

Orange County Family, Infant, and Early Childhood Mental Health (FIECMH)

Initiative Update

Issue 3: May 2025



Thanks for being part of the FIECMH Partner Community!

In this newsletter, you'll find information about upcoming events and recent learnings from the initiative. Do you know others who may want to stay updated? Please share this newsletter!

Join Us!

In-Person Community Convening: June 3, 9:30-12:30 PST, Delhi Center, Santa Ana

Come to the FIECMH Initiative's next milestone meeting and help prioritize actions for moving forward with the road map for an Orange County that supports family mental health. We will also reflect on what we have learned from FIECMH working sessions and the work of aligned initiatives. This in-person meeting is for Orange County community members with an interest in supporting the mental health and well-being of families with young children (including expectant parents). Refreshments, translation, and childcare will be provided. Stipends are available for community members attending as parents or caregivers without organizational affiliation. Please identify your needs when you register.

**REGISTER
HERE**

Recent Progress

Learnings from the April 25 Working Session on the Workforce

FIECMH partners met to discuss the state of the workforce in Orange County, including role/job types that support FIECMH, strengths and gaps, existing training and educational programs, and potential opportunities. Participants also discussed ideas for engaging non-clinical professionals who work with families (such as teachers, librarians, and coaches) in efforts for mental health promotion and prevention.

Themes to continue exploring at our next convening included:

- Expanding the definition of the FIECMH workforce
- Recruitment of professionals focused on 0-5 year olds, including cross-training and re-training
- Retention of the current FIECMH workforce
- Needs for ongoing professional development for those who work with families with young children

Reflection and Feedback from the May 20 FaCT Conference

In partnership with [Start Well](#), the FIECMH Initiative hosted a session at the [FaCT Annual Conference](#) on how to support a whole-child, whole-family, and whole-community approach to mental health and wellness. 160 attendees participated in a session where they learned about FIECMH and its importance and received actionable tools to use in Family Resource Centers and beyond. In an activity to discuss opportunities to enhance the way families experience the continuum of care in their communities, participants overwhelmingly identified meeting families' basic needs as the top priority for supporting early childhood mental health.

To see the presentation and the many resources that were shared, [click here](#).



Update on Grant Solicitation

While Orange County did not receive the \$4 million [grant from the State of California's Commission on Behavioral Health](#), the funding will go to support St. John's Community Health and Foothill Family Services—two organizations working to help families and communities recover after the Los Angeles fires. Although disappointing for Orange County, the silver lining was realizing how much we can do with our existing resources given the wealth of experience and know-how in our region. To build on the connections made during the grant process and ensure we're ready for new funding opportunities, the group met on May 21 to discuss ongoing collaboration.

What's Coming Up Next

- **Online priority-setting conversation for parents and caregivers on June 24 (6:00-7:00 p.m.) and June 27 (12:00-1:00 p.m.):** Sessions where parents, caregivers, and other family members can provide input on priorities for a countywide approach to family mental health. Please share [this flyer](#) or register [here](#).
- **July 30 Community Update (10:00-11:00 a.m.):** Community updates are open to all community members who want to contribute to the development of the FIECMH continuum of care in Orange County. A registration link will be shared in our next newsletter.
- **From aligned initiatives helping to increase our learning:**
 - **The OC Health Care Agency** will be hosting community information sessions on the impact of Prop 1 and the Behavioral Health Services Act. There will be [planning meetings](#) in the coming months with community members and people with expertise in perinatal behavioral health, early childhood development, and FIECMH work to inform the details around implementation.

FIECMH stands for **Family, Infant, and Early Childhood Mental Health**. The OC FIECMH Initiative is focused on infants and children (and their caregivers) because the roots of lifelong mental health—and health and well-being more broadly—start at birth (or before). For everyone to be as healthy and well as possible, emphasizing early, proactive, and protective support versus reactive treatment is key.

The initiative's work is to envision what a "continuum of care" (the full range of supports for mental health and well-being) looks like for Orange County families. Our goal is to work together to create a road map for how we do this, and make sure that the continuum of care envisioned by families, community partners, and systems leaders is realized and sustained.

Questions or comments? Please email us: fiecmh@healthplusstudio.com

Please share this newsletter! Forward it to staff you know at Orange County public agencies, community-based organizations, and local advocates serving children and families, as well as health care providers and families interested in knowing about and participating in the initiative.

The FIECMH Initiative is supported by funding from First 5 Orange County and Orange County Health Care Agency.

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