



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
**Early Childhood
Education**

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IECMH State Coordinator**



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Programs



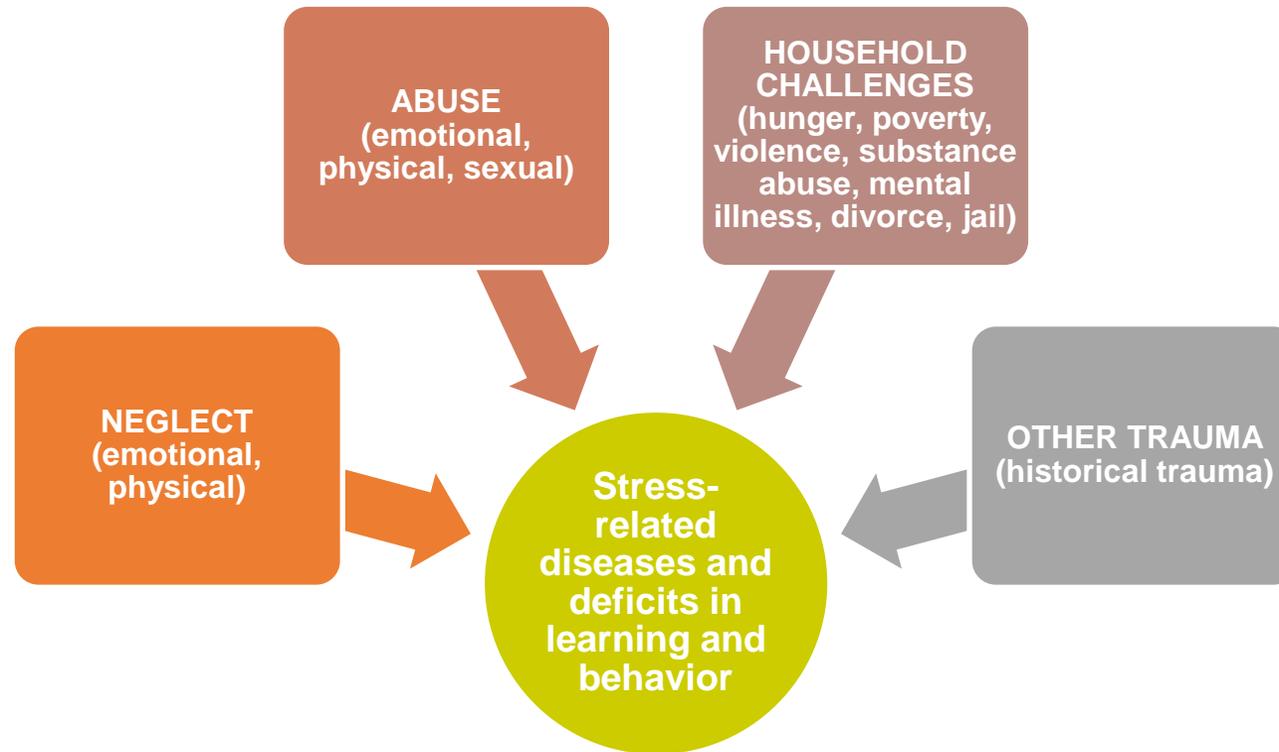
Acknowledgements

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Programs are made possible by the funding and administration of many partners:

- The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education
- The Alabama Department of Mental Health
- The Alabama Department of Human Resources
- The Alabama Partnership for Children
- Community Action Partnership of North Alabama



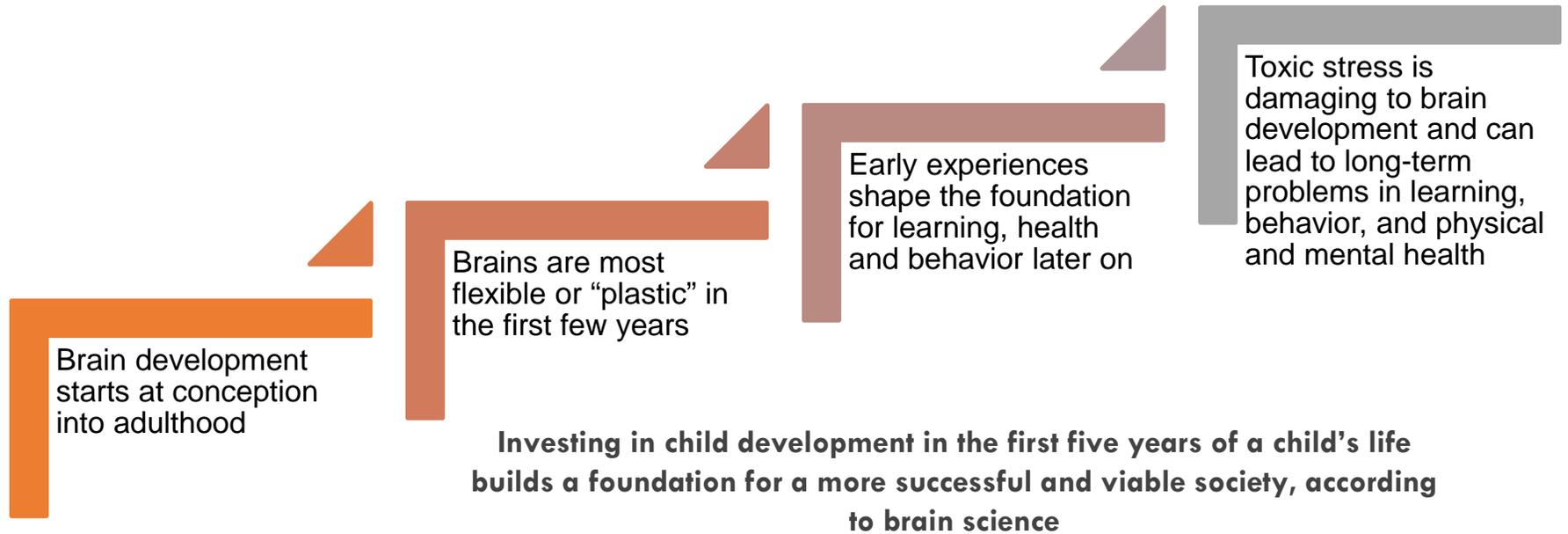
Adverse Childhood Experiences Can Impact Health Later On



Intervening early on is critical for achieving the best outcomes

Early Childhood is a Critical Time for Brain Development

Children’s brains grow by processing everything and everyone around them. That’s why environment and relationships matter so much to their development.



Epigenetics is an emerging area of scientific research that shows how environmental influences—children's experiences—actually affect the expression of their genes. ...This collection of chemical marks is known as the “epigenome.” The different experiences children have rearrange those chemical marks.



Families' Stress Can Affect Infants and Young Children Too



Our Youngest Might Lack the Words to Express Their Needs

Some infants and young children lack the words to express when they feel overwhelmed

Children who are labeled as defiant, too quiet, “naughty,” or overly clingy are telling us, through their behaviors, that they need our help

It can be hard to know the best way to respond when they are having a hard time



Caregivers Need Tools and Support for Our Little Ones

Childcare providers, EI and other Home Visitors, preschool teachers, families and communities could use more training and support to address infants and young children's social and emotional needs. Yet for preschool teachers, for example, research shows that:

Only 1 in 5

Preschool teachers have received specific training on facilitating children's social and emotional growth in the past year



Only 34%

Teachers believe they have the necessary skills to meet their students' mental health needs



Only 23%

Preschool programs have onsite or scheduled visits from mental health professionals





A New Standard of Care for Infants and Young Children

Infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) consultants help caregivers support healthy growth and development in our young children

It's not about “fixing” children or providing therapy. Mental health consultants:

- Promote strong relationships and a supportive environment for caregivers, such as EI and Home Visitors, childcare professionals, along with families and communities
- Partner with parents and caregivers to understand what babies and young children are telling us with their behaviors, and co-create solutions
- Equip caregivers with the tools and insights to develop healthy emotional and social behaviors in infants and young children
- Help our children feel safe, supported and valued

DEFINITION OF INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is a problem-solving and capacity-building intervention implemented within a collaborative relationship between a professional consultant with a mental health expertise and one or more individuals with other areas of expertise or parenting responsibilities.

It functions along the
promotion – prevention – intervention continuum.



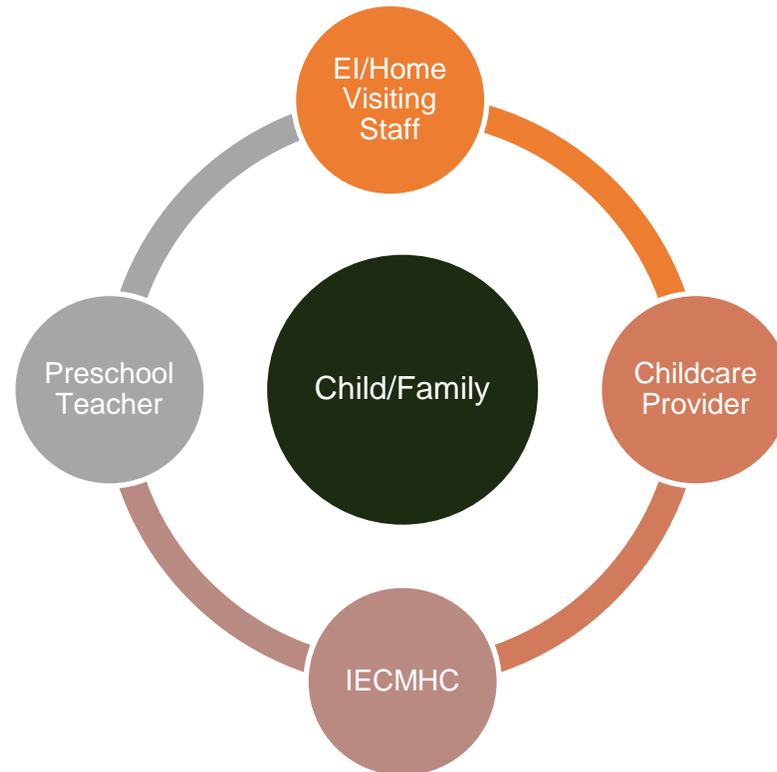
Consultant Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

- ❖ Child development theory and effective practices
- ❖ Developmental disabilities and early intervention/special education practices
- ❖ Effective communication and relationship building
- ❖ Adherence to ethical standards and professionalism
- ❖ Trauma-informed practice
- ❖ Reflective practice

Mental Health Consultants Support Providers and Families

- Provide support early on – before preschool – to help new parents and caregivers understand babies' needs and recognize that all relationships in a child's life matters
- Promote trusting, respectful relationships with providers, families and communities to help children at home, in preschool, and in other childcare settings
- Understand how culture (e.g., beliefs, values, attitudes, biases, and experiences), equity, and environment shape relationships and behaviors, and influence settings and communities in important and meaningful ways

Everyone brings their wisdom to the circle and learns from one another



IECMHC Services are Having a Real Impact

Positive Outcomes

Providers who partner with IECMHC are more likely to implement positive strategies and less likely to leave their fields

Parents and caregivers involved with these services miss less work and report lower levels of stress

Nearly **90%** of home visitors with IECMHC support are more knowledgeable about children's emotional and behavioral needs and follow-up services available for behavioral issues

Some studies have shown that expulsions are reduced by **47%** when preschoolers are given access to mental health services

Research shows that young children who are good at sharing, cooperating, and helping others are more likely to do well at school and go on to get jobs than children without these skills

Every dollar invested in early childhood development saves more than **\$8.00** down the road

To find out more about IECMHC in
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Thank You

