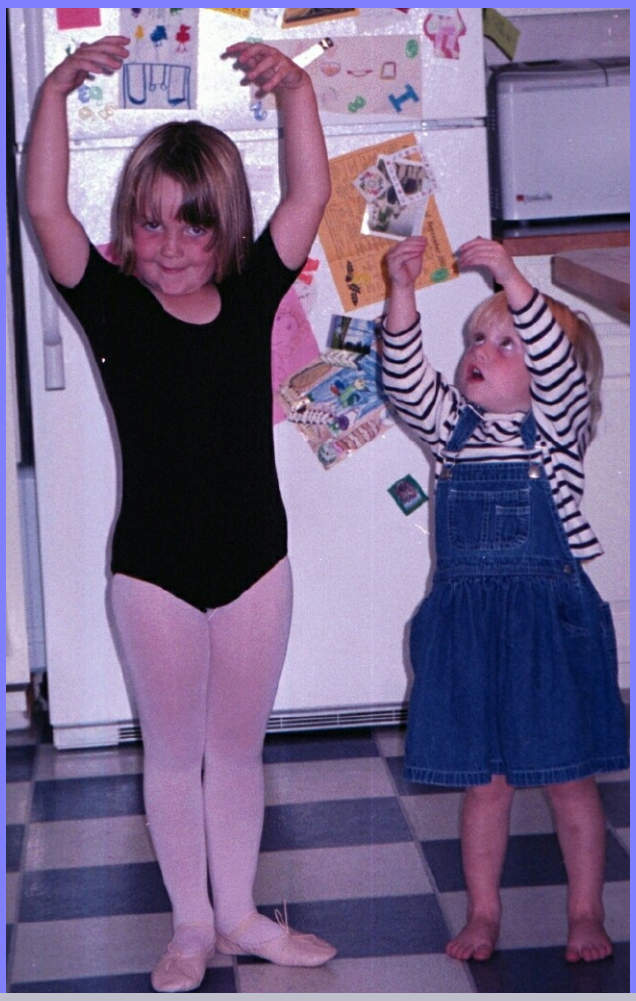
Summary

Comprehensive Plan for Early Childhood Health and Development for New Hampshire: *A Road Map to Collaboration*



NH Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)
Maternal and Child Health Section
Division of Public Health Services
NH Department of Health and Human Services
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NH Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS)

What we know about young children

- Healthy, nurturing, supportive environments for young children with age appropriate stimulation provide a solid foundation for lifelong development.
- New Hampshire professionals and families within each critical domain for early childhood development have built networks, affiliations, and systems of care for young children.

What is ECCS?

- ECCS is an initiative funded by the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau to promote comprehensive and integrated systems of care for young children so that they are healthy and ready to learn at school entry.
- Initial funding has supported the development of a statewide plan for early childhood with additional funding for plan implementation over the next three or more years.
- ECCS supports the Healthy Child Care New Hampshire Child Care Health Consultant project, promoting health and safety child care settings.
- The ECCS state plan, *Comprehensive Plan for Early Childhood Health and Development for NH: A Road Map to Collaboration*, will bridge each critical domain to ensure a common vision and essential reference point for policy and funding development.

ECCS partners' vision and mission

- In New Hampshire, we envision a system of high quality, coordinated and comprehensive early childhood services that are aligned with the strengths and individual needs of every child and family who wishes to access it.
- As a collaboration of families and public and private agencies working together as leaders and partners, we are dedicated to providing access to and bridging services between health care, early care and education, social, emotional and developmental support, parent education, and family support through a comprehensive, coordinated statewide system for all of New Hampshire's young children and families.

Why is it important that ECCS bridges other early childhood initiatives?

- Comprehensive, coordinated services and systems of care for young children will yield cost savings to state systems, community resources, and families.
- ECCS goals align with those of other early childhood initiative in New Hampshire, such as informing the strategic plans being developed by the Child Care Advisory Council, Early Learning New Hampshire and the Family Centered Early Support and Services developmental screening initiative, *Watch Me Grow*.

An example cross-domain program success: Home Visiting New Hampshire turns 10 years old!

In 1996, NH DHHS provided seed money for three community based agencies to start home visiting programs to support pregnant women and their young families. This home visiting model included nurse and parent educator team visits to a woman at her home. These programs then became the pilot sites for a statewide initiative called Home Visiting New Hampshire (HVNH).

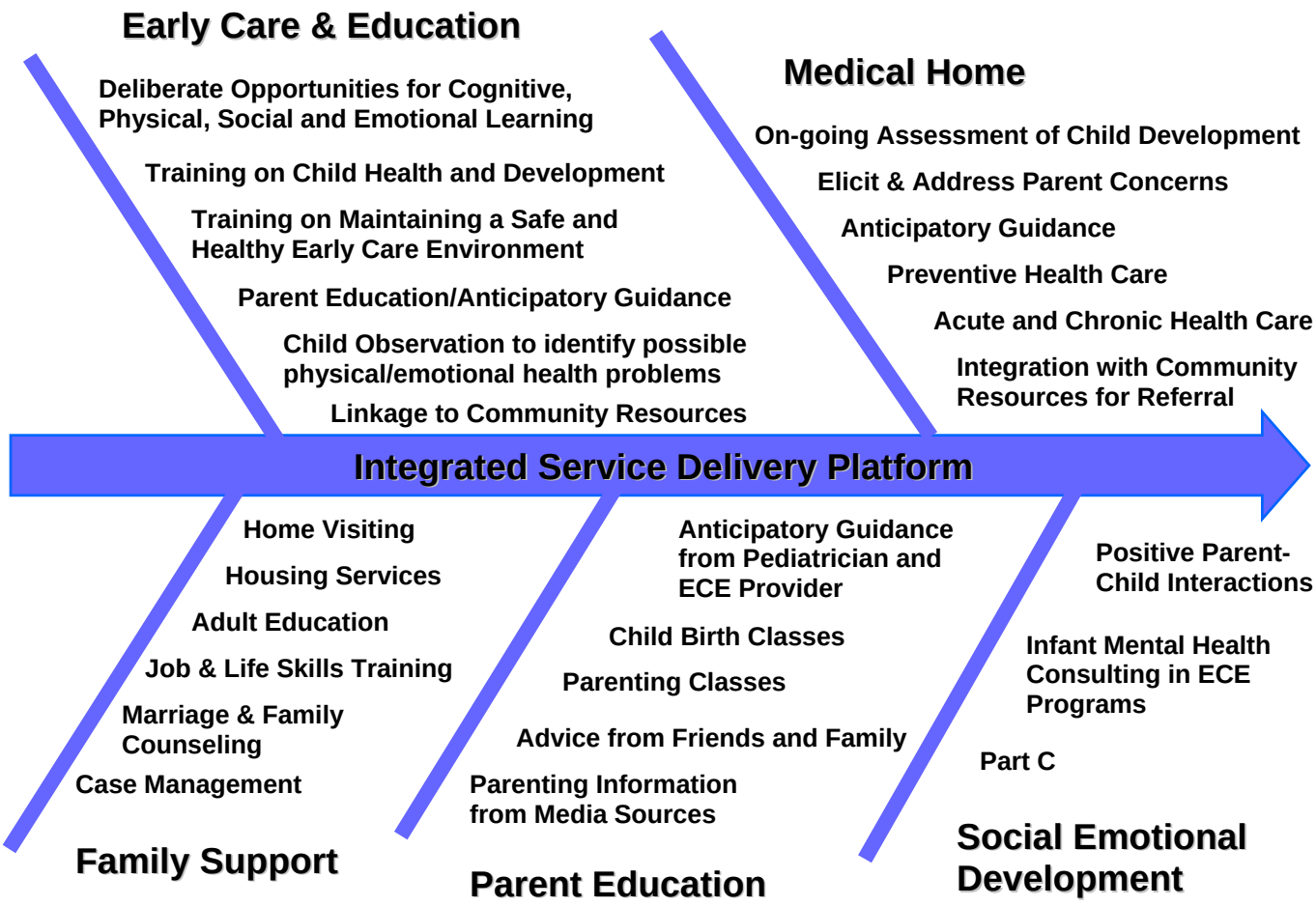
Today, 18 sites serve over 700 families a year around the State through this preventive, evidence-based program which provides health, education, support and linkages to other community services to Medicaid-eligible pregnant women and their families in their homes. Together families and home visitors work to ensure that families can address concerns such as smoking cessation, depression and access to reproductive healthcare. Families are supported in their roles as their child's first and best teacher and learn ways to enhance their child's learning and development.

> "*Good Beginnings of Sullivan County is proud to have been one of the first HVNH programs. Today there are HVNH programs in almost every community in New Hampshire, testimony to the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of primary prevention services.*
>
> *The impact of this program is felt not only by the individual families and children we serve, and by the community of Claremont as a whole. If we prevent just one pre-term birth, prevent one case of child abuse, or prevent one child from needing specialized education or medical services, we have paid for this program.*"
> – Ellie Tsetsi, Executive Director, Good Beginnings of Sullivan County

Ten years of success demonstrate that the unique needs of New Hampshire families are being met as the home visiting teams adapt the program to local needs.

Happy Birthday HVNH!

Converging Service Sector Strategies to Create an Early Childhood Integrated Service Delivery Platform



Adapted from a presentation by Neal Halfon, MD, MPH

Neal Halfon, MD, MPH with the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities uses the metaphor of ***building a bridge from birth to school*** to evoke a common vision for how different sectors, and levels of government can unite around a common goal, can build a responsive continuum of services and can enhance the developmental assets available for ***all*** young children.

Domain specific recommendations from early childhood partners

Access to Medical Homes and Health Insurance

- Promote centrally located care coordination and examine strategic funding for care coordination.
- Consolidate existing resource services and materials for professionals and families.
- Explore services being co-located, using a multi-disciplinary team model, for easier access by families.
- Increase public perception of the importance of good oral health as a component of overall health through the *Watch Your Mouth* campaign.

Social Emotional Development

- Expand and enhance current initiatives for developmental screening through the *Watch Me Grow* initiative.
- Utilize resource specialists to help families and professionals navigate the system.
- Conduct a social marketing campaign to raise awareness of the needs of young children.
- Reestablish a state children's cabinet or other forum for addressing young children's needs that cross systems.

Early Care and Learning

- Continue funding paid child care health consultants to work within selected child care Resource & Referral agencies, providing intensive training and consultation to child care providers on health and safety issues.
- Create centralized and coordinated systems of information and referral for services.
- Create universally defined service areas that are consistent across the state.
- Encourage family participation in systems building.
- Encourage regional forums where professionals can share information.
- Reestablish a state children's cabinet or other forum for addressing young children's needs that cross systems.

Family Support and Parent Education

- Continue support and advocacy for the NH State Library's Family Resource Connection, which uses braided funding to provide a one-stop access point for parent education resources, information and referrals to local services.
- Identify common indicators and outcomes for young children.
- Explore unified data systems for tracking services used and outcomes.
- Align care coordination across fields and disciplines.
- Clearly define all state services available for children.
- Welcome diversity across the state.
- Reestablish a state children's cabinet or other forum for addressing young children's needs that cross systems.