



Early Childhood Mental & Behavioral Health – Team Overview and STREET Initiative



Mindful Minute

“A child can teach an adult three things: to be happy for no reason, to always be curious and to fight tirelessly for something.”

- Paulo Coelho



Welcome and Agenda

Welcome - Thanks for joining us!

Best quote or comment from a child in your care



Behavioral and Mental Health in Early Education Field
Behavioral Health Team / Supports

STREET Initiative

Future Hopes and Aspirations

Websites for more info

Impact of Behavioral Health & Social Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is an essential part of a child's development. It helps them build positive relationships with their peers, teachers and families. This can have long-term benefits in terms of academic performance as well as social skills and relationships



Self Regulation &
Self Awareness



Enhanced Social Skills

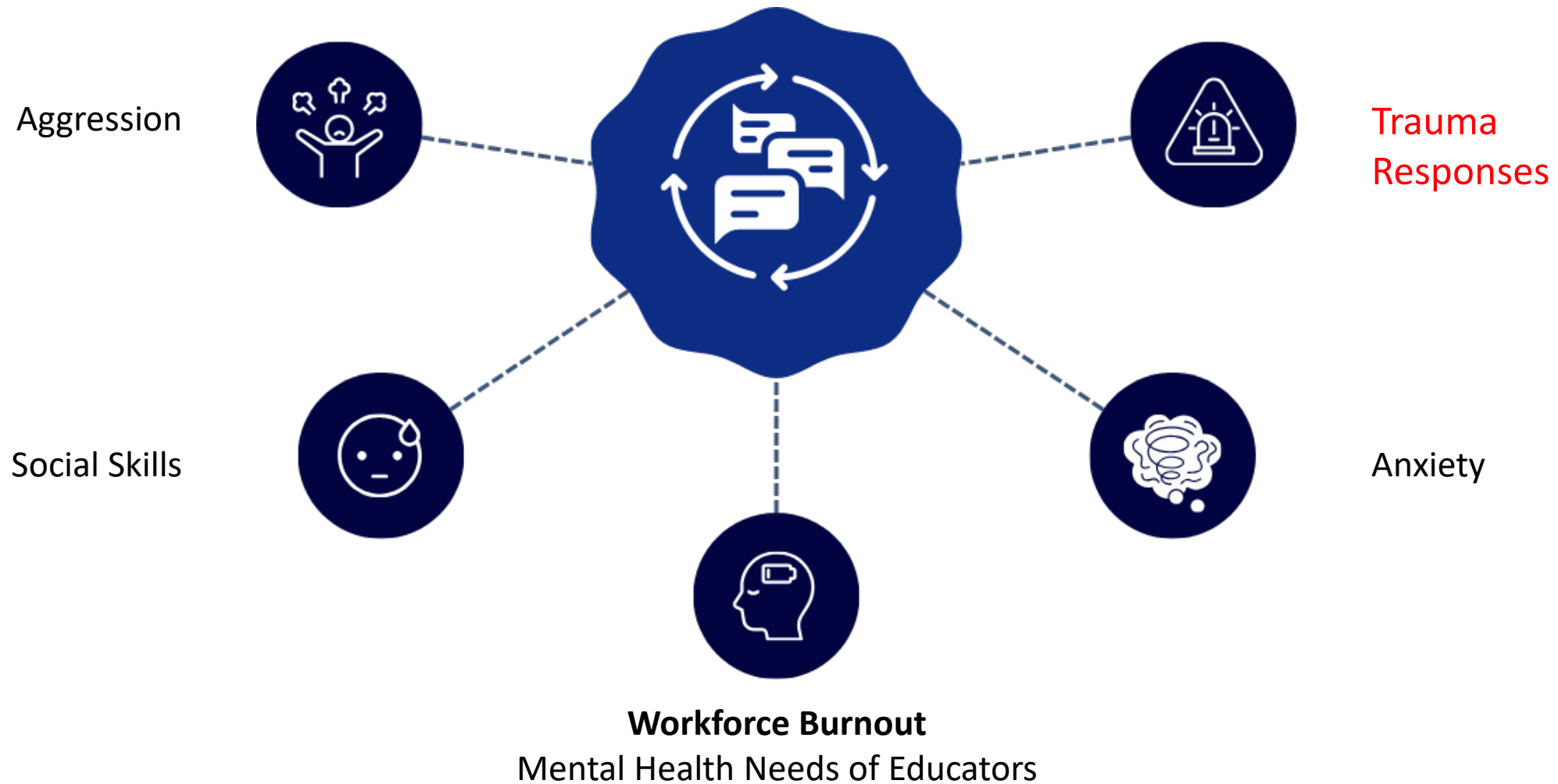


Improved Academic
Performances, Engagement,
Curiosity and Wonder



Positive Long-Term Outcomes &
Relationships

Responding to the Field: Current Challenges



Goals of Mental & Behavioral Health Supports



To help educators build a foundation of effective, research-based practices to support healthy **social emotional learning and development** to prevent behaviors that challenge and dysregulation



To reduce the use of **exclusionary discipline** across the early education mixed delivery system



To provide support and training opportunities to be **trauma informed and responsive**



To support early educator wellness



Meet the Behavioral Health Team



Aimee Smith-Zeoli

*Supervisor and Western
Region*



Alexis Thibodeau

*Western and Central
Region*



Chris Lloyd

*Metro West and
Northeast Region*



Stacey Ware

*Northeast and
Southeast Region*

EEC Mental & Behavioral Health Resources and Support

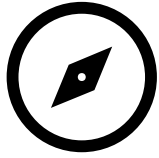


- 1 EEC Behavioral Health Team**
- 2 Early Childhood Mental Health Grant**
- Pyramid Model Supports**
Pyramid Plus Program Sites, Training, Communities of Practice (UMASS Donahue / Pyramid Plus)
- 4 Statewide Professional Development Academy**
- 5 Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative**
Support to communities around inclusion, special education & Pyramid Model

The EEC team collaborates across units to identify and address needs of educators across the Commonwealth. The behavioral health team closely collaborates with the Family Access & Engagement unit, Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) team and grantees, Head Start Collaboration Office, Educator Supports, and the EEC Licensing team.



EEC Behavioral Health Team



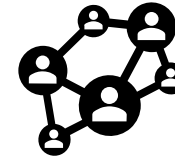
Resources & Technical Support

- Social emotional development
- Positive behavior intervention strategies to de-escalate behaviors that challenge
- Exclusionary Discipline policy consultation



Collaborate & Coordinate Resources

- Support coordination between EEC staff, regional teams, priority population contracted providers
- Continue to develop protocols, frameworks and guidelines to support implementation of support services



Facilitate Referrals to Grantees

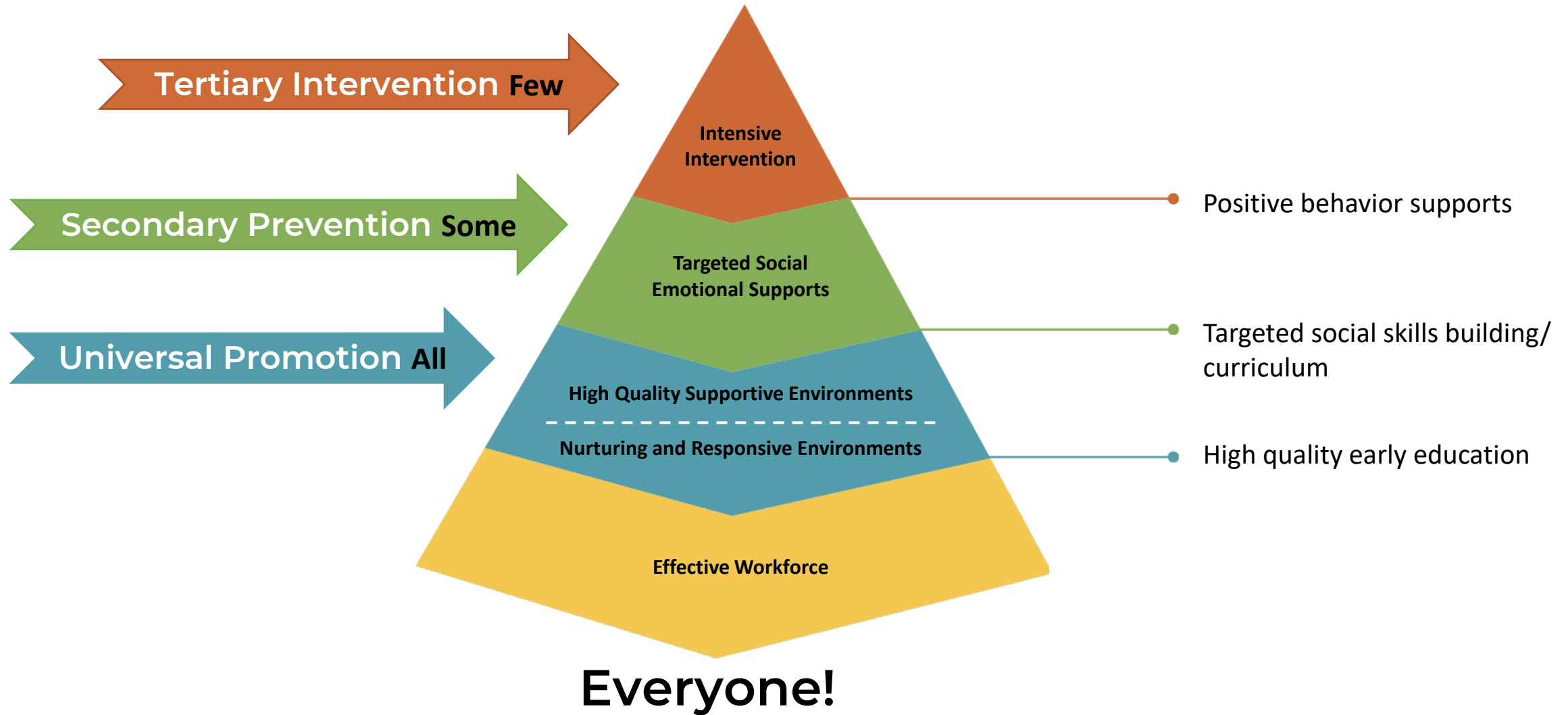
- Referrals to the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) Grantees
- Coordination with the Professional Development Centers (PDC)

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,
 - Create learning environments,
 - Provide targeted social-emotional skills,
 - Support children with challenging behavior.



Who does the Pyramid Model Help?



Pyramid Model Plus



What is Pyramid Plus?

Pyramid Plus offers professionals in the Massachusetts early childhood mixed delivery system multiple points of access to professional development focused on the evidence-based, highly effective strategies of the Pyramid Model:

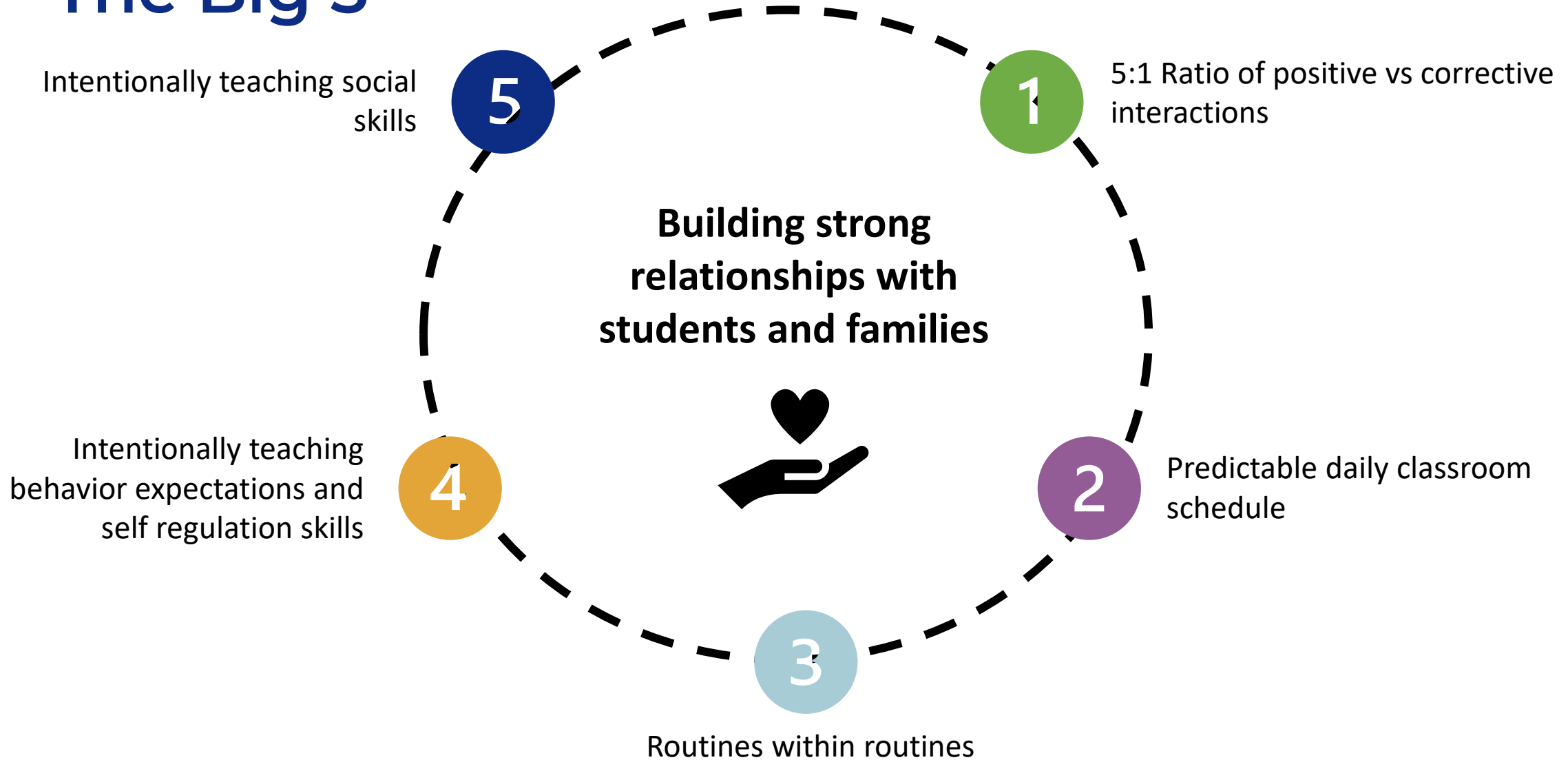
- promoting social emotional development across the age span;
- teaching and supporting social and emotional skills;
- preventing as well as addressing challenging behavior in very young children.

Who is Pyramid Plus?

Pyramid Plus is led by [Connected Beginnings](#), a program of the UMass Amherst Donahue Institute.

Questions? Happy to help! Please email Catherine Wakely at cwakely@donahue.umass.edu

The Big 5





Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grant Supports

- Classroom observations and 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).



To learn more or contact your local support [visit here](#).



Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grantees

GRANTEE	SERVICE AREA
Behavioral Health Network / Collaborative Hampden/Berkshire 413-572-4111 (Matt Matroni) Hamden/Franklin 413-203-9194 (Vanessa Pashkoff)	Western MA /Berkshires
Empower, LGA Rhonda Stollerman 508-808-8044	Canton / Westboro/ Quincy / Foxboro
Community Healthlink - Together for Kids 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	Southeast / Cape and Islands
Walker Inc. Amber Kule 781-292-2143	Boston

New Initiatives for 2025



Inclusion and Support Toolkit

- EEC will be soliciting a vendor to **develop a toolkit** that supports programs to
 - Establish behavioral health supports for children and educators and enhance social emotional learning
 - Develop program policies that reduce that use of exclusionary discipline
- **Supplemental resource guide** for technical assistance to build reflective practice and sustain best practices in social emotional learning
- **Training** for educators, leaders and support partners



Trauma Informed and Responsive Training Opportunities

- Partnership with **the Office of the Child Advocate, Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma**
- Established the **STREET** Initiative (Strategic Trauma Responsive Early Education Training) to implement training series for educators and leaders

Meet the Office of the Child Advocate Team



Maria Mossaides

*Director of the Office of the
Child Advocate*



Audrey Smolkin

*Executive Director,
Center on Child
Wellbeing & Trauma*



Joy Cohen

*Deputy Director,
Center on Child
Wellbeing & Trauma*



Alix Rivière

*Senior Policy & Research
Analyst*

Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) Overview

The Massachusetts OCA is an independent executive branch agency that provides oversight of state services for children. We were established in 2008 to:

- Ensure that children involved with a state agency receive timely, safe, and effective services
- Advise the public and state agencies about how the state can improve services for children and their families
- Examine systemic issues related to service provision and coordination to ensure “each child [has] the opportunity to live a full and productive life”

Center on Child Wellbeing & Trauma (CCWT) Overview

- Established in 2021, became a division of the OCA in 2023
- CCWT supports the work of child-serving agencies and professionals across Massachusetts to be more trauma-informed and responsive by:
 - Providing training and technical assistance
 - Developing sector-specific resources
- Examples of recent statewide initiatives include:
 - Trauma & Racial Equity Empowerment training and technical assistance series (DYS) with representation from 13 child-serving agencies
 - Supporting state agencies serving young parents (DTA, DPH, DCF)
 - Trauma-informed and responsive services for newcomers (EOHLC, EOHHS, EEC)

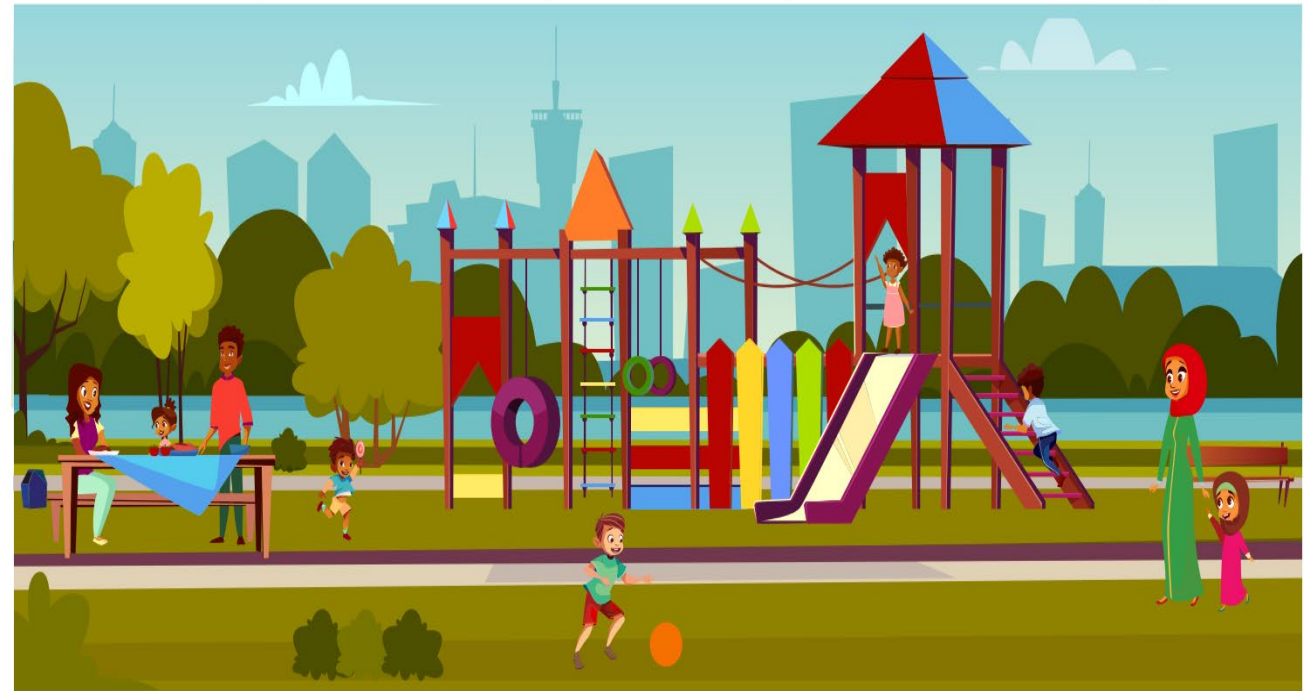
STREET Initiative – Partnership with OCA

Early education and care settings that apply **trauma-responsive knowledge and tools** promote child well-being, build resilience, and foster a healthy workforce.

EEC in collaboration with the OCA's Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma is offering a range of opportunities for **learning** the information and **tools** needed to create a **positive** and **resilient** early education setting and system.

Join us on the **STREET** to child wellbeing!

Strategic Trauma Responsive Early Education Training



Our Trauma-Informed and Responsive Framework



STREET Initiative Training Opportunities



Strong Start Learning Management System (LMS) Trauma and Resilience Training
For all providers



EEC Regional Staff TIR Training and Communities of Practice
For all EEC regional staff (licensors, investigators, support staff)



Core Champions Train-the-Trainer Program: Deeper Dives in Trauma and Resilience
For selected participants



Regional Deeper Dives in Trauma and Resilience Early Childhood Educator Training
For all providers



EEC Contracted Provider Training
Initial planning underway



Strong Start Learning Management System (LMS) Trauma and Resilience Training

For all providers

- Early education professionals can use the LMS to complete **learning modules** on creating trauma-responsive and resilience-building early education and care settings
- Each module focuses on understanding the **Guiding Principles** to be trauma responsive in early education and care settings
 - Safety
 - Transparency and Trust
 - Empowerment, Voice and Choice
 - Equity, Anti Bias and Cultural Affirmation
 - Healthy Relationships and Interactions



Outreach Flyer for the TIR Training



Click here to view the Strong Start Learning Management System (LMS) Trauma and Resilience Trainings in your preferred language:

[Click here for ENGLISH](#)

[Click here for PORTUGUESE](#)

[Click here for SPANISH](#)

[Click here for SIMPLIFIED CHINESE](#)

Through a collaboration between the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and the Office of the Child Advocate's Center on Wellbeing and Trauma six learning modules on creating trauma-responsive and resilience-building early education and care settings have been developed.



Using your smartphone?
Scan the QR code to access the course.



Access the flyer at:
mass.gov/doc/tir-lms-flyerenglish/download



EEC Regional Office TIR Training and Communities of Practice

For EEC regional staff

- This **all-day in-person** training will provide EEC regional staff with the knowledge and tools to understand how trauma shapes behavior
- Participants will be able to **apply this learning** to existing regulatory framework
- Following this in-person day, **three virtual communities of practice** will be offered to provide additional information and ongoing technical assistance





Core Champions Train-the-Trainer Program: Deeper Dives in Trauma and Resilience

For selected participants

- A train-the-trainer series will prepare selected applicants to train early childhood educators to extend their trauma-informed and responsive learning further
- Core champion trainers will leave with materials to help support training for providers in their region
- Registration for this train-the-trainer series will be posted to EEC's website in January with trainings beginning in February





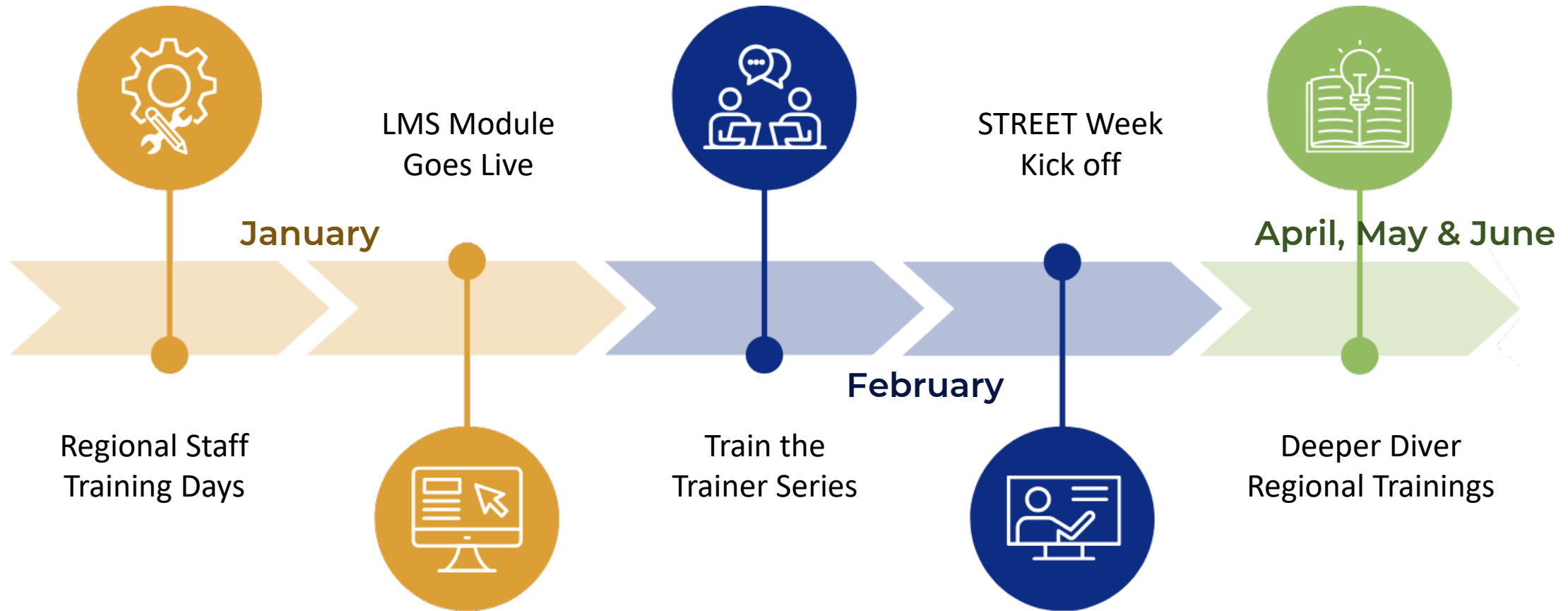
Deeper Dives in Trauma and Resilience Early Childhood Educator Training (Regional Training)

For all providers

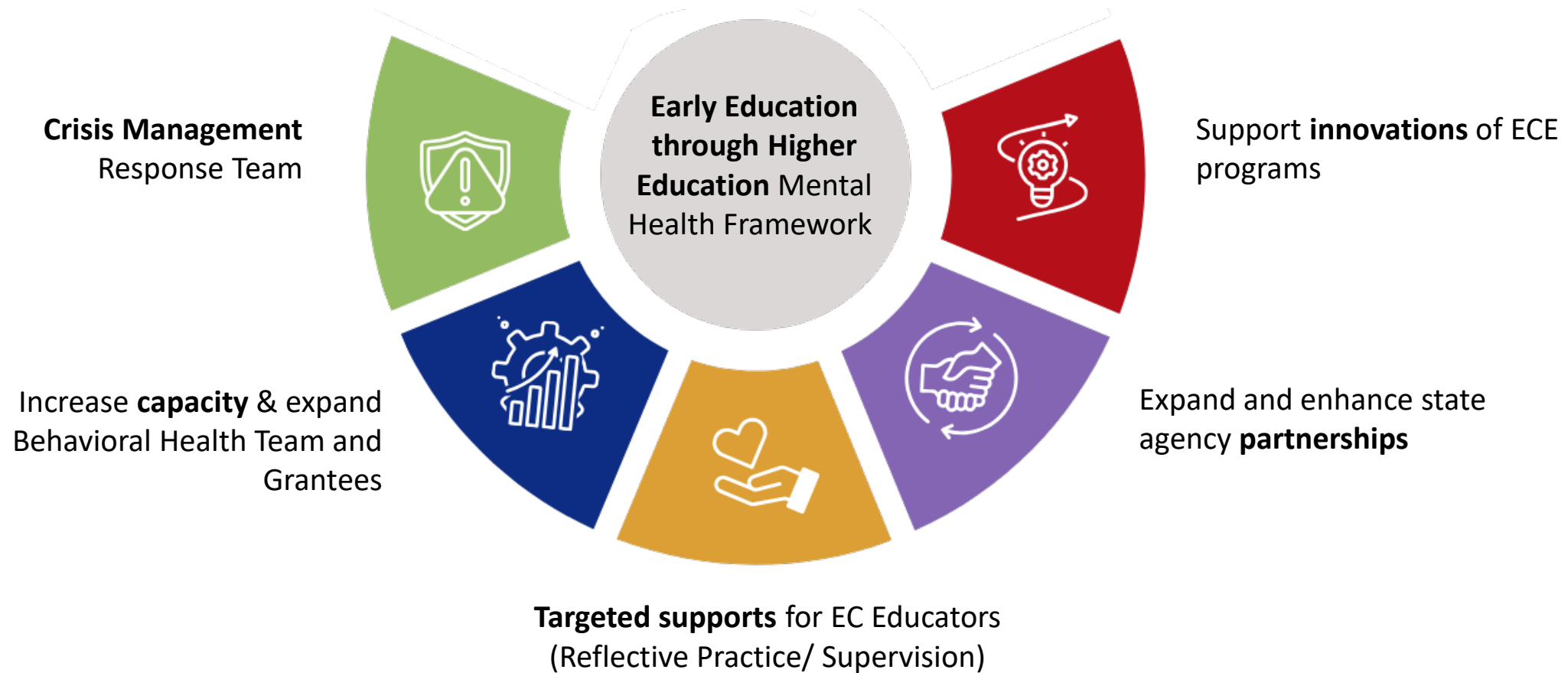
- Deeper Dives in Trauma and Resilience training will be offered to **early education professionals** who have completed the initial trainings in the Strong Start LMS
- These trainings will provide participants with **extended learning opportunities around the TIR Guiding Principles, real-world application, and practical strategies**



STREET Opportunities



Ongoing Efforts and Aspirations



For More Information

- NEW! EEC developed an **all-in-one webpage** for early childhood behavioral, mental health & special education resources:
<https://www.mass.gov/early-childhood-resources>
 - Training opportunities and registration links
 - Resource guides on family wellbeing, special education, educator materials
 - Details on events and contact information
- Center on Child Wellbeing & Trauma website:
<https://childwellbeingandtrauma.org/>
 - Facts about childhood trauma
 - Trauma-responsive strategies
 - Toolkits and videos
 - Training opportunities

Thank you!

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