



FLORIDA ASSOCIATION  
*for*  
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

KEY CONCEPTS

Florida's Strategic Plan for Infant Mental Health Summit

January 17, 2007

- I. Each local area should have a coordinated system for developmental screenings (including social and emotional), assessments, and linkages to timely and appropriate services.
  - A. The local area should coordinate the type and use of screenings.
  - B. Staff should be trained in their use.
  - C. Screenings should be used to determine if further assessments are required.
  - D. All children should receive a periodic screening using a standardized test (which addresses social/emotional/behavioral domains) from their primary care physician at nine, eighteen and thirty month visits.
  - E. Mothers should be screened for mental health and substance abuse issues.
  - F. There should be a system to identify where quality services are provided and how to access them.
  
- II. Primary care settings should be knowledgeable about the need to identify social, emotional, behavioral issues in young children (birth to age five) and their families and should be prepared to arrange for services.
  - A. Assistance should be provided to primary health care settings to enable them to use appropriate screenings, assessments and make appropriate referrals.
  - B. Clear linkages should be established to local early childhood mental health services and mental health services for other family members.
  
- III. Assistance in child care and early educational settings should be available throughout the state.
  - A. There should be a system to provide technical assistance, consultation and mentoring in early childhood settings (child care and early educational programs) to promote social and emotional development.
  - B. These services and supports should also be available for children and their families who need intensive mental health service.
  
- IV. The practices in Florida's Child Welfare System should infuse good early childhood mental health principles and relationship-based interventions.
  - A. The practices in the Community Based Care programs, Child Protections Teams, Child Protection Investigations and Guardian Ad Litem programs should promote early childhood mental health services and well-being.
  - B. The programs should also address prevention of child abuse.
  - C. Interventions should be available in each community to assist the dependency case managers in identifying needs and providing the appropriate services.

- V. Provide training and research to increase awareness and improve services for Infant Mental Health and Early Childhood Mental Health throughout the early childhood system of care.
  - A. Train teams of providers in each local area to be able to provide training (in-service and continuing education) across programs including: early childhood settings, Early Steps, Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System (FDLRS), Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Programs, programs for children with developmental disabilities and special education programs for young children.
  - B. Develop a training infrastructure that provides training in all areas of Child Welfare services to include: prevention, investigation, case management (mandatory training and continuing education), services from the offices of Guardian Ad Litem, judicial areas, and attorneys.
  - C. Encourage data collection efforts and the use of Evidence Based Practices to develop and improve services for young children and their families in Florida.
  
- VI. Improve advocacy and communication to increase the awareness and support of Infant Mental Health and Early Childhood Mental Health Services.
  - A. Develop a campaign of targeted communication with the use of the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health website as one means of communication.
  - B. Identify and cultivate legislative advocates and government office staff who understand the importance of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and can provide leadership to set appropriate policy and obtain funding.