

## Background

### Poor Developmental Outcomes for Children who Experience Homelessness:

- Adverse childhood experiences are linked to worse health outcomes in adulthood (1)
- Population is at increased risk of developmental delay our disability and are less likely to access developmental screenings, evaluations, and services(1, 2, 4)
- Strong evidence for importance of trauma-informed care and infant mental health focus in early childhood (3, 4, 5)

### Services

Boyer Children's Clinic is the largest provider of early intervention (EI) services in Seattle, WA



Mary's Place is a homeless shelter and service center for women, children, and families in the greater Seattle area

Boyer CONNECT is a grant-funded program to support Boyer and Mary's Place in establishing a streamlined screening, referral, and developmental support service delivery model for children who are homeless or in transitional housing in King County, WA

## Needs Assessment

### Challenges Identified

- Inconsistent developmental monitoring and referrals
- Complex needs of client population
- Limited competency of EI providers in trauma-informed care
- Limited partnership with mental health providers

**Main Problem:** EI providers are not effectively serving children who are homeless or in transitional housing. There is a gap in access to services as well as limited provider competency in trauma-informed care.

## Action Steps

### 1) EI provider training in trauma-informed care:

Specialized trainings and resources  
WA Infant Mental Health Endorsement Training

### 2) Community resource identification and connection:

Strengthen partnership with other existing programs  
Identify services for children ages 3-5

**Goal:** Build provider capacity to provide high quality trauma-informed EI services for children experiencing homelessness in Seattle.

### 3) Foster a strong interdisciplinary partnership of EI team:

Consistent team of providers (Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Physical Therapist, Family Resources Coordinator, Social Worker)  
Comprehensive interdisciplinary evaluations

### 4) Establish and support partnership between Boyer and Mary's Place:

Train Mary's Place staff on how to monitor child development and make referrals to early intervention services  
Weekly onsite presence at Mary's Place



## Outcomes

- Enhanced interagency partnership increased number of referrals to Boyer EI services
- Increased confidence and competency of EI providers
- Increased awareness of EI services at Mary's Place among staff and families



## Conclusion

### Discussion

- Strong argument for partnerships between early intervention agencies and homeless shelters
- Recommend EI agencies strengthen training on trauma-informed care and infant mental health principles
- Challenges: many families not ready to begin services while in shelter, communication barriers, limited agency capacity for universal developmental screening, adapting to remote partnership model during COVID-19 pandemic

### Next Steps

- Expand partnership model to other local EI providers
- Continue inter-agency staff education
- Include parent and outside agency feedback on interventions in outcome measurements

## References

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