

Abbotsford's System of Care Project for Early Childhood

Prepared by
Debbie Denault and
Megan Nichols

What is a Community System of Care?

- A Community System of Care “is the organization of public and private service components within the community into a comprehensive and interconnected network in order to accomplish better outcomes for a defined population” (Best Practice Briefs, No. 10).

What is a System of Care for ECD?

- A System of Care is “a single, interconnected and intertwined network, of public and private services and supports, working together in a community to accomplish better results for young children and families” (Michigan’s Great Start for Kids).

What does a System of Care include?

- Vision, Mission, and/or Mandate
- Principles and/or Values
- Goals, Strategies and/or Objectives
- Outcomes and/or Results
- Model or Framework (e.g., “ages and stages,” organized by sector, etc.)
- Evaluation or Feedback Loops for Accountability and Learning
- Sustainability Mechanisms

What are the benefits to creating a System of Care?

- A conceptually common approach to working with children and families
- Collaborative relationships across sectors
- More efficient ways of delivering services (e.g., integration)
- Mechanisms for identifying gaps and overlaps
- Increased access and reduced barriers (i.e., “no wrong door” philosophy)
- Continuum of care
- Smooth transitions for children and families

Menagerie of Terms

- A menagerie of 47 terms!
- Language inconsistency and variability
- Developing common language is an important step in creating a comprehensive system of care

Vision

- A vision states the desired impact for the population of concern (Best Practice Briefs No. 9).
 - Purposely idealistic
 - Designed to describe the desired future state or context (O-AIM)
- Mission; Mandate; Impact; Purpose; Dream

Principles

- **Principles** are guiding beliefs for working with families (Dunst, 2000).
- Guiding principles; Principles based on evidence, scientific principles, and best practices; Desirable practices; Values; Shared values; Guiding values
- E.g., family and child centered, accessible, inclusive, seamless, integrated, collaborative, strengths-based, and evidence-based.

Outcomes

- Outcomes are benefits children and families “receive during or after their involvement in a program or as a result of an intervention. Outcomes may relate to developmental gains, knowledge, skills, behaviour, condition, or status” (Building Together: Founded on Research).

Creating a System of Care: Sample Process

Best Practice Briefs, No. 9

- Vision: Developing Common Understanding
 - Desired impact on children and families
 - Outlining individual characteristics
- Determining Shared Values for Service Delivery
 - Outlining system characteristics
- Fact Finding
 - Describing population, assessing current services, identifying gaps and barriers
- Action Plan
 - Procedures, forms, provisions for feedback and assessment, resource sharing
- Interagency Systems Changes

Six Key Resources

1. Best Practice Briefs: A Community System of Care for Very Young Children and Their Parents
2. Building Bridges: A Comprehensive System for Health Development and School Readiness
3. Building Together: A Model for the Community-Based System of Services for ECD

Six Key Resources

4. Early Childhood Care and Development Programs as Hook and Hub
5. Foundations for an Evidence-Based Approach to Early Childhood Intervention and Family Support
6. Systems of Service Delivery: A Synthesis of Evidence Relevant to Young Children at Risk of or Who Have Challenging Behavior

Project Steps

- ✓ Conduct literature review
- ✓ Produce draft annotated bibliography and executive summary
- ✓ Identify 6 comprehensive and unique resources
- Develop glossary of terms
- Outline a variety of processes used to develop and implement systems of care

Discussion

- Questions and comments