



**TASK FORCE ON THE MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF  
YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**Thursday, February 9, 2012**

**North Carolina Institute of Medicine, Morrisville**

**10:00am – 3:00 pm**

**Meeting Summary**

**ATTENDEES**

*Members:* Marian Earls (co-chair), Beth Melcher (co-chair), Rosie Allen, Patti Beardsley, Karen Appleyard Carmody, Deborah Cassidy, John Ellis, Catharine Goldsmith, Michelle Hughes, Nena Lekwauwa, Toby McCoy, Judy McKay, Robert Murphy, Tim Murry, William Purcell, Kevin Ryan, Marla Satterfield, Terri Shelton

*Steering Committee and NCIOM Staff:* Kimberly Alexander-Bratcher, Thalia Fuller, Melissa Johnson, Marcia Mandel, Emily McClure, Adele Spitz-Roth, Anne Williams, Berkeley Yorkery

*Other Interested people:* Gary Ander, Anne Bryan, Cynthia Ross, Sharon Schiro, Claudia Zundel,

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

*Marian F. Earls, MD, FAAP*  
*Medical Director*  
*Guilford Child Health, Inc.*  
*Co-Chair*

**UPDATE ON NORTH CAROLINA'S RACE TO THE TOP: EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE GRANT**

*Anne Bryan*  
*Senior Policy Advisor on Early Childhood*  
*Office of the Governor*

Ms. Bryan summarized the Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge (ELC) grant program and North Carolina's response. North Carolina was notified on December 16, 2011 that it was selected to receive a \$70 million grant from 2012-2015. The purpose of the ELC grant is to build a coordinated statewide system of early learning and development programs that ensures that all children have the support they need to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Ms. Bryan outlined North Carolina's implementation plan, which is being coordinated by the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). She highlighted the potential to build on elements already in place such as Smart Start, the star rating system for childcare centers, and pediatric developmental screening to create a transformative and comprehensive system.

A copy of Ms. Bryan's presentation can be found here: [The Early Learning Challenge in North Carolina](#).

*Selected Questions and Comments:*

- Q: What evaluation tools will be used to demonstrate that the funds spent make a difference and the results could be expanded across the state?  
A: In addition to national evaluation of the programs, \$1 million of the grant funding is set aside for North Carolina evaluation, which will be structured and prioritized over the next few months. Outcome measures have been identified for each project.
- Q: What particular evidence-based family strengthening strategies will be used in the transformation zone?  
A: Specific strategies have not yet been selected. A number of potential evidence-based strategies were cited in the application; however, county stakeholders will be involved in the selection of particular strategies based on local community needs.
- Q: What is the purpose of Early Learning Standards, who do they apply to, and how are they used?  
A: The new Early Learning Standards combines foundations and infant/toddler standards into one document with a strong emphasis on children's social and emotional development. The standards are intended to be used as guidelines for infant/toddler development and to help teachers determine the focus in their curriculum. The guidelines are not intended to be used to assess or evaluate children.

#### FINANCING: COLORADO'S STRATEGIES FOR FINANCING A COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

*Claudia Zundel*

*Manager*

*Early Childhood Mental Health Programs*

*Division of Behavioral Health*

*Colorado Department of Human Services*

Ms. Zundel summarized the key strategies used to help finance early childhood mental health programs in Colorado. The general approach Ms. Zundel described was to focus on comprehensive children's health and work with partners and stakeholders to incorporate mental health. In particular, they worked to incorporate mental health into children's health initiatives already funded by partnering agencies. Ms. Zundel also strongly emphasized the importance of state level data collection. Colorado found Colorado-specific data helpful when seeking funding because they were able not only to evaluate pilot projects, but also demonstrate that early childhood mental health is an issue Colorado parents are concerned about.

Ms. Zundel's presentation can be found here: [Colorado And Early Childhood Mental Health](#).

#### *Selected Questions and Comments:*

- Q: Who pays for prevention services such as Nurse-Family Partnerships, or the Incredible Years?  
A: Generally, the communities select the funding source that is the most reasonable for them. Some non-profit organizations such as the Incredible Years have helped communities be very creative about finding funding. Nurse-Family Partnership is included in Colorado Medicaid because of the tobacco settlement.

#### INTRODUCTION TO FRAMING AND FRAMING EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

*Berkeley Yorkery*

*Project Manager*

*North Carolina Institute of Medicine*

Ms. Yorkery introduced Framing and discussed its importance for promoting greater understanding of early childhood mental health. Frames are organizing principles that trigger internal concepts and values to help individuals interpret new information. Successful framing elicits the desired response by presenting new information in a particular format that triggers the appropriate internal frame, or values. Ms. Yorkery discussed how framing can be used to explain the fundamental principles of young child mental health in terms the public understands, and in a way that elicits a social (rather than individual) response.

Ms. Yorkery presented the simplifying model “Levelness” for early childhood mental health, which was easily understood in testing. Levelness is a metaphor used to simplify the explanation of young child mental health, its importance, multiple determinants, long-term impact, and that mental health can be influenced, by comparing it to the levelness of a table. The levelness model is intended to be used for the issue of children’s mental health within the broader, reframed context of child development.

Ms. Yorkery’s presentations can be found here: [The Importance of Framing Issues in Shaping Policy](#), and [Putting Framing Into Action: Framing Young Child Mental Health](#).

*Selected Questions and Comments:*

- C: The levelness metaphor can seem overly simplified, but it is valuable that it presents mental health as a basic part of a person rather than something special, unusual, or separate.
- C: The inclusion of many degrees of levelness and many reasons why a table could be unlevel are both really important characteristics of this metaphor.
- C: A child’s mental health should be viewed as a state to be cultivated rather than a trait to be fixed.
- Q: Does the research show that people not only understood children’s mental health, but also felt motivated to take action?  
A: This model does help people switch from viewing children’s mental health as an individual problem to a problem that can be impacted by policies.
- C: Trees also make good metaphors for children’s mental health and have the advantage of being a living thing, and already existing as a cultural scheme. (Trees grow in different directions and are affected by a number of factors such as soil, rain, crowding, etc.)
- C: It’s important that advocates can use the model without sounding stilted or talking for an extended period of time.

GROUP DISCUSSION

*Selected Questions and Comments:*

- C: The Task Force should learn more about the Harris institute and related opportunities for workforce development.