

Agenda Item Number:

**ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

Meeting Date: August 27, 2014

Agenda Item Subject: Early Childhood Mental Health Campaign

Attachment(s): N/A

Staff or Board Member Reporting: Meredith Stewart

Purpose: ___ Action
 ___ X Information only
 ___ Information with possible action

Summary Information:

Meredith will present key messages and strategy for implementation of a consistent messaging campaign focusing on Early Childhood Mental Health in Orange County.

Background:

A key focus area of the Substance Abuse & Mental Health section of the 2014-2016 Strategic Plan is to advocate for the importance of and need for childhood mental health services. The Board also focused on this area in the 2012-2014 Strategic Plan by hosting two FrameWorks Institute trainings on communicating about mental health.

After the second FrameWorks training it was decided to develop and implement a consistent messaging campaign so that agencies in Orange County could use similar language to describe the importance of early childhood mental health. This helps our county begin to develop a common language about this important issue. From May 2014 – July 2014, an MPH candidate at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health conducted formative research with childhood mental health service providers and parents to develop key messages for the campaign. This research was used, along with FrameWorks findings on mental health messaging, to develop key messages and implementations strategy for our county.

Recommended Action: ___ Approve
 ___ Approve & forward to Board of Commissioners for action
 ___ Approve & forward to _____
 ___ X Accept as information
 ___ Revise & schedule for future action
 ___ Other (detail):

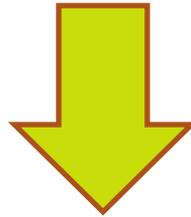
Communicating about Early Childhood Mental Health in Orange County

August 25, 2014

Board of Health

Background

FrameWorks 2012 + FrameWorks 2014



Design & implement a community campaign focused on early childhood mental health.

- Convene community stakeholders.
- Apply a unified strategic framing approach to childhood mental health policy and programs in Orange County.



Navigating the “Swamp”

Kids Don't Have It
No emotional capacity
No memory

Children are Little Adults
Same but less complicated
Need the same treatment as adults

What's in the swamp of...
Children's Mental Health

Mental Health is Emotions
Just be happy
Need to learn self-control
Better discipline will help

Mental Illness is Chemicals
Genetic; set in stone
Nothing we can do
Drugs are the only treatment

Environments Matter
BUT mostly home and parents

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1-on-1 Interviews

Organizations represented:

- KidSCOPE
- Orange County Head Start/Early Head Start
- UNC Horizons
- Mental Health America of the Triangle
- Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
- Orange County Partnership for Young Children
- Cardinal Innovations



Expert Identified ECMH Needs

- Need for knowledge.
- Need for support for parents and professionals.
- ~~Need for services.~~
- ~~Need for funding.~~

Expert Identified ECMH Needs

- Need for knowledge.
 - Current lack of effort to raise general public awareness about issues of early childhood mental health (ECMH).
 - Need to reduce stigma by getting people comfortable with the term “mental health” and defining what it means when applied to young children.
 - Tendency for people to think of mental health solely as a lack of mental illness.

Expert Identified ECMH Needs

- Lack of clear messaging about ECMH leads to stigmatization.

“If you offer to work with children on how to be a good friend, take turns, and ask for help when they need it, their parents are quick to get on board; if you offer them a ‘small group mental health intervention’, they want nothing to do with it.”

Goal of the Communications Campaign

- To raise awareness about issues of ECMH.
 - Defining & destigmatizing ECMH
 - Normalizing the concept of asking for help for kids
 - Promoting the importance of early relationships
 - Dispelling the myth that kids 0-5 don't have mental health
 - Connecting mental health with physical health, brain development, impulse control, executive function, and pre-academic skills.

Key Themes

- ECMH is everyone's responsibility
- ECMH is normal, everyday things
- Every child has mental health



A child's mental health is foundational.

Just like a well-built house, the brain needs a strong and level foundation to succeed through the years. If a foundation is not strong or level, because the ground around it is rocky or the right materials weren't used, it may crack and crumble causing parts of the house to fail.

Similarly— a strong foundation of socio-emotional well-being, or mental health, affects how children learn, form healthy relationships, and manage emotions like anger.

Our community can help build strong foundations for every child by supporting all families have the tools to build strong relationships, interactive environments, and treatment for those who need it.



Tell us why you think its important to support Orange County children [#buildingbrainsOC](#)



The future of our children is up to us all.

Everyone —not just parents—should take an active role in supporting children in Orange County.

We can do this by supporting systems that are carefully designed to foster healthy early childhood development like high quality child care and pre-k programs. Communities that support children and their families through this system help build a strong foundation for our children's financial, physical, and mental health — **which means healthier children and a healthier Orange County for us all.**

Tell us why you think its important to support Orange County children [#buildingbrainsOC](#)



Orange County. Promoting healthy brains from the start.

Campaign Strategy

- Graduated Consistent Messaging Campaign
 - Lead with general awareness to build an understanding and shift norms.
 - Tie into work with zones and increasing community engagement
 - Provide 1 message for partners to promote each month
- Coincide with PBS' new series

[The Raising of America: Early Childhood and the Future of Our nation](#)

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5
Key Theme	Early childhood mental health is foundational.	Building the foundation for a healthy brain starts before birth.	Building a healthy brain is an active process.	Supporting children’s mental health is a community responsibility.	Toxic stress can put cracks in the foundation of a healthy brain.
Suggested Strategies	Share with parents what a “mental health service“ for children looks like through online resources available here	Use the “brain architecture” and foundation metaphor to talk to parents about activities in daycare.	Share a different interactive activity each week for caretakers to practice “serve and return” with their child.	Promote universal screening for all agencies or services that work with children 0-5. See The Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!	Educate providers on signs of toxic stress and ways to screen Differentiate on different kinds of stress
Screening Events	<i>Are We Crazy About Our Kids? The Cost/Benefit Equation</i>	<i>DNA Is Not Destiny: How the Outside Gets Under the Skin</i>	<i>Once Upon a time: When Childcare for All Wasn’t a Fairytale</i>	<i>Stressing Out the Poor? Building Community Resilience</i>	<i>Wounded Places: Confronting Childhood PTSD in America’s Cities</i>