

Leveraging County Systems to Support Infant and Toddler Mental Health and Well-Being

March 28, 2022



© NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC.



Speakers



Lee Johnson III, Ph.D.
ZERO TO THREE



Staci Born, Ed.D.
South Dakota State University



Brook Son
Travis County, Texas



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

National Association of Counties Research Foundation (NACoRF): Leveraging County Systems to Support Infant and Toddler Mental Health and Well-Being

March 28, 2022

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Presented by: Lee Johnson III, Ph.D., CHES[®], IMH-E[®]
Senior Policy Analyst, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

ZERO TO THREE

ZERO TO THREE's Vision



ZERO TO THREE

We envision a society that has the knowledge and will to support *all* infants and toddlers in **reaching their full potential.**





ZERO TO THREE's mission:
Ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life.



Policy Framework



*Good
Health*



*Strong
Families*

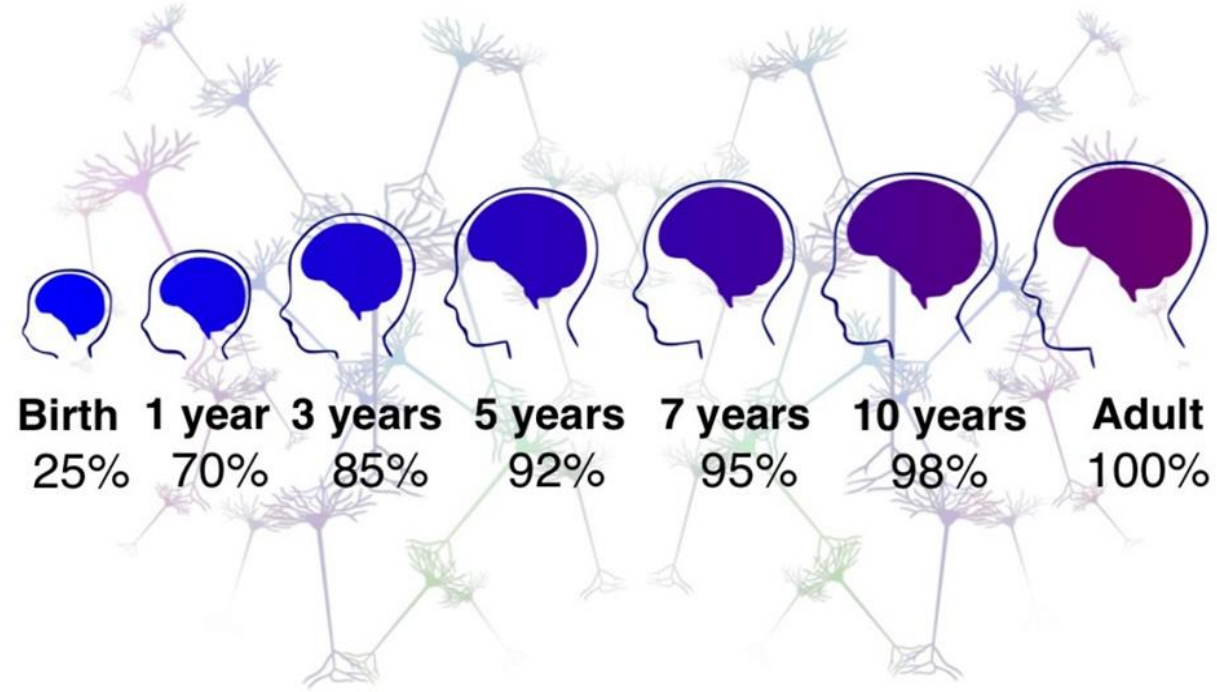


*Positive Early
Learning
Experiences*



Early Brain and Child Development

The foundations of brain architecture are established early in life.



Source: Patricia Kuhl, Ph.D. Co-Director, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences and Director, NSF Science of Learning Center, University of Washington, Seattle

Early Brain and Child Development





What is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health?

We often use the terms **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health** and **healthy social and emotional development** interchangeably.



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH): the developing capacity of a child from birth to age five to: experience, express and regulate emotions; form close, secure interpersonal attachment relationships; and explore his/her environment and learn, all within the context of family and community.



ZERO TO THREE

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The foundation of all future development

Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being

Social and emotional development, or **infant and early childhood mental health**, is the developing capacity of a child from birth to 5 years old to...



Form close and secure **adult and peer relationships...**



Experience, manage and express a **full range of emotions...**



Explore the environment and learn...

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.



Copyright © 2019 ZERO TO THREE. All rights reserved.

Early connections



last a lifetime.

Defining Policy



ZERO TO THREE

- a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual. a statement of intent, implemented as a procedure or protocol.
- a written document that includes actionable steps or dedicated support to promote, solidify or institutionalize a practice or procedure for the intention of formalizing, enhancing and/or sustaining the effort.

“Little P”

- Programmatic/organizational
- MOUs
- Cost sharing agreements
- HR policies

“Big P”

- City/County/State/Federal government
- Legislation
- Executive orders
- Medicaid state plans

A Look at ZTT's Perinatal and IECMH Federal Policy Agenda



ZERO TO THREE

The following federal policy priorities speak to the critical need for support of infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH):

- **Increase the size, diversity, and quality of the clinical workforce.**
- **Expand systems-building capacity and increase multigenerational access to high-quality services.**
- **Expand data and research capacity.**



Increase the Size, Diversity, and Quality of the Clinical Workforce

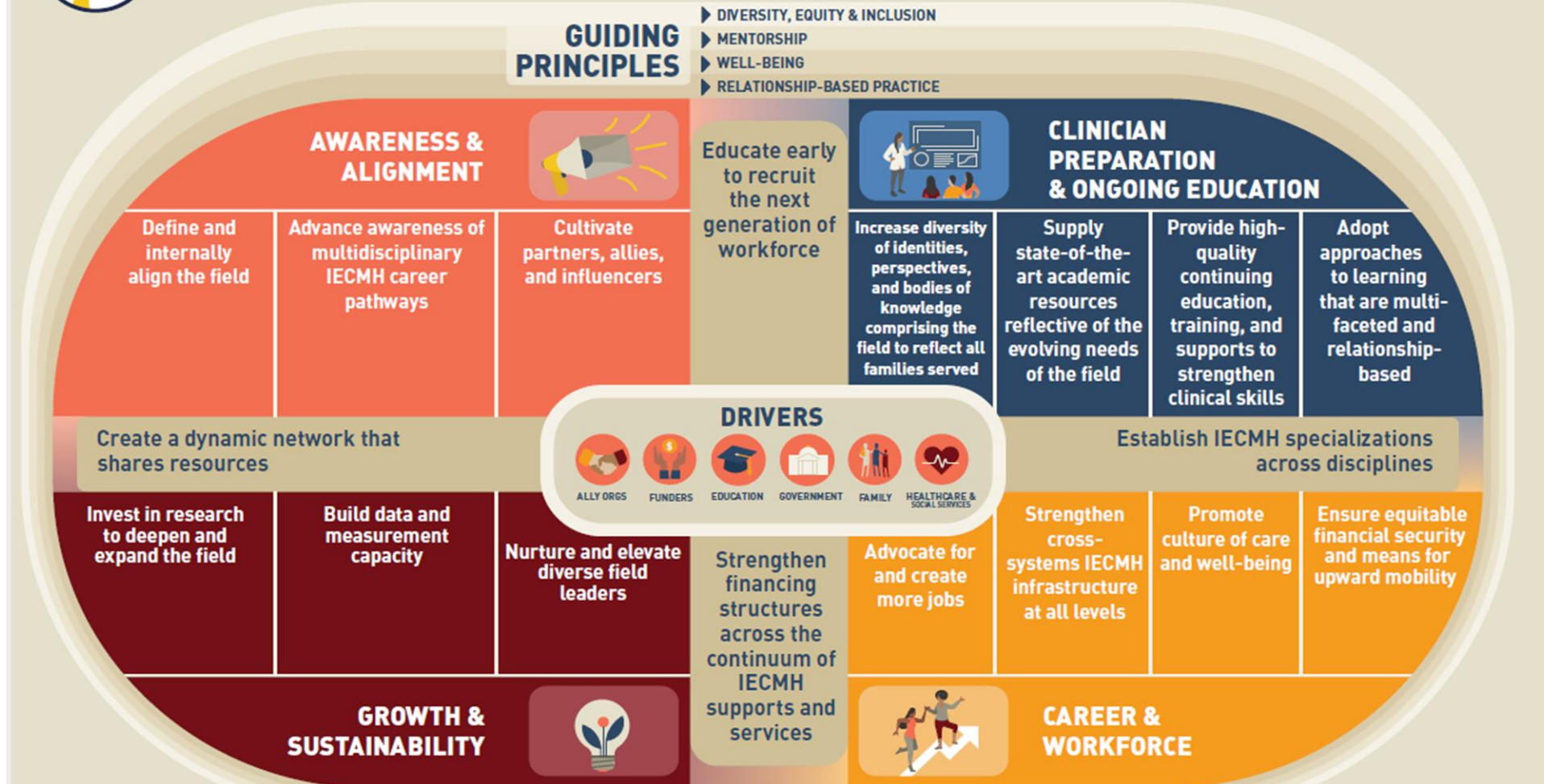


ZERO TO THREE



IECMH WORKFORCE Solution Pathways

Avenues to positively influence the size, diversity, quality, and accessibility of the IECMH clinical workforce



Expand systems-building capacity and increase access to high-quality services



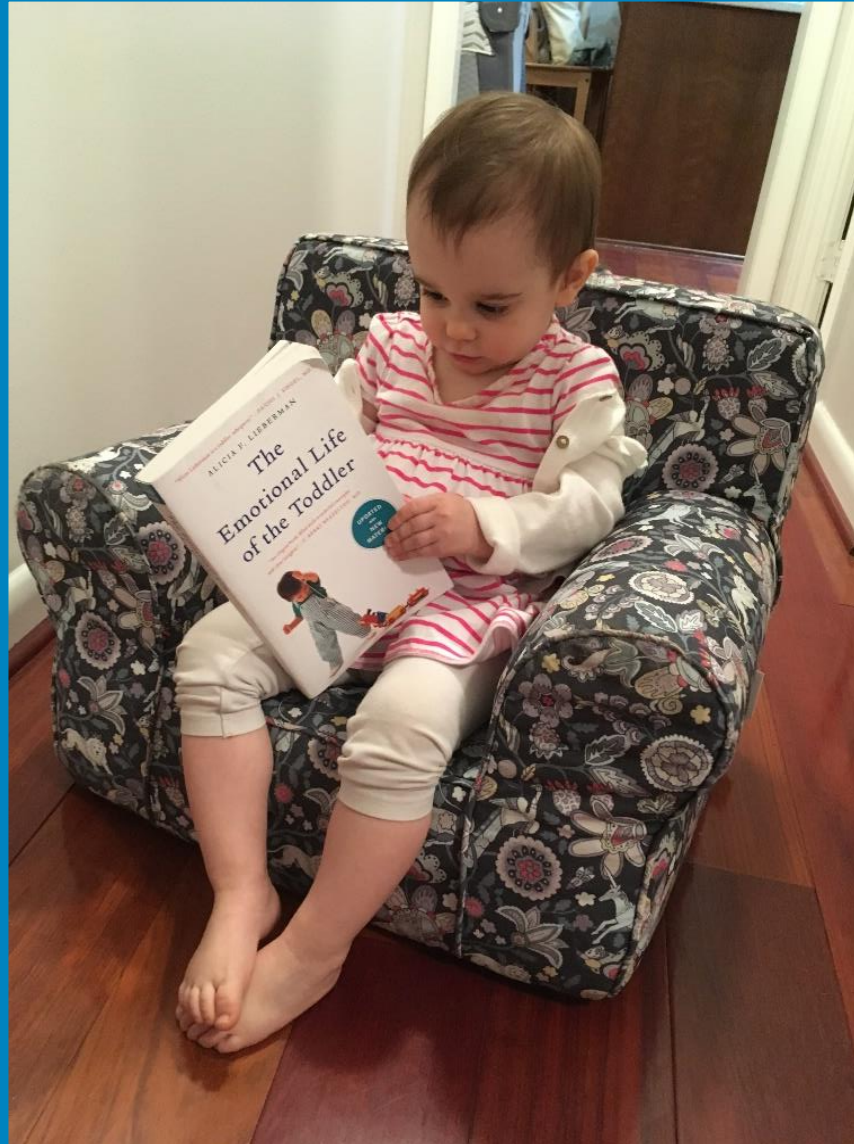
ZERO TO THREE

On **March 15, 2022**, the President signed into law the FY2022 spending package through Congress' annual appropriations process. This bill includes many critical supports for families with babies and toddlers but leaves more to be done to meet the needs of today's families. Here are a few highlights for babies and caregivers:

Health and Mental Health		
Federal Program	Description	FY 2022 Final
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	The grant program was created to better integrate infant and early childhood mental health support in state systems.	\$10 million
Community Mental Health Block Grant	The grant program ensures funding to carry out a state's mental health plan.	\$857 million
National Child Traumatic Stress Network	NCTSN exist to raise the standard of care, increase access to interventions that help reduce the impact of trauma on children, families.	\$82 million
Project LAUNCH	Project LAUNCH exist to foster the healthy development and wellness of all young children, birth through age 8.	\$24 million
Maternal Mental Health Hotline	The MMH hotline offers specialized support 24 hours per day to help mothers and families.	\$4 million
Screening and Treatment for Maternal Depression and Related Disorders (<i>Perinatal Psychiatric Access Programs</i>)	The grant program exist to establish, improve, or maintain programs that expand health care providers' capacity to screen, assess, treat, and refer pregnant and postpartum women for maternal depression and related behavioral health disorders.	\$6.5 million



Expand data and research capacity



- **ZTT's engagement to cultivate champions can include:**
 - **Providing Education** about impact on infants and toddlers for Congressional staff, Administration staff, and coalition partners
 - **Translating science into policy recommendations** through regulatory Comments, Letters, & Statements for Hearings
 - **Field Mobilization (Grasstops)**

Cultivating Champions for Infant-Toddler Mental Health: Policy & Systems Building Considerations



ZERO TO THREE

- **Determine who in your state/community has an interest in IECMH.**
- **Consider fostering relationships with leaders in Mental/Behavioral Health, and other invested divisions.**
- **Explore how resources are used to support infants and toddlers with mental health needs in your city, county, and/or state.**



Getting Involved



ZERO TO THREE

- Sign up at www.thinkbabies.org
- Email or tweet at my Members of Congress
- Share information about IECMH on social
- Contact my state elected officials



Make their potential our priority.

ADVOCACY TOOL

How to Write a Letter to the Editor and an Opinion Editorial

ADVOCACY TOOL

How to Plan a Site Visit for Your Policy Makers

Take Action

Tell Congress to #ThinkBabiesAndAct and support healthy emotional development right from the start!

TWEET

EMAIL

Congress, I'd like to be recognized.

NAME
Uriah G.

HOMETOWN
Maple Grove, MN



I LOVE ...
Reading

BABY'S FIRST
POLICY PRIORITY
Infant and
Early Childhood
Mental Health

Paid Leave
Advocacy Toolkit



IECMH Policy Resources



ZERO TO THREE

- [IECMH Policy Webinar Series](#)
- [How to Talk About IECMH Infographic](#)
- [State of Babies Yearbook](#)
- [Exploring State Strategies for Financing Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment](#)
- [Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Policy Series](#)
- [Expanding Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Supports and Services: A Planning Tool for States and Communities](#)
- [Planting Seeds in Fertile Ground: Actions Every Policymaker Should Take to Advance Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#)
- [Building Back Better: ZTT's Transition Plan](#)
- [Join Think Babies!](#)
- [Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Clinical Workforce Solution Document](#)



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

Lee Johnson III, Ph.D., CHES[®], IMH-E[®]

Senior Policy Analyst, Infant and Early
Childhood Mental Health (IECMH)

The Policy Center

ZERO TO THREE

ljohnson@zerotothree.org



SOUTH DAKOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD

Mental Health Collaborative

Workforce Development Highlights

South Dakota at a Glance

Total population: 886,667 (2020)

- Largest cities:
 - Sioux Falls, SD (192,517)
 - Rapid City, SD (74,703)
 - Of the 311 incorporated towns, only 27 have populations greater than 2,500 people

Designated frontier state

- Population “islands”

9 federally recognized tribes:

- Cheyenne River, Crow Creek, Flandreau Santee Sioux, Lower Brule, Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Sisseton Wahpeton, Standing Rock, and Yankton

Racial Demographics (U.S. Census 2020):

- 81.5% White
- 9% American Indian and Alaska Native
- 4.2% Hispanic or Latino
- 2.5% Two or more races
- 2.3% Black or African American
- 1.5% Asian



How it started...

June 2018 Partnership began partnership with **South Dakota Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative** grant application to SAMHSA through the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grant Program

Joint project between Southeastern Behavioral Health, South Dakota State University, and Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership's (ICAP) Head Start

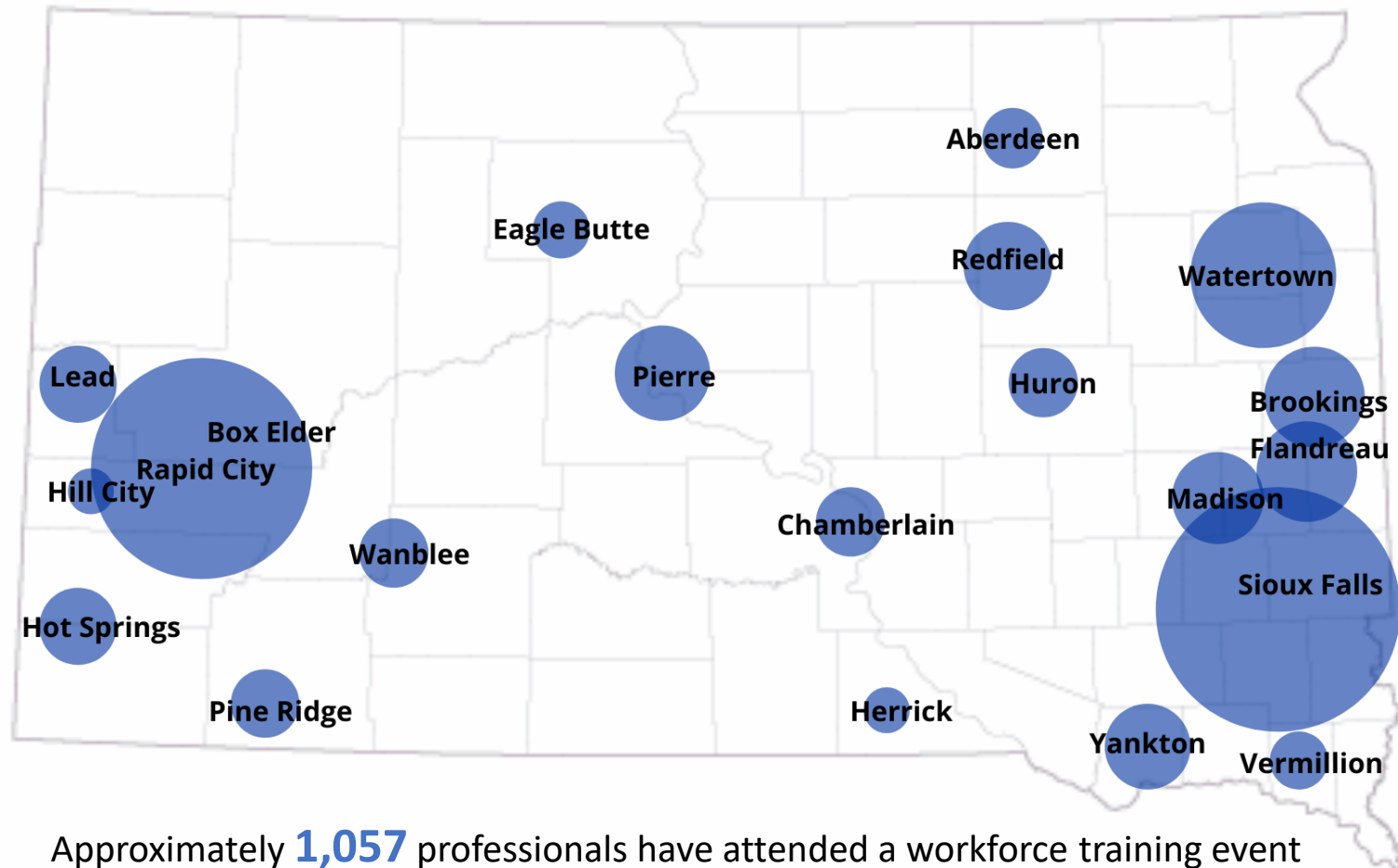


Overall Goals of SDECMHC

- 1** Increase developmental screening, mental health referrals, and access to evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum for ICAP Head Start Children.
- 2** Increase knowledge, skills and attitudes of early childhood mental health workforce in South Dakota to serve children ages 0-5, diagnosed with or at-risk for developing an emotional disturbance, and their caregivers.
- 3** Increase access to evidence-based therapeutic interventions in South Dakota for children diagnosed with, or at-risk for developing a severe emotional disturbance, and their caregivers.



SDECMHC Overall Workforce Development Impacts to- date



Approximately **1,057** professionals have attended a workforce training event hosted by SDECMHC.

Activities include: Play Therapy training for mental health clinicians; DC:0-5 Clinical Training for mental health professionals and stakeholders; Theraplay Level 1 & MIM training for mental health clinicians; Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Workshop for early childhood professionals (education, clinical – broadly)

Play Therapy Training

What is a Play Therapist?

- Credentialing is maintained by the Association for Play Therapy
- A Registered Play Therapist is a mental health professional with more than 150 hours of play therapy specific education, 350+ hours of clinical play therapy experience, and 35+ hours of play therapy supervision

Research supports play therapy with children experiencing:

- Social, emotional, behavioral, and learning problems
 - Including: children whose problems are related to life stressors, such as divorce, death, relocation, hospitalization, chronic illness, assimilate stressful experiences, physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence, and natural disasters
(Bratton, Ray, Rhine, & Jones, 2005; LeBlanc & Ritchie, 2001; Lin & Bratton, 2015; Ray, Armstrong, Balkin, & Jayne, 2015; Reddy, Files-Hall, & Schaefer, 2005)
- Outcomes are greater when caregivers are involved



Play Therapy Training



**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

Prior to SDSU offering instruction and SDECMHC funding, approximately 8 Registered Play Therapists were in practice in South Dakota. **Today: 31**

In 2018, funding from SDECMHC was received to support tuition costs for clinicians seeking credentialing as Registered Play Therapists

- 2019-2020, **9 clinicians at Southeaster Behavioral Health** (Sioux Falls) completed their 150 education hours (7 graduate credits)
- 2020-2022, a cohort of **15 clinicians located across the state of South Dakota** began working towards their education, clinical experiences, and supervision to become Registered Play Therapists

With the support of SDECMH Collaborative, the following children ages 0-12 have received play therapy services within our catchment:

- 2018-2019: **276 children**
- 2019-2020: **208 children**
- 2020-2021: **368 children**



DC: 0-5 Training

- The Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC: 0-5) is an age-appropriate approach for assessing infants, toddlers and preschool children.
- This tool classifies mental health and developmental disorders in children from birth through five years old *considered in relationship to their families, culture and communities.*
- With funding from the SDECMHC, we have provided training on the appropriate application of DC: 0-5 to
 - **January 2019: 45 clinicians**
 - **May 2021: 33 clinicians**



Theraplay: Level 1 Training

- Theraplay is a child and family therapy that targets enhancing and building attachment, self-esteem, trust in others, and joyful engagement.
- The goal of Theraplay would be a changed view of the self as worthy and lovable and of relationships as positive and rewarding. It is one type of play therapy that can be used with children.
- Two levels of Theraplay training exist; accompanying supervision is required for certification as a Theraplay provider.
- Prior to the activities of the SDECMHC, zero clinicians were certified in Theraplay. To date, from grant support, **18 mental health professionals have completed Level 1 Theraplay training**



Sustaining Efforts

- SDECMHC has been largely successful because willing leaders aligned, collaborated, trusted, and communicated
- Developing a workforce rooted in systemic, culturally-informed caregiver approaches was critical
- Developing local workforce requires time and planning
- Legislative advocacy has been necessary
 - Necessary for initial funding
 - As our project shifts to it's final year, sharing our outcomes and desired next steps based on our catchment findings



Speakers



Lee Johnson III, Ph.D.
ZERO TO THREE



Staci Born, Ed.D.
South Dakota State University



Brook Son
Travis County, Texas

Audience Q&A

