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.

Evaluation Results, Deborah F. Perry, Ph.D
Georgetown University, Washington, DC.
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:

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