Early Identification and Intervention

GOAL: To increase the effectiveness and responsiveness of child and family serving systems to provide developmental and behavioral screening, care coordination and early intervention services.

BACKGROUND

We have a critical window of time – prenatal to age 5 – to build the foundations every child needs to prepare for success in school and life. Research shows it is during this time that a child’s brain develops most rapidly. In fact, 90 percent of their brain is developed by age 5.

It is crucial during these years to determine if a child’s development is on track and to address any concerns as early as possible to have the greatest impact. Early identification, which involves a combination of routine surveillance and screenings, greatly increases the likelihood that a young child with or at risk for developmental and behavioral delays will be identified and referred to prevention and early intervention services. Furthermore, one in four children under 5 years old are at risk for developmental and behavioral delays and would benefit from early intervention services and supports.

Navigating these systems, however, is difficult and complex for many families. For instance, families often encounter challenges accessing timely screenings and early intervention services because of a lack of system-level coordination, complex eligibility and referral processes and obstacles to data sharing, among other barriers. Breaking down these barriers is essential in helping families to navigate within and between programs, services and systems that support children and families.

OUR PLAN

First 5 LA is focused on strengthening the coordination between child and family serving systems and assisting families access timely screenings and early intervention services needed for their child’s healthy development through a variety of approaches. A few examples include:

• **Partnerships for Improved Systems:**
  - First Connections – Pilots innovative approaches for community-based providers to embed developmental screening and strengthen referral processes within their practices to better identify children with or at-risk for developmental delays and connect children and families to culturally and linguistically appropriate early intervention services and supports as early as possible.
  - Help Me Grow-Los Angeles (HMG-LA) – HMG is a national effort that promotes local cross-sector collaboration to bolster early identification of developmental and behavioral delays. HMG-LA will coordinate existing systems that serve children to implement and strengthen early identification and link children and their families to appropriate intervention services and supports. The Promoting Children’s Optimal Development recommendation report from HMG-LA planning members guides and informs the next phase of planning for HMG-LA. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is partnering with First 5 LA to launch, test and refine core components (see diagram at right). Pilots will be held with L.A. Care Health Plan and within select demonstration communities for a phased, data-driven rollout of HMG-LA.
  - Public Policy and Advocacy: Develop a cohesive advocacy strategy to educate policymakers on state and federal screening requirements; and support state and federal policy to strengthen language on screening services (e.g., Assembly Bill 11 related to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program).

JOIN US

For the work to succeed, sufficient will and commitment must be leveraged across systems, agencies and communities.

- **OUR PARTNERS**
  - AltaMed Health Services
  - American Academy of Pediatrics - Chapter 2
  - Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center
  - Foothill Family Services
  - L.A. Care Health Plan
  - Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
  - Northeast Valley Health Corporation
  - South Central Los Angeles Regional Center
  - Westside Children’s Center
  - Children’s Hospital Los Angeles

- **JOIN US**
  - Tell us how your agency is providing early identification, care coordination and/or early intervention services.
  - Inquire about becoming a collaborative or supporting agency in a demonstration community to help test and refine strategies to strengthen early identification and intervention services for young children in Los Angeles County.
  - Tell us how your agency is integrating a trauma and resiliency-informed approach and early identification and intervention efforts.