



Spark NH Vision: All New Hampshire children and their families are healthy, learning, and thriving now and in the future.

Spark NH Mission: Provide leadership that promotes a comprehensive, coordinated, sustainable early childhood system that achieves positive outcomes for young children and families, investing in a solid future for the Granite State.

Director's Report October 26, 2017

Responding to ACEs

I have written before about the importance of focusing on early childhood as a way of preventing future opioid crises. A related issue that I am asked about often is, “what can we do to address [ACEs](#) (Adverse Childhood Experiences) in children. I understand the urgency of the question. The science very strongly shows that adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, exposure to violence and others have been linked to later drug and alcohol abuse and cumulatively, to other extremely poor health outcomes in adulthood. Folks who hear this want to do something to try to mitigate those experiences and change those outcomes.

I've talked about prevention and I want to reiterate its importance here. Many of the adverse childhood experiences are rooted in the parent-child relationship. That's why interventions that focus on strengthening that relationship are so critical. These include high quality child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, evidence-based home visiting, and the many family supporting initiatives at family resource centers. Most of the policy priorities in our [Framework for Action](#) are intended to prevent ACEs. As the Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman tells us, “the least expensive problem to fix is the one you prevent from happening in the first place.

That said, there are a number of innovative programs in New Hampshire that working to make sure that children who've suffered trauma can have better outcomes. It's worth saying of course the programs I named in the first paragraph are already doing just that. I have started a list of others that you might not know about. Let me know if you are aware of others that should be on this list.

1. ACERT – The Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team - The ACERT is a Manchester response team that deploys to serve children who have been exposed to violence. The ACERT consists of a policy officer, a crisis services advocate, and a community health worker. The team responds to incidents in which children have been exposed to violence as soon as the scenes have been secured by the police. It also follows up with the families after the traumatic event, to connect them and the child with services they may need. ACERT is a collaboration of Project LAUNCH at Manchester Community Health Center, the Manchester Police Department and the YWCA NH. Funding is provided by the HNH Foundation. To find out more, contact Council member Lara Quiroga
2. CPP – Child Parent Psychotherapy – an evidence based therapy for young children from birth through age 5 and their parents/caregivers. CPP is designed to help children who have suffered trauma. Studies show that the therapy helps both children and their caregivers with mood, problem behaviors, learning trauma symptoms and relationships. To learn more, go to <http://www.cassieyacklepsy.com/child-parent-psychotherapy.html>
3. Trauma informed training – Cassie Yackley, PSyD is a psychotherapist and expert on trauma who has been doing much of the trauma-informed training for professionals in the state. It is critical for those who work with children and touch their lives to be able to recognize trauma in Children. Cassie works with a variety of professions

(educators, first responders, physicians, nurses, mental health providers, early childhood care providers, etc.) to develop trauma-informed practice. Individuals and organizations unaware of the impact of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences risk re-traumatizing the people they are trying to serve. Cassie teaches audiences how to engage in trauma-informed practice whatever their role in an organization.

Spark NH Budget

We have been informed that the \$25,000 operating grant we applied for in August has been awarded by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. We are incredibly grateful to the Foundation for their support.

Home Visiting Task Force – Aurelia Moran, the Home Visiting Program Supervisor in the Maternal and Child Health Section at New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services requested that Spark NH convene a task force to help meet requirements under the federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant. The grant requires the creation of a group to advise the developing and implementing of a continuum of home visiting services to support eligible families and children prenatally through kindergarten entry. It also requires collaboration with other federal, state, and local partners.

Some of you may remember that Spark NH formed a similar task force in 2014-15 when NH first received its MIECHV grant. Such a task force is consistent with Spark NH's mission, with our Framework for Action, and will be coordinated with the work of our committees. As a result, the Executive Committee approved the request to form the Home Visiting Task Force. We expect the first meeting to be in late November.