



Howard Center Early Childhood Program. April 4, 2018

- Who I am: Howard Center ECFMH program for the past 15 years since moving to Vermont. I have been a clinical social worker for the past 36 years, supporting children, adults and families in in and out- patient mental health settings.
- Impact of ACES across ages, generations. How do we continue to address and support healing and resilience, as well as focus on preventative measures which positively impact children, families and larger communities.
- Today I would like to present focusing on two areas of our work which address ACEs, not only as a response but also in a pro-active manner
- First, our program has focused on providing consultation to childcare programs across Chittenden County.
- In 2017 we received 126 referrals for ECFMH services.
- 30% were directly from childcare providers and directors
- Another 20% were received from parents who were concerned about a child's behaviors in their childcare setting.
- From these almost 60 children, 25 were at risk of losing their childcare placement and also may have had reduced schedules in the program.
- Over the past 10 + years our therapeutic childcare programs, with advanced training and support around the social and emotional needs of children, with specific focus on looking at some children through a trauma lens, also reported increased challenges in the classroom.
- These experiences aided our program in thinking about how to better support children and childcare settings, not only as individual crises arose, but how to promote systemic changes which would promote programming which was therapeutic and preventative.
- Our program has received training and has been trained in the Attachment, Regulation and Competency model (ARC) and consultants are trained in Early Multi-Tiered System of Support (EMTSS)
- Research acknowledges the importance of the first 5 years or life for the developing brain. They learn life skills which will carry them through the rest of their lives.



- Recent research all describes the growing rate of expulsion from childcare programs for children age 3 to 5.
- Recent studies also describe the significant relationship between pre-school expulsion and future involvement in the adult criminal justice system.
- We know that children need to feel loved by and cared for by care-givers in order to support healthy development.
- We focus on enhancing the capacity of childcare staff by observing kids in their caring giving environment and designing interventions that involve changes in the behaviors of childcare providers .
- These interventions mirror and support work being done with parents/guardians in the home. Consistency is so important for kids.
- This collaboration also allows for strengthening of the relationship between home and childcare and can create a new, healthy and strong community for families who have often felt disempowered or isolated.
- A story around consultation: challenges; feelings; changes.
- The second area of focus is identified in the recent BBF Paper on the State of Childhood in Vermont, with significant focus on the impact of parental opiate use/abuse on young children.
- Focusing on enhancing and integrating the work of Substance Use treatment programs and ECFMH.
- Over past year and ½ requested and received UVM MC grant to provide more integrated support to parents receiving services through the Chittenden Clinic and their young children.
- Weekly group for parents with young children focused on supporting development of their parenting skills, within the context of their substance use recovery program. Concurrently a therapeutic childcare playgroup was run for their young children.
- Have had 2 rounds of this, with 2 more in the coming year.
- Continued development of strategies to support these families in ways that are easily accessed by families and support healing and also the potential for changing the trajectories of these kids and subsequent generations.
- Both the work with families impacted by substance abuse and our childcare collaborations support a multi-generational approach which supports all caregivers for a child. This enhances the worlds of adults and kids and has the potential to affect long term change and to create communities which are self-healing.



- The Howard Centre ECFMH program is further strengthened by being part of a mental health designated agency in Chittenden County with access to psychiatry, crisis services, and other individual and family services which support this healthy development.
- Why all of this matters to decrease the impact and presence of ACES. A personal thought.

Submitted by,

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