

Texas LAUNCH Early Childhood Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 16, 2018



In Attendance:

Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Title V-Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN)		
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Non Profit Organizations		
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Texas Project LAUNCH Staff Support		
Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health (TIEMH)-UT Austin		
Molly Lopez	Principal Investigator, Texas LAUNCH	Mlopez@austin.utexas.edu
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Arnold Amador	State Evaluator, Texas LAUNCH	Arnoldo.amador@austin.utexas.edu
Aliviane Inc.		
Judy Willgren	Local Lead, Texas LAUNCH	jwillgren@aliviane.org
Texas LAUNCH Community Contractors		
Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (YSDP)		
Linda Wiley	Project LAUNCH Community Lead-Developmental Specialist for YSDP	lwiley@ydsp-nsn.gov
MHMR of Tarrant County		
Laura Kender	Chief of Early Childhood Services	Laura.Kender@mhmrtc.org
Family Service Association of San Antonio, Inc.		
Fred Cardenas	Manager – Early Childhood Well Being	fcardenas@Family-Service.org
Other Partner Attendees		
Name	Title	Email/Phone Number
Jacquie Porter	Statewide Director of Early Childhood	Jacquie.porter@tea.texas.gov

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** Ramah Leith opened the meeting at 1:02pm with introductions and a short icebreaker.
- II. **Texas LAUNCH Overview:** Ramah provided a brief synopsis of the Texas LAUNCH project for newcomers to have a better understanding of the work as well as creating a review for former members.
- LAUNCH stands for Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children’s Health. It’s a project funded by SAMHSA from 10/2015 – 9/2019, to support the social emotional development, mental health, and wellness of all children ages 0-8.
 - Texas LAUNCH is a collaboration between the Department of State Health Services Maternal Child Health, the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health through the School of Social Work at the University of Texas, and Aliviane, Inc. These entities combined create the projects state leadership team consisting of:
 - Ramah Leith - Project Director
 - Molly Lopez - TIEMH Director/Project Principle Investigator
 - Judy Willgren - Local Lead
 - Holly Gurslin - State Lead
 - Arnoldo Amador - State Evaluator
 - Texas LAUNCH has 4 Core Strategies:
 - Increase screening and assessment in a range of child serving settings
 - Provide family strengthening and parent skills training
 - Implement early childhood mental health consultation
 - Build early childhood competency in the workforce
 - Texas LAUNCH has 3 expansion communities who provide direct services to children 0-8 in all core strategy areas:
 - Family Services Association of San Antonio led by Fred Cardenas
 - The Tigua Tribe from Ysleta del Sur Pueblo led by Linda Wiley
 - My Health My Resources Tarrant County in Fort Worth led by Laura Kender
 - The Texas LAUNCH Early Childhood Committee (TLECC) has the mission to support the success and wellness of young children and their families throughout Texas and a vision to empower families to raise children to reach their full potential. Most member’s agencies have memorandums of understanding with the project to support and participate on the committee. Expansion of membership has come as needed.
 - The TLECC has 4 active subcommittees:
 - Developmental Screening – meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month 3-4:30pm led by Ramah Leith and Arnold Amador. The focus of this group is the promotion of universal early childhood screening across early childhood settings – supporting specifically the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaires and affecting state agency policy around screening.
 - Family Strengthening – meets the 3rd Thursday of the month from 1-2pm led by Judy Willgren. The focus of this group is to support the statewide use of evidence-based parenting programs and normalize the need for parent education.

- Mental Health Consultation/Workforce Development – meets as needed with the focus on building a statewide infrastructure for Mental Health Consultation across early childhood settings. In addition, this group promotes and supports all workforce development opportunities regarding early childhood providers.
- Suspension/Expulsion – meets the last Tuesday of the month from 9-10:30am led by Judy Willgren and Holly Gurrslin. The focus is to examine the state’s status around suspension and expulsion and build on prevention/collaboration across state agencies.

III. **New Binder Materials: (see attached materials)** Holly Gurrslin provided the group a summary of new materials handed out at the beginning of the meeting which are to be added to committee member’s binders handed out at the last meeting:

- Project Summary Sheet – was updated to include Arnold Amador the new State Evaluator for Texas LAUNCH;
- Roster – includes all the names and contract information for members of the TLECC so others can network and have access for future collaboration;
- Acronyms Sheet – new and created to address the mass amount of acronyms used at state and subcommittee meetings to assist new members;
- Workgroup Updates – a new handout providing subcommittee workgroup updates from the last quarter;
- Community Updates – a new handout proving updates on the progress of the expansion communities in the last quarter;
- Agenda for current meeting.

IV. **Workgroup Breakout Time:** Three of the four subcommittees met to continue their activities in advancing outlined workgroup goals. (Suspension/Expulsion workgroup does not meet during this time). Minutes from these portions will be provided by workgroup leaders to that membership.

V. **Suspension/Expulsion Plan Overview:** Judy Willgren provided an overview of the new subcommittee workgroup and its progress since conceptualization. The purpose of this group was to bring key early childhood stakeholders together to comprehensively address the issue of suspension/expulsion in the state through a coordinated system; working to align policy, coordinated training, and increase support for children with challenging behaviors. Membership includes key state level early childhood stakeholders, front line field providers, policy leaders and parent representatives.

- This group created a Texas Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Matrix (TECSEM), which is a crosswalk/overview of all of the current policies and supports already in place to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children with behavioral concerns. A dissemination plan has been set in place and members may be receiving it soon through their list-serves.
 - A parent engagement specialist and parent representative will be utilizing the matrix in their coursework with a Harvard University program on Parent Engagement. A new parent document will be created as a companion document to notify parents of what policies and supports are in place if they have a child with challenging behaviors or disabilities.

- The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC), funded through ACF, is the training and TA system that supports the lead agency for the Child Care Development Block Grant (TWC). The SCBC created a tool for states to evaluate their progress in implementing policies and providing supports to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children in early childhood programs especially those who receive supplemental childcare funds. The group began collaborating with SCBC and will be utilizing the Policy Tool moving forward in strategic planning efforts.
 - As part of SCBC's support, they provided a compilation of other states work in this similar area to support the garnering of ideas and thoughts on key policy levers for the workgroup.
- Next steps for this workgroup include hosting a full day strategic planning session, planned for September 21st at the Office of Child Care Licensing, with its partners to develop action steps, policies, supports, training and family engagement activities for the next year.

VI. **Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (YDSP) Expansion Community Discussion:** Linda Wiley expressed the need for support around mental health consultation (MHC) specifically around children with challenging behaviors and the child-focused support. Fred Cardenas suggested an expansion community collaboration where he would send staff to support efforts in El Paso.

VII. **Family Services Association of San Antonio:** Fred Cardenas reported challenges surrounding LAUNCH implementation and requested ideas/support from membership:

- Fred reported that communities with higher basic needs and high levels of disparities are often more challenging to implement new programming with providing an example of a new childcare center the expansion community is working with that needs high levels of support for staff, processes and policies, and professional development. The new center has some staff willing to learn new ways of working with children but not all staff. Fred reported concern for his staff's burnout and child safety concerns within the center.
 - Group suggested seeking support from Child Care Licensing to see if there are direct licensing violations.
- Parent engagement continues to be a challenge, however, Fred reported that when parents/families do come together for services they are engaged and evaluation is positive. The group discussed the importance of working with the right partners that are accessible and relevant to families.
- Limited resources for young children in the San Antonio community continues to pose a concern for children who need extensive or comprehensive support services. Group provided some suggested resources such as ECI, 211, Psychiatric support, etc.

VIII. **My Health My Resources Tarrant County (MHMR-TC):** Laura Kender reported on the challenge of keeping up with the demand for Ages and Stages support. MHMR-TC has provided multiple workforce development opportunities within their early childhood community to engage stakeholders in the use of the ASQ and the online data tracking system (Enterprise) supported by MHMR. Since so many people are interested in continued support and data tracking the demand has become too large for their single team, specifically trying to obtain data on grant required items like follow-up and referral. Group

asked questions regarding the online data system (Enterprise) and the extent of data collection. MHMR-TC has hired a new data person who will oversee the Enterprise system project and is already working with LAUNCH evaluators to address data needs.

IX. **Community Support Activities:** Judy Willgren reported the following local technical assistance activities for the last quarter:

- Provided an ASQ training in YDSP for the child care center staff;
- Continued to host monthly calls with each expansion community to address work in the core strategies, report success stories and challenges, and address any implementation/sustainability or behavioral health disparity plan needs;
- Hosted an Incredible Years Community of Learners call where all providers from each expansion community, who are implementing/leading Incredible Years and PC groups, could come together and learn from each other on successes and challenges;
- Hosted a peer-to-peer call, with Rhode Island’s LAUNCH team and the TX. LAUNCH expansion communities, to discuss the implementation and success of Parent Cafés. Judy reported that Rhode Island is interested in a follow-up call to learn more.
- Hosted a peer-to-peer call with Massachusetts regarding expansion community behavioral health disparity plans – assisting the TX LAUNCH expansion communities with learning how to implement, evaluate and integrate the plans into their work. This call supported by the Texas LAUNCH former technical assistance support Patty Cameron.
- Continued working on expansion community’s behavioral health disparity plans. San Antonio’s topic addresses suspension and expulsion and thus they have been asked to join the state workgroup. The TLECC has requested to hear more about the plans in future meetings.
- Will host a Pyramid Model Training (formally known as CSEFEL) August 23-24th in Austin and is expected to serve 90 people. There will be two tracks of training that align with the Endorsement ® system of First3Years which could support participants in their ability of obtain the Infant Mental Health Endorsement®. This training supports the core strategy of Mental Health Consultation – providing participants with tools and strategies to promote the social emotional development of young children while reducing behavioral health disparities.
 - A Pyramid Model Training of Trainers will be offered September 17-18th in Austin with the goal of ensuring the implementation of high fidelity training on Pyramid Model practices system-wide, with a focus on supporting children 2-5 years of age. This training will be designed for those who are responsible for professional development of their early childhood workforce. The training will include an overview of the Pyramid model, review of Positive Behavior Supports, and Parent-Teacher Reinforced Support for Young Children (PTR-YC) which focuses on reducing challenging behavior and preventing intensive interventions. The target population has been outlined as: Early Childhood Intervention specialists, Infant Mental Health Consultants, Special Education Directors, Education Service Center staff including- PPCD, Pre-Kindergarten, SEL, School Psychologists, and Behavior Specialists; Head Start/Early Head Start Mental Health and Disability Managers, Texas Workforce Board TRS Mentor/Coaches; Behavior Network Specialists or state agency staff

who have oversight responsibility for promoting the social emotional development and well-being of young children. There will be 40 spots for this training. See Judy Willgren for more details.

X. **State Support Activities:** Holly Gurslin reported the following technical assistance activities for the last quarter:

- A new edition of the Texas LAUNCH newsletter was published in June - Edition 15 – that highlighted the: newly established National Early Childhood Family Network, a Parent Café video advertisement created by the Fort Worth expansion community staff, and the publishing of Endorsement® study materials no online.
 - State team is working on a means to track how many people are receiving the newsletter
- ASQ Training was provided to the Blue Bonnet Trails South Austin staff as well as Child Care Directors in San Antonio. These trainings were offered in support of the workforce development core LAUNCH strategy and the developmental screening goal of increasing the knowledge and use of the ASQ's.
- The LAUNCH Facebook page was highlighted as a great resource for facts, relevant news articles and workforce development opportunities. The Facebook page has recently highlight the:
 - Promotion of Texas Health Steps tutorial on integrating postpartum depression screening into infant medical checkups;
 - Sharing Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report on addressing health disparities through investments in early childhood systems;
 - Sharing information on discipline disproportionality for black boys beginning in Pre-K; Checked into Achieving Health Equity workshop sponsored by Prevention and Early Intervention with Dr. Camara Jones.
- The LAUNCH website page was highlighted as a great resources for information on Texas LAUNCH – including the 1-page project briefing, expansion and expulsion plans, TLECC meeting minutes, hosts all LAUNCH newsletters, resources such as the marketing infographic for LAUNCH activities in year 2 and other supportive resources. The state team urged members to become familiar with the website as a resource.
- The following upcoming trainings were highlighted:
 - Pyramid Model Training - (see information above)
 - ASQ Training of Trainers – will be held September 10-12 for 30 participants who went through an application process
 - Pyramid Model Training of Trainers - (see information above)
 - A Save-The-Date September 28, 2018 for an Orientation to Mental Health Consultation and the Georgetown Framework and Resources Training of Trainers. Amy Hunter from Georgetown University will be coming to Austin to provide a brief MHC-TOT
 - Additionally this date will host a meeting of local early childhood consortiums and coalition leaders to begin discussions around mental health consultation and their status of knowledge and use.
 - Holly Gurslin will be releasing information on this event soon.

XI. **State Evaluation Update:** Molly Lopez provided an up-to-date picture of data collected regarding year three goals. 775/750 (103%) screenings have been completed for this year-to-

date. This goal has been reached quickly due to the rise in screening use in the Fort Worth area. 74/80 (92.5%) parents have been trained in the Incredible Years Program which is reportedly on track to meeting year end goals. 616/56 parents have been trained in the Parent Café Be Strong Families model. Molly reported that this model is being widely accepted at the community level in all three expansion communities. Finally, 49/30 mental health consultation cases have been reported. All goals have been surpassed or are on track for being completed at the end of the fiscal year.

Due to the success of the Parent Café model, Molly provided a data-narrative around the implementation of PC's.

- The goals for the Parent Café model were reported as follows:
 - Building meaningful relationships and authentic partnerships;
 - Conversations that elicit change and inspire families and communities to be agents of change;
 - Nurture the spirit of family and strengthen families from the inside out;
 - Promote healing;
 - Change negative image of low-income families and families of color
- Parent Cafés incorporate Five Protective Factors:
 - Parental Resilience – Being Strong and Flexible;
 - Social Connections – Parents Need Friends;
 - Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development – Being a Great Parent is Part Natural and Part Learned;
 - Concrete Support in Times of Need – Everybody Needs Help Sometimes;
 - Social and Emotional Competence of Children – Parents Need to Help Their Children Communicate.
- Molly reported on progress for Texas LAUNCH on the promotion and implementation of Parent Cafes to-date, which included 3 expansion communities, 54 parent cafés and 616 parents served. Doing a deeper dive into the data Molly reported that 92% of the attendees for the PC's being offered are female with the majority of the attendees being between the ages of 22-40. Important data was shared on the race/ethnicity breakdown of attendees with the majority identifying as Black and the minority identifying as Multi-cultural. Finally, the majority number of children per attendee was calculated as one.
- Molly shared Parent Café evaluation outcomes that support the continued use of this model. Some of those outcomes include (but are not limited to):
 - 98.7% of participants shared that the event was helpful
 - 98.5% of participants would recommend PC's to a friend or family member
 - 95.3% of participants plans to attend another event in the future
 - 94.2% of participants have learned new ways to handle stress or challenges in their lives
 - 96% of participants plan to take better care of themselves.
- In regards to engagement, Molly reported that 39% of participants had attended a Parent Café in the past and that 98% report that the event made a positive change in their lives.
- Molly discussed how this data could be used at both the state and local levels to show positive outcomes to the model and its current mode of implementation.

- XII. **Continuous Quality Improvement:** Holly Gurrslin led the group in a brief discussion around Continuous Quality Improvement beginning by explaining the purpose – to improve meeting quality to meet the needs of the participants and continue to support engagement. Members provided the following feedback:
- Having workgroup meetings at the beginning continues to be a strength for engagement of the group;
 - Having materials electronically is good – requests those materials be sent farther in advance to prepare for meeting;
 - Meeting time is a good length – would prefer something earlier in the day.
- XIII. **Closing:** Ramah closed the meeting and announced the next meeting for November 15, 2018 from 1pm-5pm.