

Dept. of Health Services: Hosts event to share findings of innovative local pilot programs addressing the social and emotional needs of children

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Today, 15 local Birth to 3 Program grantees gathered virtually to talk about what they learned over the past 18 months as they piloted innovative efforts to help the social and emotional development of children enrolled in their programs. This work included a focus on supporting children who are enrolled because of incidents of child abuse or neglect as well as helping families better engage with and support their child's development. The Department of Health Services (DHS) awarded \$1.2 million in grants to support these programs in 2020.

"Wisconsin's Birth to 3 program relies on a strong state-local partnership to help support children in their key first years of life," said DHS Secretary Karen Timberlake, "Even as COVID-19 forced agencies to close their in-person services and work with families remotely, local agencies committed themselves to this critical effort to promote positive social and emotional development among our most vulnerable children. We look forward to exploring the lessons learned through the local pilots and using them to improve our Birth to 3 efforts statewide."

More than 30 local programs originally submitted applications for this competitive opportunity. Some counties applied individually, while others worked together as consortia to submit their applications. Some projects aimed to increase coordination between different partners trying to help the children, while others offered new trainings for staff and/or families. Meanwhile, others tried out new tools to help identify children's issues early and trigger action, and others tried combinations of these approaches. All were based on a common understanding: early interventions

can change the trajectory of a child's future.

A list of local programs and a short description of their pilot is provided below.

[The Birth to 3 Program](#) is an early intervention program provided by [counties](#) to support children under the age of three who have developmental delays or disabilities. After a review of national data revealed that Wisconsin's gains in children's social-emotional development were among the lowest in the country, the innovation grants were created to serve as a catalyst to expand efforts to explore and pilot new ways to improve our outcomes. Across the state, many Wisconsin counties have improved protections and strengthened supports for children with disabilities through ongoing efforts, and many counties have focused on initiatives to address the needs of families impacted by substance use and trauma. Additionally, the work our local areas have done with these grants has provided invaluable insights that DHS will use to further statewide opportunities for advancing the Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program's practices in the area of social-emotional development.

Local Innovation Grant Pilots

The **Barron County** project focused on strengthening team leadership through participation in the Wisconsin Infant Mental Health Reflective Supervision Learning Collaborative, building team capacity through training and implementation of the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) and Your Journey Together (YJT) Curriculum, and integrating case-based discussions into their team schedule routinely.

The joint **Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties** project focused on collaborating with child protective services (CPS) and building team capacity through training and implementation of the DECA, Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS), and YJT Curriculum.

The **Fond du Lac County** project focused on collaborating with CPS and training staff to implement Parents Interacting with Infant (PIWI) and Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO). Additionally, the grant supported a literacy initiative to distribute books and improve parent visitation rooms with the aim of improving caregiver-child interactions.

The **Jackson County** project focused on staff training and implementation of Circle of Security and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The project also included ongoing trainings with Birth to 3 program staff, parents, and community partners in trauma-informed care and resilience, and it aimed to promote leadership development through reflective supervision training.

The collaborative **Jefferson and Dodge Counties** project focused on the training of staff and implementation of the Brazelton Touchpoints Approach in collaboration with staff from CPS. Project funds were also used to increase sustainability by promoting the professional development of two staff members who became trainers in this approach.

The **Kenosha County** project developed parent-focused materials, a social media campaign, micro-videos, and an online “Parent U” program focused on promoting social emotional development and mindfulness. Additionally, they trained staff in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), an evidence-based intervention for young children with social and emotional difficulties; an Autism Navigator course through the University of Florida; as well as additional training in social-emotional development, functional outcome writing, and mindfulness.

The collaborative **La Crosse and Vernon Counties** project focused on the training of staff and implementation of the Circle of Security and the Infant Mental Health Capstone. The grant also supported activities to increase capacity and collaboration between the Birth to 3 Program, CPS, and the Safe Babies Court.

The **Milwaukee County** project focused on staff training and implementation of the ASQ-SE, Social Emotional Assessment Measure (SEAM), Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN), and Healing-Focused Care Trainings. The Parenting Network developed a number of trainings specifically for Birth to 3 program families. Additionally, a multimedia campaign was introduced that used social media and radio advertisements to share public messages about the importance of children’s social-emotional development and Birth to 3 program services.

The collaborative **Monroe, Columbia, Juneau, Marquette, and Adams Counties** project focused on the training of staff and community partners in the Circle of Security. They also began to use the DECA and the PICCOLO to assess parental capacity and child social-emotional development.

The **Pierce County** project focused on staff training and implementation of Triple P

Primary Care Stepping Stones. The project also aimed to enhance collaboration with CPS by training staff in Parents as Teachers, and by developing information sharing and warm handoff protocols with CPS for families referred under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or CAPTA.

The collaborative **Polk County and St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin** project focused on training staff and community members in the DECA and Triple P Stepping Stones.

The **Sauk County** project focused on training staff and implementing the Growing Great Kids curriculum. The project also aimed to advance the development of a Growing Great Kids socialization parenting group.

The **Waukesha County** project focused on staff training and implementation of the Circle of Security, the ASQ:SE, and the DECA. The project also aimed to enhance collaboration with CPS by enhancing processes through which CAPTA-referred families are linked to Birth to 3 program services.

The **Waupaca County** project focused on strengthening team leadership through participation in the Wisconsin Infant Mental Health Capstone. The project also aimed to build team capacity and collaboration through training and implementation of Body Keeps the Score Brief Early Relational Assessment, Emotion Coaching, and special play. A caregiver-dyadic child group was provided in conjunction with staff. A group for staff and caregivers was developed and modified from Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids. Ongoing collaboration has been established with CPS partners to include a change in referral process and tools to support joint education to families on trauma. A parent visitation room was modified to create a suitable environment for promoting healthy caregiver-child interactions.

The **Wood County** project focused on staff training and implementation of the Circle of Security, infant massage, and Conscious Discipline, monthly distribution of activity bags to increase positive caregiver-child interactions, distribution of books and other items to support positive development, and providing an expanded service array through Interlocking Autism Therapy and Music Therapy Services of Center Wisconsin while providing all primary coaches new knowledge and skills to implement on their own in the future.