

Childhood Trauma Task Force

August 7th, 2023

1pm-3pm

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Approval of June 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Update on 2023 Work Plan
- Presentations on Trauma Supports in Early Childhood
 - EEC Trauma-Responsive Policies and Programs
 - Community Action's Head Start & Early Learning Programs in Western MA

Update on 2023 Work Plan

- What does the Task Force want to learn more about re: trauma services in MA? Group brainstorm during the June 5 meeting revealed 3 areas of interest:
 1. Trauma supports in education
 2. TIR policies and practices to limit the school-to-prison pipeline
 3. TIR juvenile justice
- We will be hearing from state agencies and providers at our quarterly meetings:
 - Summer (today): Early Childhood
 - Fall/Winter (tentative): K-12 + Juvenile Justice

Update on 2023 Work Plan

How can the CTTF develop more specific recommendations on trauma services? Group brainstorm revealed interest in:

Mapping out trauma trainings

- Research Questions
 - What does the state expect child-serving professionals to know about childhood trauma?
 - How are these expectations communicated/implemented? (e.g., licensing standards, contract requirements, agency policy)

Mapping out trauma EBTs

- Methodology TBD. Research questions include:
 - What trauma EBTs exist in MA?
 - What are the gaps?
 - What state agenc(ies) provide or reimburse for trauma EBTs?

Trauma Supports in Early Childhood Presentations

- EEC Trauma-Responsive Policies and Practices:
 - Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) grants
 - Policies and guidance to diminish the use of exclusionary discipline
- Community Action's Head Start & Early Learning Programs in Western MA

CTTF Presentation

Aimee Smith-Zeoli
EEC

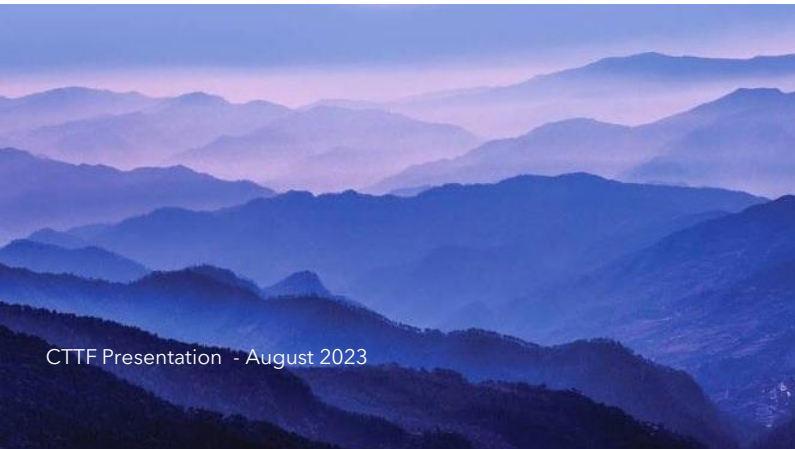
Special Education Support Specialist



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

August 7, 2023

Welcome and Updates From EEC



CTTF Presentation - August 2023

- **Introductions and Welcome**
- **Early Childhood Mental Health Grant**
- **Draft Policy Work - Exclusionary Discipline**
- **Building a Culture of Support - Expanding the work of Trauma Informed Care at EEC**

Updates

ECMHC Grant

- Procurement Process
- Additional funds (1.5 Million)
- Increase Capacity / Supports
- Hoping to award the grants by October 1

Policy Work

- Prohibiting Exclusionary Discipline
- Draft Form

Trauma Informed Learning

- PDG Grant Funds
- Expand our efforts to offer additional Trauma Informed Learning and Supports to EEC Field.

Early Childhood Mental Health Grant



Our Goal:

To support and guide development of practice for early education staff

in order to promote young children's healthy social and emotional development

and address the needs of children who exhibit behaviors that challenge with supportive, trauma informed strategies while looking through a lens of social justice and equity.

Early Childhood Mental Health Grant



Who is eligible?

- Independent and system-affiliated **FCC** providers
- EEC licensed **center-based** and **out-of-school** time programs
- **Head Start** /Early Head Start Programs
- **Public school preschool** programs,
- **Public** school district **out-of-school** programs
- **DESE approved private schools** that serve children under the age of 14 years.

Trauma Supports and the Early Childhood Mental Health Grant



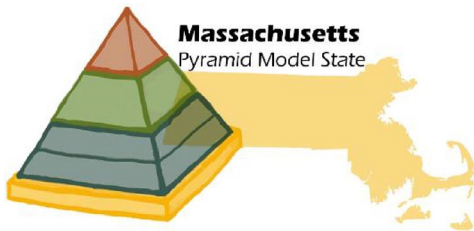
What is included?

- Classroom **observations** and suggest strategies for creating supportive learning environments.
- **Training and coaching** for educators.
- Guidance for developing ongoing **partnerships with families**.
- **Individual observation** and assessments of children (with parental consent).
- Help with **individualized behavior support plans** for children, using input from parents and educators to prevent concerning behaviors.
- **Referrals** to community-based services that meet the basic needs of children and family (with parental consent).

All with the ultimate goal of reducing the number of children who are suspended or expelled from EEC licensed programs.

Pyramid Model and ECMH

The Pyramid Model:



- is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework that uses systems-thinking and implementation science to promote evidence-based practices
- helps early educators build skills for:
 - supporting nurturing and responsive caregiving relationships
 - create supportive learning environments,
 - Provide intentional, targeted social-emotional skills,
 - support children with behaviors that challenge.

<https://www.pyramidmodel.org/>

Statewide ECMH Grantees as of August 2023

GRANTEE	SERVICE AREA
Behavioral Health Network / Collaborative Hampden/Berkshire 413-572-4111 (Matt Matroni) Hamden/Franklin 413-247-4715 (Sarah Lusardi)	Western MA /Berkshires
Enable Katherine Judge 410-812-5970	Canton / Westboro/ Quincy / Foxboro
Community Health Link, INC Beth Ciavattone 508-421-4454	Central MA / Worcester
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention and Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) Jayna Doherty 508-688-5408	Lowell/Lawrence / North Shore
Justice Resource Institute (JRI) Stacey Gay 508-828-1308	South Boston / Cape and Islands
The Home for Little Wanderers Cynthia Davis 857-321-2748	Boston

Draft Policy Work

Exclusionary Discipline

CTTF Presentation 2023



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DRAFT EEC Policy Proposal: Prevention of Suspension and Expulsion

Context

On August 10, 2022, Governor Baker signed An Act addressing barriers to care for mental health (Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022). Chapter 177 will address a broad range of behavioral health issues, including the establishment of new EEC requirements related to mental and behavioral health supports. EEC is in the process of proposing a comprehensive set of reforms dealing with our licensing regulations, which will include more detailed policy guidance related to behavioral health and the mitigation of suspension and expulsion related to a child's behavior. This policy is intended to serve as a mechanism to begin to establish these requirements in advance of the reforms.

Goals of New Policy

- Respond to the updated statutory language around mental health (Chapter 177 of 2022)
- Improve program understanding of existing regulations (606 CMR 7.00).
- Increase educator knowledge and tools to avoid exclusionary practices
- Reduce the use of exclusionary practices in EEC programs

Proposed Policy

- Programs are required to request and utilize services from the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMH) program, including:
 - When a child's behavior is identified as having the potential to result in a future suspension or expulsion
 - When a child's behavior presents a risk to the child or others in a way that the program does not know how to address
 - Before any child is suspended
 - Before any child is expelled

Proposed Policy

Exclusionary practices are prohibited in licensed and funded early education and care programs except as outlined below.

Suspension or expulsion from the program is a last resort and may only be considered if a child's behaviors present a risk to the health or safety to themselves or others AND the program has documented accommodations and interventions, including working with Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, that did not reduce the risk of health and safety to the child and others.

Proposed Policy

- Programs must engage with their ECMH grantee for at least three months before any suspension or expulsion may be considered and must demonstrate a good faith effort to implement the strategies identified in the consultation before imposing exclusionary practices on any child.

Proposed Policy

- Programs must provide written notification to the family at least two weeks prior to the effective date of the suspension or expulsion, including details of any incidents that led to the decision to suspend or expel, and all efforts made to avoid the suspension or expulsion.

Proposed Policy

- When a child will be returning to the program following a suspension, the program must provide transitional support for the child and family. Prior to a child's return to the program following a suspension, a transition support plan* must be put into place which includes positive behavior supports for behaviors that challenge, as well as supports for the family.

*Policy document would include recommendations for what should be included in a transition support plan, including a plan to communicate new or previously used strategies with the family and staff

Clarifications

- Programs are responsible for tracking and documenting any utilization of ECMH services, strategies implemented, and any patterns related to suspensions and expulsions for all child from the program [see 7.06(5)(b)].
- Parental consent must be obtained prior to contacting the ECMH grantee or any other service provider on behalf of an individual child [see 7.06(5)(b)]. If consent for an individual child cannot be obtained, program-level supports must still be pursued.
- EEC requires that programs make reasonable accommodations to welcome and serve children with disabilities [see 606 CMR 7.04(13)], and specify, in writing, how they will meet their needs, as required by 606 CMR 7.04(13)(a). This includes disability-based behavior.
- Programs must consider whether a behavioral concern is the result of, or an indicator of, a child's disability. Programs must provide a referral to parents for services when the staff feel that an assessment for services would benefit the child [see 606 CMR 7.04 (17)(h)].
- If it is determined that it is in the best interest of the child to find a placement at another program, programs are expected to assist the family in finding a new provider or in connecting with the family's local CCRR for assistance.

Clarifications

- Companion Document is being created to accompany the policy with very specific resources and strategies to support programs and educators. Companion Document also aims to educate EEC workforce around the research and negative effects of using exclusionary discipline.
- Goal of policy is to support educators in their efforts to work with children and families while they are creating systems of support to keep children with behaviors that challenge IN classrooms.

Trauma Informed Care

Expanding the Work of Trauma Informed Learning Opportunities at EEC

Presentation title



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Current Trauma Informed Supports

- Regional Professional Development Centers
- ECMHC Trainings
- Pyramid Model Plus - Umas Donahue Contract
- EEC LMS - Pyramid Model Trauma Informed Care
- **Office of the Child Advocate ***
- **Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma ***

Creating a Culture of Support for Trauma Informed Learning - Next Steps

- Identify the most impactful Trauma Informed Training for EEC workforce
- Increase Access for Trauma Informed Learning for EEC Programs, Educators and Families
- Explore ways to partner and leverage expertise of OCA and Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma and create a pathway for continuous access and opportunities for EEC workforce





Thank You!

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Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary.

— Fred Rogers

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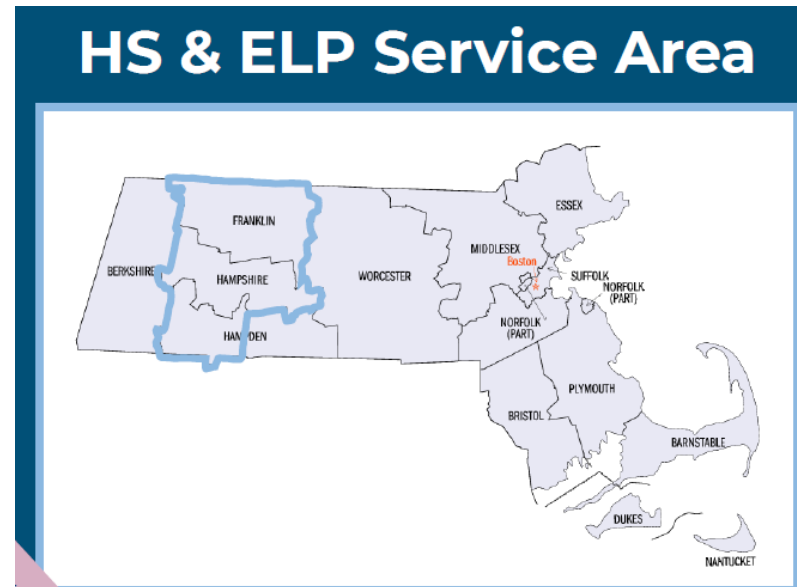
COMMUNITY ACTION HEAD START & EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS



Access ■ Opportunity ■ Community

Community Action's Head Start & Early Learning Programs (HSELP) provides quality early education & care and comprehensive services to expectant parents and children birth to five in Franklin, Hampshire and Western Hampden Counties, MA. We cover over 1500, mostly rural, square miles and serve approximately 600 families each year. Head Start Programs such as ours serve the most low-income families in our communities.

- Part-Day/School-Year Classrooms
- Extended-Day/School year Classrooms
- Home-Based Services
- Full-Day/Full-Year Classrooms and Family Child Care



Comprehensive Services

Family Advocates and Home Visitors work in partnership with families to provide individualized support, goal setting, and connections to community resources

Educators provide a variety of curriculum to support the social-emotional well-being and development of children in their care to support school readiness

Specialists are available to provide information and assistance around health & nutrition, special needs and social emotional support and community referrals

Provide meals and snacks, diapers, and infant formula for children who need them while in care

Provide interesting and meaningful parent training and leadership opportunities

Some of our Trauma - Informed Assumptions

Child and family organizations are a "holding environment" for children and families -how we are with each other has everything to do with how we care for children and families

The developmental process is not linear, and includes regressions, pauses and bursts – we value vulnerability and disorganization – in children, families and ourselves.

Everyone has strengths, and we build on strengths through listening and reflection - reflection builds intentionality

Behavior is communication

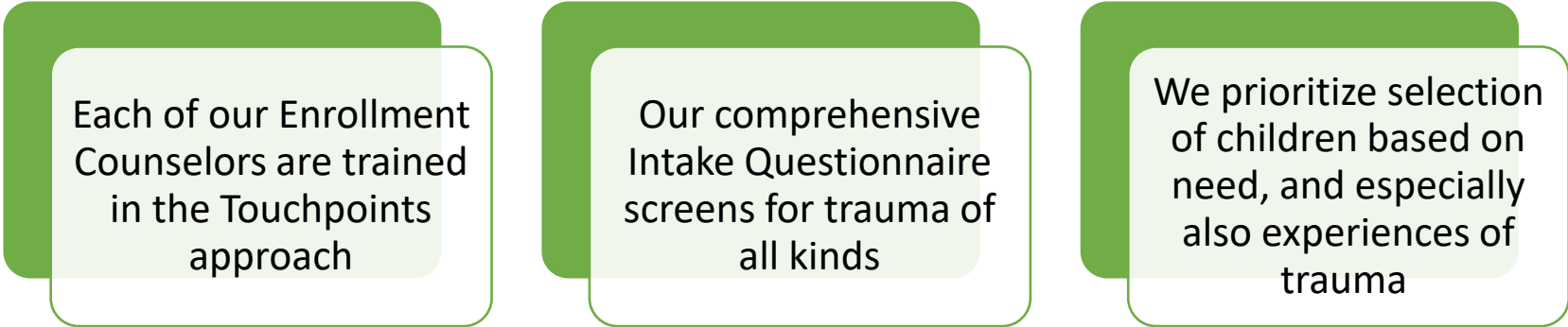
We value curiosity, learning, differences, and intentionally take the perspective of the other

Cultural humility and developing cultural competence – what has been your experience? What would you like me to know? How can I help support *your* goals?



- Since 2016 we have used the Brazelton Touchpoints™ approach, an evidence-based trauma informed way of working with families in support of their relationship with their child, and the child's development. We have on-staff trainers of the approach and are a designated Touchpoints™ site.
- We use the Brazelton Touchpoints™ Parenting Program which is a practical, preventive curriculum designed to meet the needs of families with the goal of supporting positive parent-child relationships. The curriculum consists of a series of parenting modules that early childhood program leaders can facilitate in their program to come alongside parents as they learn about their children and address issues facing their families.

Upon Entry Into Our Program



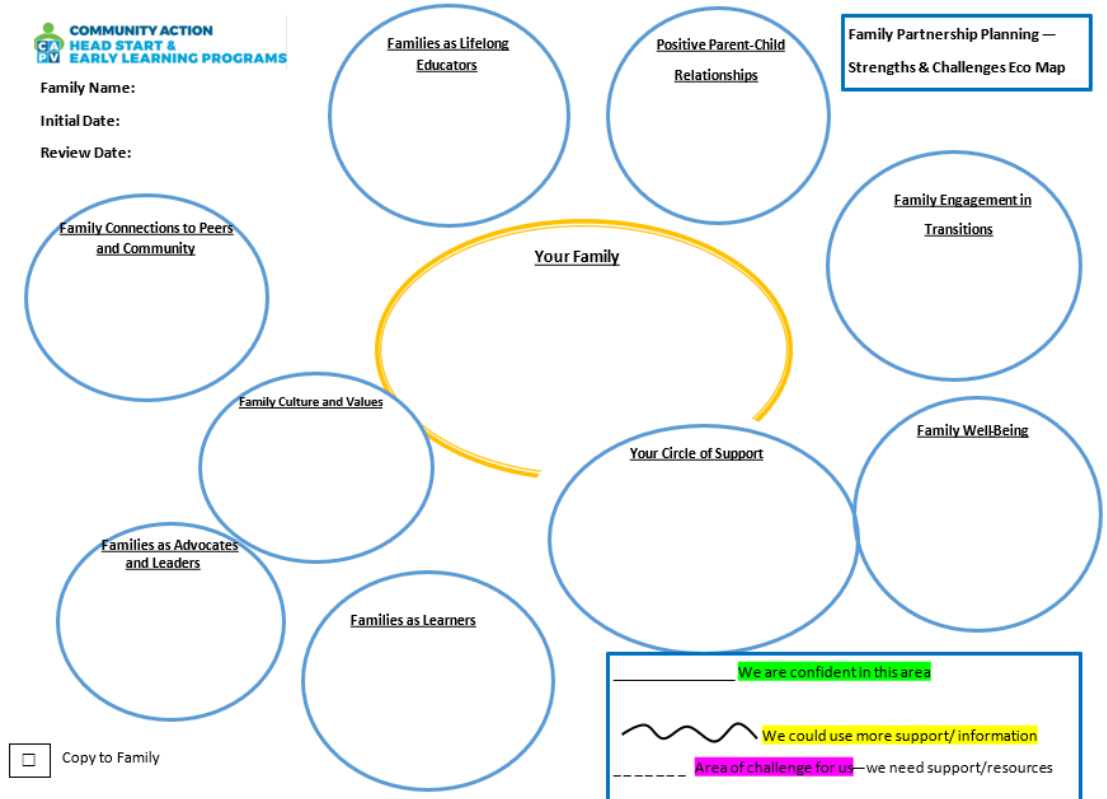
Each of our Enrollment Counselors are trained in the Touchpoints approach

Our comprehensive Intake Questionnaire screens for trauma of all kinds

We prioritize selection of children based on need, and especially also experiences of trauma

Family Goal Setting Process

In fall of 2018 we transitioned from using a needs assessment questionnaire with families to using an ECO map strength-based relational process which strengthened our relationships with families



Case Management Support System

UCM: All Children and Families

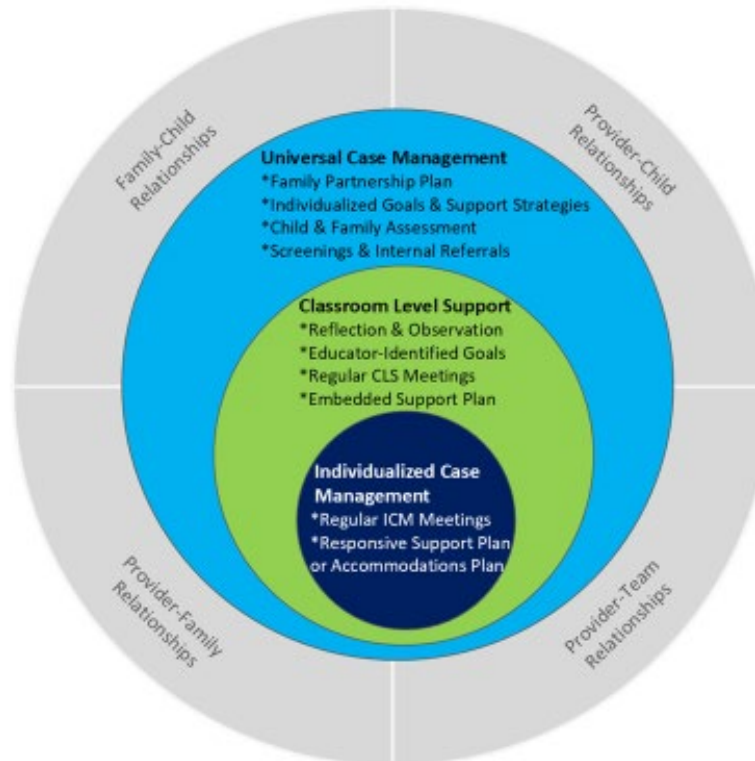
Developmental and social-emotional screenings and internal referrals based on screening results are universally applied to all cases.

CLS: 20-30% of Classrooms

Internal referrals that are based on a concern automatically become classroom level support. CLS can be based on the needs of one child or several, but focus is on whole-classroom level proactive supports.

ICM: 5-10% of Children and Families

Specialists/Coordinator and Site Director collaborate to determine if child requires ICM (external referrals, wrap-around supports for parent-child relationship, individualized plan).



Focus on Reflective Practices

Reflective Supervision and Mentoring

With a trusted other: Step back from the immediate, intense and emotional experiences of hands-on work

Together, take the time to wonder what the experience means for us

Make room for questions, feelings and the developmental process

Take the time to self and co-regulate

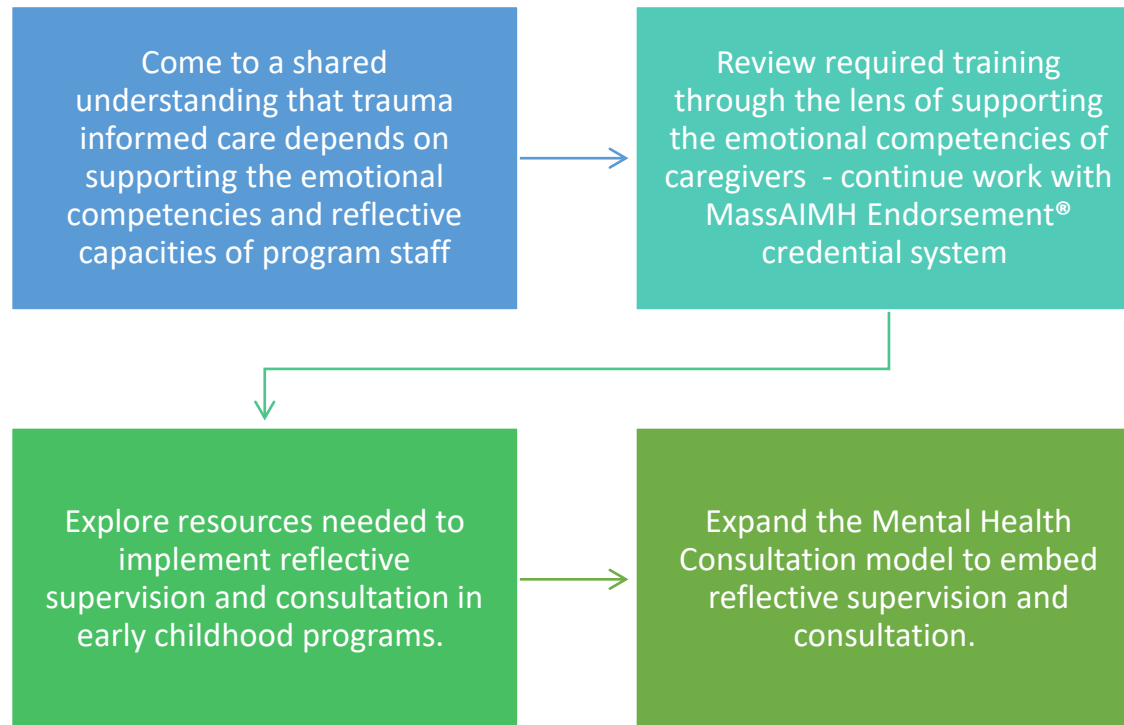
Improve our practice with children and families

Supports in Place to Prevent Suspension and Expulsion

[Head Start prohibits expulsion and suspension of children]

- Trauma Informed care for children, families and staff (Brazelton Touchpoints Approach)
- Comprehensive case management system
- Direct support by program developmental specialists (IECMH Consultants, Disabilities Specialists etc)
- Collaboration with consultant from Kids Included Together (KIT)
- Collaboration with community partners and resources as available
- EEC Flex funding to support individual child to transition
- Practice Based Coach to support educators in their professional development

Recommendations for EEC: supporting Trauma Informed Care



Thank You

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Programs

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Services

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