

A stylized, colorful illustration of a landscape. The foreground features rolling green hills with a brown path. On the left, there is a green tree, a purple flower, and an orange flower. A small red bird is flying in the sky above the tree. The background consists of wavy blue and white bands representing the sky.

Board of Health Presentation

Ennis C. Baker, MSW, LCSW
OCHS/EHS Family Partnership Manager/
Mental Health Specialist
ebaker@chtop.org

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OCHS/EHS provides:

- high quality child care and education
- parent education
- comprehensive health, mental health and developmental screening and follow up
- in classrooms and through home visits & parent-child playgroups



An Early Head Start classroom



Orange County Head Start/Early Head Start's Mission:
Engaging and Strengthening Families to Prepare Children for School and Life

“Parents are a child’s FIRST and MOST IMPORTANT teacher!”

OCHS/EHS's team of specialists:

- **Bilingual Family Specialists and Home Visitors** who provide parent education, support, goal-setting and health, developmental and mental health screenings using motivational interviewing strategies to engage and strengthen families
- **Child Development Specialists** who work closely with parents and staff to identify developmental needs, individualize curriculum and access needed services
- **Health/Nutrition Specialist** – works closely with parents, medical providers and staff to identify and address health needs
- **Mental Health Specialist & Mental Health Consultant** – work closely with parents and staff to identify and address family and child mental health needs

What is Early Childhood Mental Health?

Early Childhood Mental Health is defined as the healthy social and emotional development of a child from birth to 6 years; and a growing field of research and practice devoted to the:

- Promotion of healthy social and emotional development;
- Prevention of mental health problems; and
- Treatment of the mental health problems of very young children in the context of their families.¹

Definition adapted from Zero To Three www.zerotothree.org

For more information about what is happening in North Carolina related to ECMH visit www.NCIMHA.org

It's about the adults....

In order for young children to be mentally healthy, the adults who care for them need to be mentally healthy and capable of being “good enough” parents, so to promote young children’s mental health, we focus on **Building the Capacities of Adult Caregivers** to provide:

- **safe,**
- **stable and**
- **nurturing**

relationships and environments

What it is all about: Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/building-adult-capabilities-to-improve-child-outcomes-a-theory-of-change/>

5 minute video From The Harvard Center for the Developing Child

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

Orange/Chatham Early Childhood Mental Health Task Force

- Multidisciplinary group formed in November 2012 after NCIOM *Growing Up Well* Report – see packet for Executive Summary
- Meet monthly at SHSC
- Linda Foxworth, KidSCOPE Director, and I are co-chairs

Our mission:

“To support the social, emotional and mental health needs of children under 5 in Orange and Chatham Counties through advocacy, awareness, collaboration, collective action & evidence-based practice.”

Agencies that provide direct Early Childhood Mental Health services to at-risk families in Orange County

- with a focus on Building Capacities of Parents/Child Care Providers

- **KidSCOPE** – variety of services including Incredible Years Parenting Series for ages birth to 6, child care consultation, inclusive child care (KELC and CLC) and direct parent-child therapy
- **Freedom House** – new, starting soon, Triple P parenting work funded by Smart Start
- **UNC Horizons** – for mothers in substance abuse treatment and their children
- **OCHD** - limited Triple P parenting work and counseling for low income pregnant/postpartum women (interpreters available)

None of these agencies offer the same services in languages other than English
(Incredible Years for ages 3-6 offered once a year in Spanish in Chapel Hill area)

Other core pieces of the early childhood service delivery system

- OCHS/EHS (prenatal – 5) and CHCCS PreK Head Start (ages 3-5)
- NC PreK sites (only serve 4 year-olds)
- Child Care programs
- OCHD Care Coordination for Children (CC4C), Postpartum Newborn Home Visit assessment, education and Triple P parenting to low income new mothers and their infants, OCHD Breastfeeding Support prenatal education and postpartum breastfeeding support home visits.
- Early Intervention
 - OCS & CHCCS Preschool services for children ages 3-5 with special needs (IEP's)
 - Durham CDSA services for children under age 3 with special needs (IFSP)
 - Private providers who bill Medicaid for OT, PT and Speech/Language therapies in children's homes or classrooms
- OCPIC – Orange County Preschool Interagency Council
- Orange/Chatham ECMH Task Force

We know what works.....

Investing in the First 2000 days of life creates stronger families, stronger communities and more resilient children – see First 2000 days campaign handout

Early Experiences Matter - Protecting children from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) and Toxic Stress is one of the most powerful ways we can promote lifetime health

It's About Relationships - The emotional well-being of young children is directly tied to the functioning of their caregivers and the families in which they live, therefore, reducing the stressors affecting children requires addressing the stresses on their families.

Engaging stakeholders across disciplines/agencies/target populations and developing a shared vision and collective action plan is essential

– more bridges, less silos

Gaps in Orange County related to Early Childhood Mental Health

- Very little services (and no ECMH therapy) available in Spanish, none in Karen/Burmese
- System is dependent on the community to identify needs, engage families and connect them with existing resources – not enough community awareness of importance of first 2000 days and how serious the consequences of waiting to intervene are
- Not enough screening for trauma, toxic stress and early signs of mental health needs – missing opportunities to intervene early
- MH services for adults are not accessible due to stigma, cost, undocumented parents can't access state MH dollars or Medicaid – adults are not getting adequate treatment and as a result, are not able to be “good enough” parents
- Pregnancy through 3rd Grade not seen as a continuum – need to ensure stability and continuity of services and match highest quality services to highest risk kids and families

Barriers in Orange County related to Early Childhood Mental Health

Limited transportation options for low-income families to access high quality preschool

- Travelling with young children using public transportation adds another layer of difficulty
- Families living in areas not accessible to CH Transit bus system are most isolated, much worse in OCS District
- Most common reason for OCHS/EHS not to be able to serve a family who qualifies for our center-based services or to lose a family being served, is transportation

No afterschool care (2:00 – 5:30) available for 4 year-olds in OCS District PreK classrooms

- Inequity between 2 districts
- Working parents need fulltime care
- Would require collaboration between OCS and OCHS/EHS and we are eager to begin that work

Results in some of the children in our community who are at greatest risk either being in poor quality child care programs (because they offer longer hours and often have vans to transport kids) without comprehensive services or not being in care at all

Healthy Early Childhood Action Plan

- Report released this month by the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) a non-profit, non-partisan organization, highlights more than 40 policy target areas that are key to achieving national goals of reducing toxic stress and ACE's and improving the lives of millions of children.
- The report calls for increased public health engagement in early childhood areas
- “If we work together across sectors – bringing together the collective energy and resources of diverse partners – we have a better chance of achieving the common goal of a healthy start for all of America's children.....But the question remains whether we can garner the public will to turn the potential into the promise that improves the lives of our next generation.” - Gail Christopher, TFAH Board Chair

www.healthyamericans.org

Guidance for Next Steps

SAMH Subcommittee to consider facilitating conversations together with Family Success Alliance

- School systems & Partnership for Children, regarding wrap-around care from 2:30 – 5:30 for NC Pre-K*
- OUTBoard/OPT & DSS regarding transportation to quality childcare*

SAMH Subcommittee to review strategies to increase screening for trauma, ACES, & early signs of mental health needs for children and parents in FSA zones and across the county

More websites to refer to for more information and best practice standards

Strengthening Families Framework – national model

– promoting protective factors

<http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengtheningfamilies>

First 2000 days campaign - NC

www.first2000days.org

Others included in previous slides