

Strategic Planning Map for Early Childhood Social Emotional Health in Cuyahoga County

Local Conditions: Why here?

1a. Community violence coupled with systemic poverty leaves children with few safe places.

- 1 in 3 children in Cuyahoga County live in poverty. (Children, 2010)
- The national benchmark for violent crime per 100,000 is 73. In Cuyahoga County, the violent crime rate is 663 per 100,00; in Cleveland, 1,507 per 100,000. (HIP-Cuyahoga, 2013)

1b. There are many stressors among adults who care for young children at home and in the community.

- 1 in 7 adults in Cuyahoga County report that their quality of life is fair or poor. One in 4 adults in Cleveland report that their quality of life is fair or poor. The national benchmark is 1 in 10. (HIP-Cuyahoga, 2013)

2a. Adults who care for young children lack a social support network.

- Families with low income have high levels of emotional investment in their children, but they do not have the support and connections to overcome the challenges of poverty. (Bierman, 2017)

2b. Families spend more time connected to screen than engaging with one another.

- In Cuyahoga County, 32% of middle schoolers watch TV for 3 hours or more a day, 47% play video games for 3 hours or more, and 47% use a computer for things other than school. (PRCHN, 2014)
- Parental involvement in limiting screen time use is seen as a barrier by early care and education providers. (USDA, 2015)

Root Causes: Why?

1. Unhealthy community norms lead to an increase in toxic stress within the family structure.

- Communities and families with a history of ongoing, generational trauma, like toxic stress, have been shown to have alterations in ways that their DNA functions. When family lines experience trauma over and over again, these effects of trauma can be passed through future generations. (CDC, 2016)

2. Adults who care for children are not educated in ways to improve social emotional health.

- Adults who have multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are more likely to develop more mental health and health related issues, creating environments conducive to ACEs for children. (CDC, 2016)

The Problem

Social emotional needs of young children are not being met in ways that are supportive of all children.

Data Supporting the Problem

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study found that, “Most people in the U.S. have at least one ACE, and that people with four ACEs— including living with an alcoholic parent, racism, bullying, witnessing violence outside the home, physical abuse, and losing a parent to divorce — have a risk of adult onset of chronic health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, suicide, and alcoholism.”(High, 2015)
- The homicide rate in Cleveland is 14.6 per 100,000, more than double the rate for the US (6.1) and well above the national benchmark of 5.5. (HIP-Cuyahoga, 2013)
- The rate of child abuse for Cuyahoga County was 5.8 per 1,000 and 11.2 per 1,000 in Cleveland, and 9.4 per 1,000 in the US in 2009. (HIP-Cuyahoga, 2013)

What If?

- National Research shows that families with low income have high levels of emotional investment in their children, but they do not have the support and connections to overcome the challenges of poverty. (Bierman, 2017)
- Increased levels of stress as well as increased parent health and mental health concerns keep families from engaging with children and early care providers. (Merz, 2012)
- Complex trauma results in emotional dysregulation and a loss in interpersonal relatedness. Complex trauma is the most common type of trauma experienced in high-violence, low-income regions (Cook et al, 2005)
- The more ACEs that happen during the childhood of an individual increase that person’s risks for developing chronic disease, mental illness, and both perpetrating violence and experiencing violence. Higher ACE scores increase the likelihood of in individual developing violent behavior, getting divorced, having a broken bone, being depressed, and developing autoimmune diseases. (CDC, 2016)

How do we know?

Early Ages Healthy Stages Coalition will utilize the following evidence base to promote strategies to meet the social emotional needs of young children in Cuyahoga County:

- The National Head Start Association recommends connecting families with community partners and others resources to improve upon intervention strategies related to trauma informed early childhood care. (Consultation, n.d.)
- Consistent, quality communication and relationship building between parents and early care and education providers has been shown to predict kindergarten readiness, behavioral health, and provide a foundation for future parent engagement and improve academic and social development. (Bierman, 2017)
- Evidence based programs that provide learning materials for families and have teacher support on how to use them have been shown to improve child social emotional skills. (Bierman, 2017)
- Zero to Three recommends building partnerships between ECE providers and children’s mental health care providers to respond to children’s mental health needs. (Collins, 2003)
- Health communication and social marketing campaigns that combine mass media with health services are recommended strategies to improve health behavior and increase knowledge. (CPST , 2011)

What we will do?

By December 31st, 2020, Early Ages Healthy Stages Coalition will:

1. Collaborate with partner agencies to gather and fill gaps in parent education materials to increase awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences and promote resiliency.

- Engaging with parents and families.
- Connect with current and potential partners to develop an inventory of tools and materials available for social emotional health promotion.
- Fill any identified gaps in materials that help families understand ACEs and resiliency.
- Collaborate with partners on an ongoing social marketing campaign for early childhood social emotional health.

2. Collaborate with partner agencies to provide tools to empower early care and education programs to include parent support services.

- Engaging with parents and families.
- Engage community partners that focus on trauma informed programming, respite services, and resiliency building.
- Collect resources from local experts and partners on EAHS website.
- Hold trainings, meetings, and community events for early care and education providers that elevate resources for social emotional health.

3. Plan a county-wide social marketing campaign and event series that coincides with National Screen Free week to reduce screen time and increase family bonding.

- Promote National Screen Free Week, collecting outcomes and input from multiple coalition members during the first year.
- Plan and orchestrate events for National Screen Free Week for the following 2 years.

Context

Current Scope

Consequences

Intervention