

# **CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE PLAN**

## **TEN SERVICES NEEDED**

### **PARTNERSHIP: TCHD, TCDSS, TCPS**

**February 2019**

1. Early prenatal care for all births Talbot County
  - Getting children born healthy is by far the most critical step for having healthy children.
  - Prenatal care in the first three months is considered an important indicator for children's health.
  - 25% of Talbot County women delivering an infant did not have prenatal care the first trimester.
  - Many did not have insurance and a deposit upfront of \$500 to \$900 was required before being seen.
2. Parenting classes for new parents is important to help them understand what is important for their child's healthy growth and development.
  - Talbot County Department of Social Services (TCDSS) is now holding classes.
  - Reaching our high risk population is difficult and more thought will be given to this challenge.
3. Home visits for high risk infants and families with new baby have been proven effective.
  - Healthy Families program at the Talbot County Health Department (TCHD) is funded with a grant through Local Management Board and provides one worker to serve 40 families.
  - TCDSS obtained funds to add second person: now a total of 80 families are served by TCHD.
  - This is more intensive assistance for parents of children at risk of maltreatment.
4. Early Head Start (EHS) services for more children.
  - Early Head Start is an evidence-based strategy for improving school readiness.
  - TCHD has this program and the federal government has just expanded funding to have 59 full time slots instead of part time center attendance; if the state increases their funding this could add another 20 full day slots that help with parents who are in school or working.
  - The biggest challenge is finding qualified teachers that will work for the salary offered. Consideration is being given to a program to train our own teachers.
  - EHS could have more comprehensive services on site for families and children with the greatest needs.
5. Accessible and affordable quality childcare for all families needing this care.

- Quality childcare for children less than 6 months is difficult to find even when the family can afford the cost.
- Critchlow Adkins helps in this area but many families do not have the funds and use home or family childcare.

#### 6. Universal Pre-K

- Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) now provides universal Pre K.
- Social services agencies need to find opportunities to work with School system to bring more services to these children and families.

#### 7. Early identification and interventions for children with problems that could interfere with learning are needed.

- From birth to three years is the period for the greatest brain development of a child. Waiting until children start school before intervening can lose valuable time, require far more resources for a positive outcomes, and often leave children always trying to catch up with their peers.
- TCPS had the Infant and Toddlers outreach program but only one worker; TCHD added funds for a second outreach worker in 2018.
- This program would also benefit from wrapping other social services around the families need support.
- Better screening for potential problems in children is needed by pediatricians, nurse practitioners, social and health agencies seeing the children or their families.

#### 8. Early evidence based interventions for children preschool to 3rd grade with mild to moderate behavioral problems that can interfere with learning

- Assistance from behavioral health consultant in Early Head Start (TCHD) is available.
- Primary Project for K through 3rd grade once served 90 children with a federal grant, but due to funding loss it only serves 30 children now through donations to Channel Marker. The goal is to increase this to serve 90 students a year again.

#### 9. Enhanced behavioral health services within school system

- Currently providers are available and are reimbursed by billing insurance.
- Some non-reimbursable programs are needed for different age groups that will promote behavioral health.

#### 10. Develop system for better comprehensive assessments and care plans for children with co-occurring behavioral, developmental and learning disorders on Eastern Shore.

- Multidiscipline teams provide this in large medical centers.
- Building a home team that can connect with specialists through telehealth is our concept for a solution, but needs start-up funds and a sustainability plan for the services of home team members that are not reimbursable.

## **PLAN FOR ACTION**

1. Engage community leaders by improving awareness of the issue facing children and the evidence based strategies for addressing them.
  - Presentations to many different groups including business leaders
  - Frequent news releases to increase awareness along with notification of an event
2. Community Conferences for awareness and interventions
  - DSS in partnership with TCHD and TCPS held first conference September 2018 concerning Adverse Childhood Experiences and how trauma relates to behaviors
  - Second conference planned for Spring 2019, to help staff of agencies serving children and families understand the concept of trauma informed care, how to screen for Adverse Childhood Events, and programs that can address the prevention or decreased impact of ACEs
3. Expand the group convened to discuss prevention of addiction in children to include diverse stakeholders that will guide and support the partnership established by TCHD, TDSS, and TCPS.
4. Utilize existing funds and existing grant opportunities to expand programs/services for the 10 needs in the plan.
5. Note the gaps in services and develop plans for filling these gaps.