

**Using Minnesota's  
Early Childhood  
Indicators of Progress  
to Support Young  
Children and Families**

# Introduction of Presenters

- Michelle West Lenhart, Minnesota  
Department of Human Services
- Gail C. Roberts, Early Childhood  
Consultant

# Workshop Objectives

- Learn about Early Childhood Indicators of Progress and resources that are available
- Increase understanding of basic child development and appropriate expectations
- Examine some effects of homelessness on the development of young children
- Consider case studies, examples and strategies for supporting the development of young children and families in a variety of settings

## State-Level Activities

**2000** - Early Childhood Indicators of Progress first developed

**2005** - Early Childhood Indicators of Progress for 3-5 revised

**2007** - Early Childhood Indicators of Progress for Birth - 3 developed

## **Why were Early Childhood Indicators of Progress developed?**

- Focus on School Readiness
- Focus on At-risk
- Interagency Collaboration
- Common Framework in Early Childhood
- Usefulness in other Initiatives
- Accountability Issues

# Are Minnesota children entering kindergarten fully prepared to learn?

Minnesota School Readiness Study: An assessment of the skills and abilities of a randomly selected group of children entering kindergarten in the Fall, 2007

- Approximately 9 – 10 percent of Minnesota children do not have the language and literacy, and mathematical thinking skills and knowledge needed for school success (approximately 50% are proficient in these areas)
- Fewer (3 – 8 %) children do not yet exhibit the skills needed in the domains of personal and social development, the arts, or physical development (approximately 52 – 65% are proficient in these areas)

# Are some children at greater risk of not being fully prepared?

- Risk factors:

- Low family income
- Low parent education
- English language learner

- National research on school readiness:

The gap between the math and reading skills of children from the most affluent families and the least affluent families can be large (approx. 10 month skill gap).

# What are Early Childhood Indicators of Progress?

A framework for understanding and communicating a common set of developmentally appropriate expectations for children presented within a context of shared responsibility and accountability for helping children meet these expectations

# Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP) Goals

- To increase understanding of all areas of children's development and developmentally appropriate expectations
- To support families and caregivers by providing examples of strategies that facilitate and enhance children's development

## ECIP Goals

- To expand understanding of the multiple influences on the growth and development of young children
- To provide a common framework for communication and the development of comprehensive and coordinated services

# Organization & Structure of Documents

## Domains of Child Development

### **For 0-3 and 3-5 year olds:**

- Social and Emotional Development
- Language Development
- Cognitive Development
- Physical and Motor Development

### **Also for 3-5 year olds:**

- Approaches to Learning
- Creativity and the Arts

# Organization & Structure of Documents

- Domains
- Components
- Indicators
- Examples
- Strategies



# Definitions

- **DOMAINS** are a major area of development
- **COMPONENTS** are subparts within each domain
- **INDICATORS** define expectations for specific, observable outcomes for the child

# Criteria for Inclusion as an Early Childhood Indicator

- Research Based
- Clearly Written
- Measurable
- Comprehensive
- Manageable Number
- Broadly Applicable

## **Understanding about Age of Children in Early Childhood Indicators of Progress**

- Early childhood period spans years birth-8
- ECIP documents are intended as guides for children ages 0-3 and 3-5
- Specific indicators are based on widely-held developmental expectations for infants, toddlers and preschool-age children
- General expectation is for most children to meet the majority of these expectations by the end of the pre-kindergarten year

## **Understanding about Age of Children in Early Childhood Indicators of Progress**

- Because normal development varies greatly from child to child, the ECIP documents are intended to be a flexible guide in describing a child's individual progress
- ECIP are intentionally written to include both typically and atypically developing children

# Some Influences on Development affected by Homelessness

- Adequate Nutrition
  - before and after birth
- Quality of Attachment Relationship
  - security and trust
  - sensitive and responsive caregiving
- Interactions with the Environment
  - physical and social environments
  - opportunities for exploration and discovery
- Health and Well-being
  - consistent access to health care
  - safety and stability in living places

# Some Effects of Homelessness on Development

- **During Infancy**
  - Basic trust and attachment
  - Health, nutrition and physical growth
- **During Toddler years**
  - Exploration and independence
  - Using language for communication
- **During Preschool Years**
  - Social and interpersonal skills
  - Language, literacy and cognitive skills

## ECIP Guiding Principles (0-3)

- Infants and toddlers develop in the context of their families, cultures and communities
- Nurturing and responsive caregiving helps infants and toddlers develop secure and trusting relationships
- The years from birth to three represent a period of rapid growth and development and are critical for the healthy development of young children'
- Abilities and skills develop simultaneously in the first three years and each affects the development of others

## Guiding Principles (3-5)

- Young children are capable and competent
- Development occurs in predictable patterns
- Children are individuals who develop at different rates
- Many factors influence a child's development
- Children exhibit a range of skills and competencies within any domain
- Expectations for children must be guided by knowledge of child growth and development
- Young children learn through play, interaction with others and exploration of the environment
- Families are children's first and most important caregivers and educators

# **Domains and Components**

## **Social and Emotional Development**

### **Birth to 3 Years**

- Trust and Emotional Security
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation
- Relationships with Other Children

### **3 to 5 Years**

- Emotional Development
- Self-Concept
- Social Competence & Relationships

# Domains and Components Language Development

## Birth to 3 years

- Listening with Understanding
- Communicating and Speaking
- Emergent Literacy

## 3 to 5 years

- Listening
- Speaking
- Emergent Reading
- Emergent Writing

# Domains and Components Cognitive Development

## Birth to 3 years

- Exploration and Discovery
- Memory
- Problem Solving
- Imitation and Symbolic Play

## 3 to 5 years

- Mathematical and Logical Thinking
- Scientific Thinking and Problem Solving
- Social Systems Understanding

# **Domains and Components**

## **Physical and Motor Development**

### **Birth to 3 years**

- Gross Motor Development
- Fine Motor Development
- Physical Health & Well-Being

### **3 to 5 years**

- Gross Motor Development
- Fine Motor Development
- Physical Health & Well-Being

# Other Domains and Components

## 3 to 5 years

### Approaches to Learning

- Curiosity
- Risk-Taking
- Imagination & Invention
- Persistence
- Reflection & Interpretation

### Creativity and the Arts

- Creating
- Responding
- Evaluating

# Using the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

- **Birth to 3 years**
  - Three age groups
  - Examples and strategies for caregivers for each age group
- **3 to 5 years**
  - Strategies for family members, teachers and caregivers, community members and policy makers

# Age Groups in Early Childhood

- **Young Infants (Birth to 8 months)**  
Development of emotional security and trust
- **Older Infants (8 to 18 months)**  
Exploration and increased mobility
- **Toddlers (18 to 36 months)**  
Using language and increasing independence
- **Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)**  
Making friends and learning social skills

# **SAMPLE - YOUNG INFANT**

## **(Birth-8 Months)**

- **DOMAIN - Social and Emotional Development**
- **COMPONENT - Trust and Emotional Security**
- **INDICATOR - Shows emotional connection and attachment to others**
- **EXAMPLE - Looks for familiar caregiver when tired, hungry or upset**
- **STRATEGY- Respond to baby's messages and cues and try to determine baby's needs**
- **CHALLENGE - Being physically and emotionally available to the infant**

# **SAMPLE - OLDER INFANT**

## **(8 - 18 Months)**

- **DOMAIN - Language Development and Communication**
- **COMPONENT-** Communicating and Speaking
- **INDICATOR -** Uses consistent sounds, gestures or words to communicate
- **EXAMPLE -** Imitates sounds or familiar words of home language
- **STRATEGY -** Introduce and model new sounds, gestures or words for baby to imitate
- **CHALLENGE-** Overcrowding, noise and too many distractions in the language environment

# **SAMPLE - TODDLER**

## **(18 - 36 Months)**

- **DOMAIN - Physical and Motor Development**
- **COMPONENT - Fine Motor Development**
- **INDICATOR - Controls small muscles in hands while doing simple tasks**
- **EXAMPLE - Stacks two or three blocks on top of each other or builds simple structures**
- **STRATEGY - Provide toys or other materials that offer practice for fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination**
- **CHALLENGE- Availability of appropriate toys, materials and space for physical activities**

# **SAMPLE - PRESCHOOLER**

## **(3 to 5 years)**

- **DOMAIN - Cognitive Development**
- **COMPONENT-** Scientific Thinking and Problem Solving
- **INDICATOR** - Ask questions and seek answers through active exploration
- **EXAMPLE** - Wants to know what makes the leaves change color and fall off the trees
- **STRATEGY-** Collect different kinds of leaves at different times of the year and examine them closely
- **CHALLENGE** - Lack of access to natural areas and to preschool programs

# CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

- Case study examples for each age level for each of the domains of development
- Case studies illustrate different aspects of and influences on development
- Case studies reflect the guiding principles and the interrelationships between various domains, components and indicators
- Case studies allow us to examine the effects of different settings and circumstances on children's development

# Case Study - Young Infant

## Maria and Juan

What domains,  
components and  
indicators are  
represented?



# Case Study - Older Infant

**Kara and Mom**

**What domains,  
components and  
indicators are  
represented?**



# Case Study - Toddler

## Sammy and teddy bear

**Which domains,  
components and  
indicators are  
represented?**



# Case Study - Preschooler

**Barbara**

**What domains,  
components and  
indicators are  
represented?**



# **Some other uses of Early Childhood Indicators of Progress**

## **For Parents and Family Members**

- To build awareness of child development
- To increase communication with families
- To involve families in children's learning
- To provide support for parents as the primary nurturers of their child

# **Some other uses of Early Childhood Indicators of Progress**

## **For Caregivers and Teachers**

- To provide guidance for planning appropriate learning experiences for young children
- To provide guidance for appropriate assessment of young children
- To provide consistency in age-related goals for children across programs and settings

# **Some other uses of Early Childhood Indicators of Progress**

## **For Community Members**

- To provide a framework for identifying needs within the community
- To help organize advocacy efforts within the community on behalf of young children

# **Some other uses of Early Childhood Indicators of Progress**

## **For Policymakers**

- To assess the impact of public policies on young children and their families
- To improve public understanding of appropriate expectations, accountability and responsibility for young children and their families

# Some Challenges in Working with Homeless Families and Children

- Lack of continuity, stability and consistency
- Priority on basic needs and survival strategies leaves less time and energy for other things
- High level of stress affects parent-child interactions and relationships
- Lack of access to supportive programs and services
- Level of understanding in the community about the needs of homeless children and families

# Strategies for using ECIPS in working with homeless families

- Focus on the individual child, observing and monitoring their development
- Communicate concerns about development to others and make referrals when possible
- Model pro-social and positive behaviors and skills in interaction with children and families
- Maintain respect for the primary relationships within the family and between parent and child
- Continue to advocate for the needs of homeless children in access to early childhood programs

# Next Steps and New Initiatives

- Parent Aware System
- Other Program Initiatives

# Questions?

Do you need additional copies of the ECIPs?  
Contact your local CCR&R:

<http://www.mnchildcare.org/network/>

Or call: 1-888-291-9811

You may also contact Michelle Lenhart at DHS:  
651-431-3871 or  
[michelle.lenhart@state.mn.us](mailto:michelle.lenhart@state.mn.us)