

NCIOM Essentials for Childhood Task Force
February 21, 2014
Meeting Notes and Summary

In his presentation *Essentials for Childhood: Developing a Shared Vision of Impact*, Adam Zolotor, M.D., Vice President of NCIOM, discussed the frameworks that contribute to the discussion around the risk factors and protective factors that can have the most impact on the realization of SSNRs (safe, stable and nurturing relationships) for children. From this presentation, the task force discussed potential protective and risk factors that could have the most impact.

Following this presentation, the task force discussed how the group should move forward in incorporating these protective and risk factors. Several members agreed that the focus has to be on what programs are already in place and promoting these factors. The primary goal is to identify the strategies that impact the protective and risk factors, as these represent the intermediary steps in achieving SSNRs and Es.

The group also discussed what some of these protective factors look like in practice. The group felt that self-regulation looks different at different stages in a child's development and that it can be difficult skill to develop, especially in unsafe environments where survival has to be the primary focus. One member raised the concern that the process of identifying risk factors may happen too late as children can experience toxic stress very early on in their life and that it can severely impact their ability to cope and self-regulate. A member also commented that child welfare services already requires their grantees to collect data on protective and risk factors of the children and families that they serve.

In their presentation, "Innovations in Child Maltreatment Surveillance: Using Data to Move Towards Prevention," Meghan Shanahan, Ph.D., and Jared Parrish, M.P.H., discussed child maltreatment from a public health perspective and gave a brief overview on the nature of public health surveillance, including the types of surveillance studies and their various uses, and the importance of common goals and strategies for collaborative surveillance studies. Shanahan and Parrish then discussed the Wake County Child Maltreatment Surveillance Project and the Alaska Surveillance of Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program, including the impetus of the projects, challenges and successes, and current status.

Following lunch, Dale Epstein, Ph.D., presented, “North Carolina’s Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS).” Epstein discussed the mission and purpose of ECIDS, which is to create a high quality integrated early childhood data system in North Carolina and utilize data from many participating sources, including NC Dept. of Health and Human Services (NC Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC Division of Public Health, NC Division of Social Services), NC Department of Public Instruction, and Smart Start and the NC Partnership for Children. Epstein addressed the governance structure and potential reports of ECIDS, the project’s timelines, and the indicators of successful project outcomes.

The meeting was then opened up to discussion on Dr. Shanahan’s, Mr. Parrish’s, and Dr. Epstein’s presentations.

Selected comments/discussion items included:

- For ECIDS, how much of this is about measuring service delivery, and how much is about improving child well-being? It looks at the effectiveness of systems.
- Is there an opportunity to look at the whole general cohort? No. Eventually we will see individual, child-level data.
- Project is working on specifics for small-cell suppression. Data would be protected, but we could still look at cohorts.
- Parrish – no individual program can move the needle, but surveillance can be beneficial to collective impact goals, since there are so many involved players
- Shanahan – it is difficult to see an impact with a 5-year grant, as it takes a while for upper level changes to trickle down
- Zolotor – are we tracking the right things? Measurement as a larger challenge with large population surveys
- Earls – should we be talking about agencies’ strengths and weaknesses?
- Dodge – how do we take advantage of what’s opportune while also looking more broadly? How do we leverage what we already collect? How do we combine data collection with existing programs?

Sarah Vidrine and Michelle Hughes presented a revised framework of risk and protective factors and the ways in which the Task Force can approach them in order to develop

measurable outcomes and increased SSNR/Es and child well-being. The new framework focused on ensuring all environments are nurturing, and that parents/schools/communities have the tools and support they need to create these nurturing environments. There was a discussion of public/political will around these tools and support, and about the work of the E4C task force to figure out the strategies for developing nurturing environments and the barriers preventing us from doing this.

Additional comments included:

- Can we have policies to quantify supportive environments? What is the business approach? We have to have measures at all levels of the sociological model.
- How do we tailor our ideas and strategies for diverse areas with different levels of resources and strengths/weaknesses?
- What are examples of hubs for rural areas – how do we utilize these hubs to create infrastructure (WAGES as example)

Suggestions for upcoming discussion and meeting topics:

- Strengths and weaknesses of task force members' organizations; what is their current work
- Current programs in NC focusing on systems of care
- Shift focus on issue of implementation
- Where are we falling short?
- Innovations in financing
- Indicators of SSNRs and Es across systems

