

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Supports

Beth Jones, MSW, IECMH-E®

October 4, 2024



Alabama Department
of Mental Health
connecting mind and wellness



Learning Objectives

Before we begin, let's look at what we already know.

1

Familiarize with
Infant and Early
Childhood Mental
Health

2

Explore the supports
available to young
children & families

3

Understand PPEER
grant and future
opportunities

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health





Early Childhood Is A Critical Time for Brain Development

Brain development starts at conception into adulthood

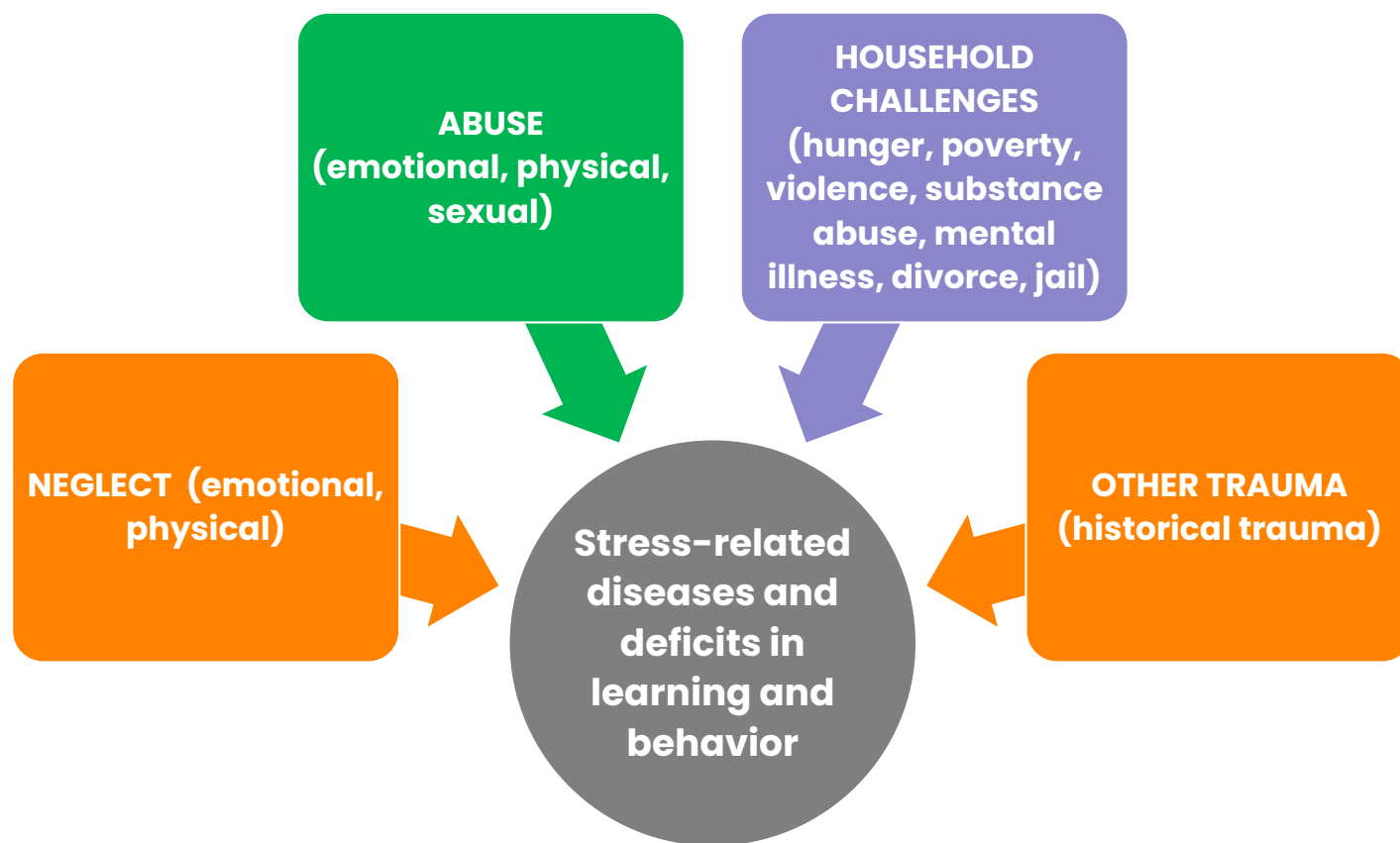
Brains are most flexible or "plastic" in the first few years

Early experiences shape the foundation for learning, health and behavior later on

Toxic stress is damaging to brain development and can lead to long-term problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health



Adverse Childhood Experiences Can Have Lasting Impacts



Family Stress Can Affect Young Children

Some parents struggle with juggling multiple responsibilities, affording basic needs, and relying on public transportation

Dealing with these stresses can make it harder for parents, family members and communities to focus on children's social and emotional needs

Children pick up on stress, which affects behavior if they don't know how to cope with stress



Early Experiences Can Influence How Children Learn

x 3.5

Preschool Expulsion to K-12
Expulsion

x 10

Drop Out, Academic Failure,
Negative Attitude Toward
School

x 8

Incarceration Likelihood



All Behavior Has Meaning



Supports Available to Families



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

**Promote
Partner
Equip
Help**



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

EARLY INTERVENTION

Part C Early Intervention eligible children, families & the EI providers who serve them have access to support from our team of Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

FIRST CLASS PRE-K

The Alabama Department of Mental Health's team of Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants provide support to First Class Pre K classrooms statewide.



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

PEDIATRIC PRIMARY CARE PRACTICES

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is available in a select number of Pediatric Primary Care Practices enrolled in the HRSA funded PATHS program.



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

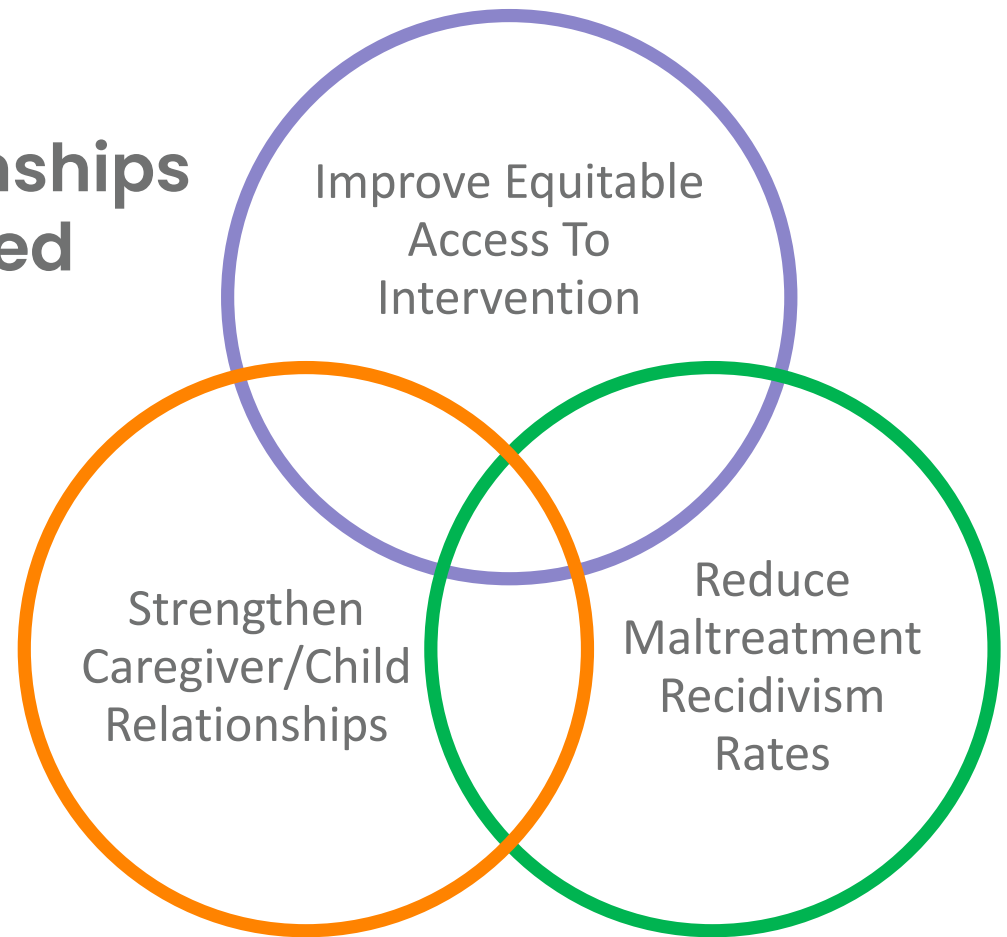


OTHER SETTINGS

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is available in other settings as well. Reach out for more information!

Promoting Positive Early Experiences and Relationships in Alabama: A Team Based Approach (PPEER)

PPEER in Alabama seeks to create and sustain a culturally sensitive system of mental health care that promotes positive early experiences through collaborative partnerships, empowering families, and building capacity across communities.



Improve Equitable Access to Intervention

Focus Population:

- Children, ages birth to 12 years old
- At risk for or currently engaged with Child Protective Services
- In need of mental health support across the promotion, prevention, and treatment continuum

1

Establish Local Children's Mental Health Teams (CMHT)

Interdisciplinary teams provide insight and guidance on supporting children and families

2

Community Stakeholders Training & Engagement

Pediatricians, Family Court and other child/family serving professionals will have training opportunities

3

Train CMHTs on Research Supported Practices

Offerings may include:

- Child Parent Psychotherapy
- Parent Child Interaction Therapy
- Facilitating Attuned Interactions
- DC:0-5
- The Growing Brain
- Circle of Security



Strengthen Caregiver/Child Relationships

Focus Areas for Years 1-2:

Jackson County
Jefferson County
Mobile County

1

Circle of Security Training

Parent leaders in the focus area will be trained in Circle of Security

2

Parent/Caregiver Trainings

Caregiver trainings will be offered in Strengthening Families, Protective Factors and Parent Leadership

3

Screening for Children/Families

New children/families identified by Family Court and/or DHR will receive evidence-based screening by CMHT to identify need for referrals

4

Referrals to Intervention Services

Based on screening results, referrals and connections to appropriate intervention services will be made



Reduce Maltreatment Recidivism Rates

Opportunities to Engage With PPEER:

There are multiple ways to engage with the work of PPEER. Reach out to learn more.

Beth Jones, PPEER Project Director

beth.jones@mh.alabama.gov

334-430-2576



This project was supported by Grant Number 6H79/SM086420 from SAMHSA. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of SAMHSA.

1

Screening for Children/Families

New children/families identified by Family Court and/or DHR will receive evidence-based screening by CMHT to identify need for referrals

2

Referrals to Intervention Services

Based on screening results, referrals and connections to appropriate intervention services will be made

3

Data Collection & Evaluation

Will allow for objective measurement of the impact being made by PPEER efforts

4

Strategic Partnerships

Community partners involvement in infrastructure building and implementation allow for sustainable efforts that will impact communities for years to come.

Thank you for all that you do to ensure a strong and healthy future for young children and families.

Beth Jones, MSW, IECMH-E®
PPEER Project Director
beth.jones@mh.alabama.gov
334-430-2576

