

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children

Maryland's
Early Childhood
Mental Health
Project





Pilot

- In 2000, a three year pilot project for children, birth to five years, began in Baltimore City and in five counties on the upper eastern shore of Maryland



Project Goals

- Identify and work proactively with children who may have developmental, social, emotional, behavioral, or physical concerns
- Provide prevention and intervention services to children and families before intensive therapy is needed
- Help young children acquire social and emotional skills necessary to enter school ready to succeed
- Help children stay in their current child care placement
- Refer children and families in need of mental health services to appropriate support programs



Results of Pilot

- Nearly 90% of children at risk for expulsion from child care were maintained in their placement
- 85% of the cases could be handled through behavior modification and did not need to be referred for mental health services
- Roughly 75% of all children served had improved social skills
- Reductions were seen in the highest rates of problem behaviors
- Changes in teachers' behaviors and improvements in the classroom environment were seen in child care programs that received consultation services



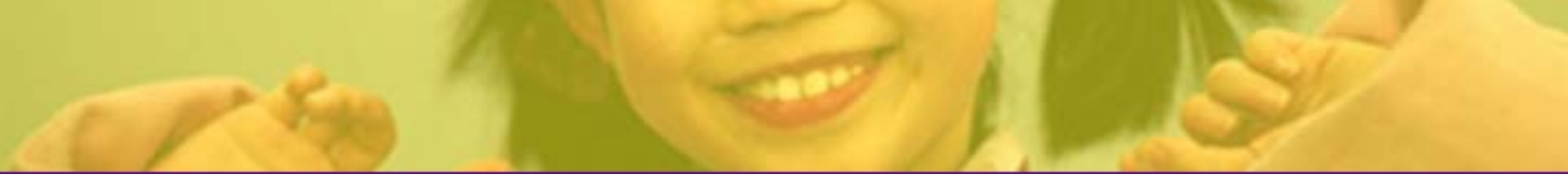
Statewide Implementation

- Due to the success of the pilot sites, funding was sought and received to expand the project statewide
- An initial appropriation of \$1.8 million has been allocated to expand the services



Who is eligible?

- Individual children and parents
- Child care centers
- Family child care providers



Provision of Services

Services are provided through a collaboration of child and family service providers, including:

- Child care resource and referral centers
- Child and family services agencies
- Head Start
- Infant and Toddler Programs
- Judy Centers
- Local Management Boards
- Public School Systems, and
- Other child focused public and private agencies



Access to Services

- A parent, provider or service agency contacts their local child care agency
- An interventionist gathers information from the parents, providers and child observation
- The agency staff identifies the needs and proposes a course of action
- Children and families are linked with other community support systems as needed



Services

- Consultation
- Intervention strategies
- On-site observation
- Mentoring
- Training for parents and caregivers
- Referral to more intensive services, if needed



For Additional Information

Contact:

Maryland State Department of Education
Office of Child Care - Program Development Branch

Audrey Smith, Program Manager

200 West Baltimore Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

410-767-7128

Audrey.smith@msde.state.md.us