



## Welcome to Spark NH!

Dear Friend of Spark NH

### Preventing and 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, and exposure to violence have been linked to later drug and alcohol abuse, and 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.

Because brain plasticity and the ability to change behavior decrease over time, getting it right early is less costly, to society and individuals, than trying to fix it later. That means we need to work to both prevent children's exposure to significant adversity, and provide effective interventions as early as possible. And we know the impact of ACEs can be buffered by interventions in early life. That's why high quality child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, evidence-based home visiting, and the many family support initiatives at family resource centers are so critical, as they help children build resilience and other capacities needed to cope effectively with adversity. These programs, along with high quality early learning programs more generally, also serve as an effective prevention system throughout the state. By connecting children experiencing early adversity to resources and services that improve outcomes, these programs are essential to ensuring the healthy futures of all of our children.

In addition to these early childhood interventions, there are a number of other innovative programs in New Hampshire working to make sure that children who've suffered trauma are connected to resources and services that improve outcomes. It's worth noting, of course, that the programs I mention above are already doing just that. I have started a list of others that you might not know about. Let me know if you know 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 Project LAUNCH Local Program Director Lara Quiroga [lquiroga@mchc-nh.org](mailto:lquiroga@mchc-nh.org)

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 and problem behaviors, To learn more, go to <http://www.cassieyackleypsyd.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 professionals (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.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Milliken, Esq.  
Director, Spark NH

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## Community of Practice: December Updates

### **Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition**

This fall members of the Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition (CCECC) have shared SparkNH's Bedrock Presentation with local Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions Clubs, as well as local elementary school parent-teacher organizations, reaching over 85 people. We are excited to share that Schelley Rondeau, RN, BSN, Pediatric Program Coordinator for Central New Hampshire Visiting Nurse Association (CNHVNA), received the Excellence in Home Visiting Award for CNHVNA's Healthy Family America Program. She will be representing Carroll County on the NH Home Visiting Task Force that is getting underway through the NH Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV). We look forward to the new year ahead and working to increase the awareness of the family support services that are available through the Family Connections Family Resource Center at Children Unlimited.

### **Claremont Learning Partnership**

In Claremont, on Tuesday, December 5th there was a Community Forum held in the middle school multipurpose room. The hope was to partner with parents, students and staff to determine how an even more accepting, caring and kind learning environment at CMS can be created. Approx 80 people came to this event. It was a nice combination of staff, parents, community partners, and students. The students did a great job relaying their feelings and ideas. There will be a follow up event after the first of the year.

### **Concord School District Safe Schools/Healthy Students**

The Concord School District Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant Initiative is fully committed to expanding upon its work to build Pyramid practices throughout the early childhood community. Offering ongoing, high-quality workshops for Early Childhood providers, has helped to strengthen Concord's workforce. In order to support young children through nurturing and positive relationships, Concord offers four weekly Family Center programs, Positive Solutions for Families programming and Family Engagement activities. Each year, more young children have been screened using the ASQ-SE. with follow up for children needing additional supports. In order to provide targeted social emotional supports, resources such as home visiting, child-parent psychotherapy and counseling services are available through our community partners.

### **Coos Coalition for Young Children and Families**

In early November the Coos Coalition sponsored a two day "summit" for Childcare programs and the SAUs in Coos County. The purpose of the summit was to build connections and communication elementary school principals, kindergarten teachers and childcare directors and teachers that would lead to shared, county wide strategies around positive social and emotional development for young children. The ultimate goal was to insure that all Coos children can transition successfully to kindergarten and succeed in school. The objectives of this summit were to:

- Build trusting relationships and open communication between the community based childcare programs, school districts, families and organizations serving families with young children in Coos
- Develop a coordinated county-wide plan to create and implement shared goals and evidence based strategies to support positive social and emotional development for children 0-8 in Coos County

Over 60 childcare teachers and directors, elementary school principals and kindergarten teachers and SPED directors came together for a day and a half to address 3 questions-

- What physical and cognitive skills (aside from social and emotional) need to be in place for a child to successfully transition into kindergarten?
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- How do we build a shared approach to early childhood education in Coos?

The participants broke into SAU regional groups to discuss these questions and arrive at one or two step action plan. The regional groups plan to continue to meet for the next 6 months and come together again for a day in the spring to present the plans they have developed. Four of the five regional groups have chosen to focus on improving the transition for children from childcare to Kindergarten.

### **Greater Nashua Smart Start Coalition**

No December update.

### **Greater Tilton Area Family Resource Center**

A healthy and prosperous future for our school community is important to all of us. And what we know now is that providing our next generation with positive early learning experiences, good health, and strong family support is vital to our future social and economic wellbeing - as today's young children are tomorrow's students, parents, workers, and citizens.

Developmental science shows that a child's earliest experiences lay the foundation for the brain's developing architecture, setting a sturdy or fragile stage for all of the learning, health, and behavior that follows. Making sure children in our community have access to the resources and experiences that promote development - health, nutrition, learning - will make them more likely to succeed in school and later in life. The Greater Tilton Area Family Resource Center, in collaboration with the System of Care of the Winnisquam School District is creating and implementing the Strong Foundations program. The purpose of this program is to engage parents of children ages 0-5, to remove barriers and create opportunity for our community's youngest children to have access to positive early learning experiences, good health, and strong family support. The framework of delivery will be in the Strengthening Families™ framework of the five protective factors, as we work to increase the parenting capacity and family engagement with community resources in the environments in which these young children live. A family support specialist will be hired to carry a home visiting caseload of up to ten families, to facilitate parent education in group settings, and participate in other community engagement events. In addition the family support specialist will provide outreach, developmental screening, and information and referral services to families with young children and participate in the Early Childhood Workgroup of the System of Care.

### **Impact Monadnock**

Jill Morgan started as the new Program Director on September 27. She has been meeting with staff, community leaders, and other stakeholders to deepen her understanding of Monadnock United Way Impact Monadnock (IM) and its Project Teams, and NH early childhood systems work.

On November 16, Impact Monadnock held a celebration event to honor the work of Marj Droppa, the former IM Director, and all of the volunteers who were involved in implementing Year 1 of the IM Strategic Plan. A link to the full Year 1 Evaluation Report and Summary Report can be found on the IM website: <http://www.impactmonadnock.org/about/implementation/implementation-updates/>

Jill has begun taking steps to address recommendations in the Year 1 Evaluation Report, including restructuring the IM system. The restructured organizational chart embeds mechanisms for enhanced communication, adds some new labels that better explain the work of IM and its project teams, creates entry points for those interested in joining IM activities, and enhances processes which allow for better tracking and reporting of activities and outcomes. The chart will be available online soon.

IM's Project Teams are gearing up for a full year of implementation in 2018 and are working with Jill to create action plans which outline the goals and activities to support the IM Strategic Plan. The year ahead will include strong focus on increased use of ASQ-SE developmental screenings by pediatricians and early care providers, increased adoption of family-friendly policies at Monadnock area businesses, continued professional development of child care and preschool teachers, and a new focus on early literacy. In addition, a new advocacy and policy plan is in the

works that will ensure continued community education on the importance of early childhood development.

### **Project LAUNCH Manchester**

In an effort to build in-state capacity to implement the Pyramid Model, Project LAUNCH has offered and is planning to offer several intensive trainings for the three focus populations of the model - early childhood teachers, home visitors, and family support professionals. Please contact Lara Quiroga for more information.

- Train-the-Trainer of Positive Solutions for Families Facilitators. SAVE THE DATE!!! Only facilitators previously trained through Project LAUNCH and/or the Pyramid Model Consortium are eligible. Training will be held January 30-31, 2018. Trainers will receive technical assistance via conference calls every other month for one year through the Pyramid Model Consortium. Interested facilitators should contact Lara Quiroga at [lquiroga@mchc-nh.org](mailto:lquiroga@mchc-nh.org).
- Classroom-based Strategies to Promote the Social-Emotional Competence of Infants and Toddlers: The Pyramid Model. SAVE THE DATE!!! Up to 50 early childhood, child care, and Early Head Start teachers, administrators, and other who support the professional development of early childhood professionals in NH will be trained to promote young children's social-emotional competence and preventing, understanding, and respond to challenging behaviors. The evidence-based materials presented in this training are most effective with infants and toddlers and reflect a commitment to promoting social-emotional development in young children through the use of promotion and preventive strategies. Primary content areas related to supporting children's social-emotional development include: 1.) Promotion Practices: Supporting Social-Emotional Wellbeing for All Infants and Toddlers; 2.) Preventive Practices: Targeted Social-Emotional Supports; and 3.) A Relationship-Based Approach for Supporting Infants and Toddlers with Challenging Behaviors. Training will be held March 5-7, 2018. More information on location and how to register will be disseminated in the near future.
- Classroom-based Strategies to Promote the Social-Emotional Competence of Preschool-Aged Children and Address Challenging Behavior: The Pyramid Model. Early childhood/elementary, child care, and Head Start teachers, administrators, and others who support the professional development of early childhood professionals in NH will be trained to promote children's social-emotional competence and prevent and address challenging behaviors. The evidence-based materials presented in this training are most effective with young children three to five years of age and reflect a commitment to promoting social emotional development in young children through the use of preventive strategies and recognizing the need for more intensive interventions when children have significant social emotional needs and challenging behavior. Primary content areas related to supporting children's social emotional development include: 1.) Promotion Practices: Supporting Social-Emotional Wellbeing for All Children; 2.) Preventive Practices: Targeted Social-Emotional Supports; and 3.) Intensive, Individualized Interventions for Children with Significant Challenging Behaviors. Training will be held March 12-14, 2018. More information on location and how to register will be disseminated in the near future.
- Positive Solutions for Families Facilitator Training. Sixteen (16) facilitators were trained in September to offer Positive Solutions for Families in their respective communities. Facilitators will receive technical assistance via conference calls every other month for one year through the Pyramid Model Consortium.
- PIWI (Parents Interacting With Infants) Training. Fifty (50) home visitors, parent/child group leaders, other providers working, and their supervisors with parents and young children in home-based settings were trained in October and November.
- Pyramid Model PIWI 2.0. Eight (8) supervisors in home visiting and similar programs were trained how to support their staff using PIWI in November. Supervisors attended two days of training and will receive monthly technical assistance via conference calls for one year through the Consortium.

### **Somersworth Early Childhood Coalition**

Somersworth Ready Together is focused on making a difference for children and families in Somersworth by fulfilling our mission to improve early childhood development, ensuring language development and supporting family engagement to promote school readiness to succeed. The Coalition has continued to meet on a monthly basis and is in the process of forming Work Groups to focus on efforts related to family engagement and improving kindergarten transitions. We are also working to expand the Pyramid Model in our community. In October, the Coalition was awarded a grant from the Spark NH Community of Practice to develop a plan for implementing the Pyramid Model in community based early childhood programs. The strong representation of the Somersworth School District in our Coalition will allow us to align this work with that of the school district who is using the Pyramid Model in their school based preschool and kindergarten

classrooms as part of their ISocial grant from the State Education Department. Finally, we are working with our area partners to connect with families and caregivers that are often hard to reach with traditional family engagement strategies. We hope to host focus groups with these families and caregivers to better understand how we can help link them to existing resources and services.

#### **Team Up Rochester**

No December update.

#### **Thrive Laconia**

Following success summer and fall training series in Mind in the Making and Strengthening Families Framework, Thrive Laconia is partnering with the Laconia School District to host a March event featuring the Bedrock presentation. The superintendent and Thrive leadership are asking the city, economic development council, emergency responders, and other key community leaders to join efforts to make Laconia a great place to work and raise a family.

## **Stay Connected. Stay Engaged.**

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### **Please Consider Joining a Committee**

Spark NH has four committees that are open to the public: Policy, Data, Evaluation, and Work Force and Professional Development. To find the latest information about our committees and important documents such as meeting minutes, agendas and presentations please visit our website at [www.sparknh.com/council-and-committees](http://www.sparknh.com/council-and-committees).

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### **About Spark NH:**

Spark NH is the Governor-appointed Early Childhood Advisory Council for the State of New Hampshire. Our mission is to 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.

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### **Contact Us:**

Call us at 603-226-7900 or email us at  
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