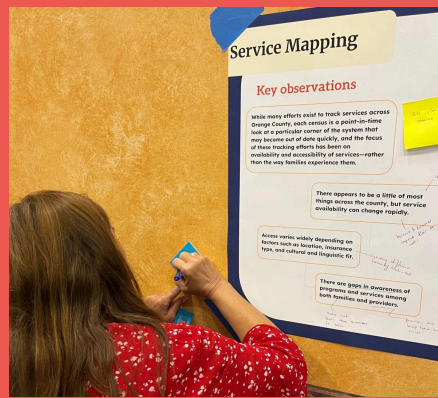


# Orange County Family, Infant, and Early Childhood Mental Health (FIECMH)

Initiative Update  
Issue 8: May 2026



After two years of listening, planning, and building together, Orange County has a [community-designed Roadmap](#) for supporting the mental health of every family with a young child—from before birth through age 8. Now our task is to come together across sectors and zip codes to build the connections that make that possible for every family, in every community. This newsletter is how we stay connected and keep the work moving.

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## Our Purpose for 2026

Over the last two years, we've worked together on an extensive plan to better meet the mental health needs of families with young children in Orange County. It was exciting to publish the [Roadmap](#) and distribute it to everyone in the network, local advocates, community groups, public agencies and beyond. Now it's time to ensure that all this hard work gets translated into action.

## In 2026, the Initiative will focus on three goals:

1. Sharing the Roadmap widely and ensuring that partners and county agencies understand it so that more organizations and collaboratives can meaningfully embed its priorities into their existing work.
2. Developing tools and launching action groups to help partners put the Roadmap's five strategies to work in their own organizations and communities.
3. Growing the network—because the cracks in our system cannot be filled by any one organization working alone.

## ICYMI: April 10 Community Update

### Moving Towards Implementation

At the first community update of the year, community partners reviewed the priority areas and strategies laid out in the Roadmap, discussed the implementation activities currently underway, and shared some of the things they need in order to bring the Roadmap into their own work:

- Tools to share the Roadmap clearly with colleagues in healthcare, housing, and government
- Clearer navigation resources for connecting families to services

- A stronger link between the Roadmap and Prop 1/BHSA planning happening right now across the county

If you missed the meeting, you can access the slide deck and recording by clicking the button below:

[Slide Deck and Recording](#)

## NEW: Outreach Toolkit for Network Partners—Use It and Share It

One of the clearest requests at the April 10 meeting was for tools to help partners share the Roadmap consistently and confidently with colleagues, funders, and community members who haven't yet encountered it.

With this input, we've developed an [Outreach Toolkit](#) that includes ready-to-use templates for emails, social media posts, and newsletter blurbs—all designed to be adapted for your audience and your voice. Whether you are a healthcare provider, a community organization, an educator, or a county agency, the toolkit gives you a starting point for bringing new partners into this work.

The partners we most need to reach right now include pediatricians and family practitioners, decision-makers in county and city government, educators and school district representatives, health systems like CalOptima, and nonprofits and family resource centers not yet connected to the Initiative.

To view and download the toolkit, click the button below:

[Outreach Toolkit for Network Partners](#)

## Ways To Take Action Right Now

With the toolkit in hand, here are some concrete steps you can take to put the Roadmap into practice in your communities:

- **Talk to one new person about the Roadmap this month.** Use the Outreach Toolkit to reach a colleague, funder, or community partner who hasn't yet heard about this work. Awareness is infrastructure—and it starts with you.
- **Tell us about work in your organization that connects to the Roadmap.** We are looking for partners to feature in upcoming newsletter spotlights. If your organization is doing work aligned with any of the five Roadmap strategies—especially navigation and accessibility to services, where there is currently no initiative-level activity—email us at [fiemh@healthplusstudio.com](mailto:fiemh@healthplusstudio.com).
- **Share why this work is important to you.** Stories are an important communication tool. Help us tell the story of FIECMH by sharing why you're involved in this work, and why it's so important for Orange County.

[Share Your "Why"](#)

## Upcoming Events

**Next Virtual Community Update:** July 10, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. | Registration link to be shared via email.

**In-Person Convening: Later in 2026** | Planning is underway. Stay tuned—details to come!

Have a relevant event to share with the network? Email [fiemh@healthplusstudio.com](mailto:fiemh@healthplusstudio.com).

## Roadmap Connection

With your help, our community is building an ecosystem of care throughout the county. One of five strategies in the OC FIECMH Roadmap is *Strengthening Capacity at the Organizational and Systems Level*; in other words, ensuring that the people and organizations families turn to have the tools, knowledge, and support to actually help. A key part of that strategy is expanding the Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce so more families can be reached where they are, in their language, by someone who understands their experience.

It's easy for families to get lost navigating our county's complex system of services. Community Health Workers, sometimes called promotores, are trained health professionals who work within their own communities: helping families understand early childhood development, connecting them to services, and addressing basic needs that affect the whole family's well-being. CHW services are also a reimbursable Medi-Cal benefit. Across Orange County, a growing network of community organizations, nonprofits, and training programs is building exactly this kind of workforce.

**Want to learn more?** [Click here to read the full story on the FIECMH blog.](#)

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  
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