

## NCIMHA Workforce Development Project

### Developing a System of Social-Emotional Competencies To Support North Carolina's Early Childhood Workforce

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In response to the 2012 recommendations from the NC Institute of Medicine, the North Carolina Infant/Young Child Mental Health Association has worked with stakeholders across the state since

2015 to develop a competent early childhood mental health workforce. Based on extensive research of competency-based approaches and broad stakeholder input, NCIMHA seeks to expand and enhance the capacity of NC's early childhood workforce by establishing a system of social-emotional competencies and professional development opportunities.

Since early 2015, NCIMHA's Workforce Development Project has collaborated with partners to produce:

- Justification of the need for a system of social-emotional competencies
- **Early Childhood Social-Emotional Competencies** (an adaptation of the "Early Childhood Mental Health Core Competencies for Positive Practice" from the Alamance Alliance for Children and Families)
- Applications of the system of competencies in several locations in NC, including higher education and in-service staff development settings
- Messaging to raise community awareness and buy-in for developing the workforce and the application of the system of

competencies

- Collaborative partnerships to sustain these workforce development efforts, such as

Negotiating for **Race to the Top** funding to:

- Cross walk B-K curriculum to embed competencies as needed, and provide training for Birth - Kindergarten higher education faculty to help them understand how they might teach to the competencies, through the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Add competencies to the "North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development" online modules that focus on social-emotional development, through the Early Learning Network of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Develop an In-Service Training Model/Curriculum to teach and promote the competencies, through Encouraging Connections.

#### NCIMHA Workforce Development Project's Long Term Goal:

*By June 30, 2018. North Carolina public agencies that promote and support the social and emotional well-being of infants, toddlers and young children will have established a system of social-emotional competencies, to assure that the early childhood mental health workforce has the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide optimal services.*

## Developing a System of Social-Emotional Competencies

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- Review how to apply the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) framework for piloting and implementation of innovations.

Additional current initiatives related to the application of the competencies and involving NCIMHA Workforce Development Project representatives include:

- The School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte has initiated a **Graduate Certificate in Early Childhood Mental Health**, drawing from some of the social-emotional competencies promoted by NCIMHA.
- Participation in the NC Division of Public Health, Early Intervention Branch, **NC Infant-Toddler Program Phase II - State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)** (February 18, 2016) Professional Development Implementation Team in which the social-emotional competencies have been recommended for consideration in future EI personnel standards.
- Presented to the Healthy Social Behaviors consultants and other training professionals across the state who attended the **Promoting Healthy Social Behaviors in Child Care Centers** 2016 conference, through Child Care Services, Inc. funded by the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education.
- Participation on North Carolina's interagency team for the Zero to Three initiative **Aligning Policy and Practice: Mental Health Assessment and Treatment of Infants, Young Children and Families**, which will include important professional development issues.
- Collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to assign a graduate intern to the Workforce Development Project's implementation agenda.
- Collaborate with many agencies and organizations to educate and inform, including the early childhood "Competency-Based Training Workgroup".
- Furthering work with essential state agencies and associations to explore how to integrate the social-emotional competencies into existing credentialing systems.
- Focus the 5th Annual NCIMHA Conference and Annual Meeting on **The Science of Resilience: Building Adult Capabilities to Promote Early Childhood Mental Health**, including presentations about early childhood workforce development.

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