

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

*Initiative Update*

Issue 4: July 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!

#### Virtual Community Update: July 30, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. PST

Please join us for our next community update! We will share what we learned during our convening on June 3 and talk about what the next phase of the work will include.

To receive a calendar invite with the video link, use the button below to register. Hope to see you there!

[Register Here](#)

### Recent Progress

#### Reflecting on the In-Person Community Convening

48 community partners came together at the Delhi Center on June 3 for the FIECMH Initiative's second in-person gathering. The group included parents, staff from local organizations, county agency leaders, and many others. Participants reflected on the community's vision for the FIECMH continuum of care, as well as the data gathered about the systems, services, and workforce supporting FIECMH in Orange County. Partners used the data (and their own lived experience) to work together and identify priorities for the

Some of the themes that came out of the discussion included:

- **Vision:** Participants called for leaders to make sure community voice stays at the center of the vision. One way to do this, they suggested, is to continue creating fun ways for continued engagement. Many also agreed that meeting basic needs is essential to family mental well-being.
- **Services:** The service map highlighted how many services focus on intervention—rather than promotion and prevention. There is also an awareness gap. Improving access to preventive care could include providing space for parents and community members to share and learn from one another about resources.
- **Systems:** Participants highlighted the importance of making sure this work continues after the roadmap is developed. They also pointed out that we need to find a way to make sure that community members with all types of insurance can be connected to the right services.
- **Workforce:** Organizations need more staff and better pay to prevent burnout and decrease turnover. Participants also suggested educating a wider range of providers to broaden the FIECMH workforce.

You can find more resources from the convening, including slides and activity materials, using the button below.

[View More Resources](#)



## Insights from Priority-Setting Sessions with Families

In two separate Zoom calls, parents and caregivers shared their top priorities for improving mental health support for families with young children in Orange County.

There were many recurring themes, such as meeting basic needs, connecting families to services more quickly, and creating opportunities for

parents to learn about child development.

- **Unmet basic needs (like access to stable housing, employment, food, and childcare) affect family mental health and well-being.** Families without a long-term address may experience challenges in connecting to crucial services. Parents who work physically demanding jobs, more than one job, or have opposite work schedules can find it harder to attend to the emotional needs of their children. When parents are operating in survival mode, it is harder to be present with their families, which creates an ongoing feedback loop of stress.
- **Services are not always easy for parents and families to access, even when they are aware of them.** Complicated paperwork and phone trees can present “bricks in the way” of connecting to the resources they need. To help with this, parents suggested a “warmline” that they can call to receive one-on-one support. They also suggested asking community members, advocates, and local organizations to help with outreach. This could help shorten the bridges between families and the help they need.
- **Creating opportunities for parents to learn more about early childhood development and behavior can help support family well-being.** Parents are interested in learning more about early childhood development and milestones. They hope that this will help them understand and manage their children’s behavior, and seek help early on if needed—before they reach a crisis point.

## What's Coming Up Next

### Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) Regional Community Forums

Changes to state funding under the Behavioral Health Services Act impact the FIECMH continuum of care. The Orange County Health Care Agency is hosting a series of in-person community forums about these changes. The sessions are a good opportunity to help identify needed services for individuals, their families, and loved ones affected by mental health and substance use challenges.

The forums will be held in North, Central, and South Orange County in the last two weeks of July. People with lived experience seeking behavioral healthcare, as well as their family members, are eligible for help with transportation and a stipend for participating. Interpretation is also available for those who need it. More information and the registration form are available using the button below. **Please register early as space is limited!**

[Register Here](#)

[More BHSA Resources](#)

You can learn more about the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) by exploring the following resources:

History of Prop 1

BHSA Goals and Priority Population

Additional Resources

---

**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 roadmap 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](mailto: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 healthcare 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.*

---

Was this email forwarded to you? [Sign up](#) to get it in your inbox.

This newsletter was developed by [Health+ Studio](#).



First 5 Orange County | 1505 E. 17th Street Suite 230 | Santa Ana, CA 92705 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)