

Coos Coalition for Young Children and Families

Outcome #2:

Early Care professionals in Coos County are trained in evidence-based curricula and evidence-based strategies to support healthy social and emotional development in children birth through age 5.

Indicator:

- 1. ___% of early care professionals trained in evidence-based curriculum and/or strategies to improve social and emotional outcomes for children (early care professionals includes home visitors, mental health professionals, health care providers, primary school educators, and early care and education providers)**

Why is training in evidence based curriculum and/or strategies important for children and families and what does the research say about it?

- **Healthy social and emotional development is foundational for school readiness for all children.**

“Besides the core cognitive capacities that develop in early childhood, advances in the child’s understanding of other people, self-understanding, emotional growth, self-control, conscience and peer relationships provide an essential bedrock of skills necessary for learning in the classroom. Young children with positive early experiences are well-prepared to be attentive, cooperative, motivated to succeed, and capable of working with others” (Thompson, 2002, p. 21).

- **Young children develop within the context of relationships. Caring adults support children’s brain development and build relationships through responsive interactions. They also help children to learn how to interact and build relationships with peers.**

“Establishing successful relationships with adults and other children provides a foundation of capacities that children will use for a lifetime...Young children learn a great deal from each other. They learn how to share, to engage in reciprocal interactions (e.g. taking turns, giving and receiving), to take the needs and desires of others into account, and to manage their own impulses” (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004, p. 2).

- **Young children who experience high levels of “toxic stress” are vulnerable to mental health problems with emotional or behavioral consequences. Knowledgeable early care professionals can help to identify children with mental health needs and provide the supports they need.**

“Young children living in highly threatening environments can be protected from serious emotional or behavioral consequences...through the early identification of their emotional needs and the provision of appropriate assistance in the context of stable, nurturing

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relationships with supportive and skilled caregivers as well as through preventive mental health services” (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2008/2012, p. 6).

“Research points to the protective impact of warm, supportive teachers on young children’s success in transitioning to school...There is an urgent need to develop support systems (along with better pay) for teachers and child care providers so that they can better help young children learn new ways of regulating their feelings and impulses, of relating to other children, and of interacting with adults more appropriately” (Knitzer, 2002, p. 103).

What is going on in Coos County in regard to this indicator?

We do not yet have a full picture of all the efforts that are currently underway in Coos County to train early care professionals in evidence-based strategies and/or curricula to support healthy social and emotional development for children ages birth through 5.

- The revised NH Early Learning Standards include an emphasis on social and emotional development for children ages birth through five. These developmental domains are also emphasized in the Head Start Frameworks.
- A small group of early childhood educators have participated in “train the trainers” through the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).
- Some early childhood teachers and directors are implementing some CSEFEL strategies and materials in their classrooms and programs.
- Mental health consultation is being provided through Northern Human Services to some early childhood programs in Coos.
- Participants in the PSU professional development opportunities have learned about teacher-child interactions that support children’s learning, but not with a focus on social or emotional development.
- Some preschool programs have investigated the Tools of the Mind curriculum, which promotes the development of executive function in children.
- We do not know whether or what evidence-based curricula and/or strategies are being used in Head Start programs or public preschool programs in Coos to support social and emotional development.

How will the Coos Coalition strategic plan have an impact on training in evidence based curricula and/or strategies that will address social and emotional development for children ages birth through five?

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Overall, we are aware of some efforts to train early care professionals in evidence-based strategies and/or curricula and some implementation efforts, but there is not as yet a comprehensive plan for training and/or implementation.

Where the work of the Coalition goes depends on several decisions that need to be made:

- Should we focus on evidence-based strategies, or curricula, or both? Should we adopt a particular curriculum or several curricula? Should we identify a list of key strategies to be used across sectors?
- How much variability can be allowed in implementation across settings, without reducing the potential impact of the implementation? (This is the fidelity question.)
- Should we aim to affect all children birth through age 5 in Coos or a particular target group?
- Should we aim to train all early care professionals or a particular target group?
- What would be our ideal? How will we arrive at and decide on our agreed course of action?

References:

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