

7th Annual KIDS COUNT Conference
Wednesday, June 26, 2019
Breakout Learning Session Summaries

Boys at Risk: The Boy Crisis as an Infant Mental Health Issue

Presenter(s): Paul Golding, Ph.D., Director, Santa Fe Boys Foundation
Topic: Early Mental Health of Boys
Thematic Area(s): Culture of Health

Session Description: “Boys at Risk” is a phrase employed to define the underlying vulnerabilities that too many boys experience. These are manifested in adolescence and adulthood as school failure, criminal activity, violence perpetration, unstable employment, and frequent and long incarcerations (among other negative outcomes) – all statistically much more likely to be suffered by males. The concept rests on the relation between being a young male and the greater probable occurrence of certain early-in-life psychopathologies – usually externalizing disorders like ADHD, impulsivity, and antisocial or conduct disorders. Understanding boys at risk – the overarching learning objective of this presentation – requires appreciating the complex intermixing of an individual boy’s biological, psychological, and social circumstances and how these may interact probabilistically starting in infancy to result in these negative outcomes predominately associated with males.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Define the meaning of boys at risk
2. Describe examples of the almost unique vulnerabilities of some males to being at risk.
3. Explain the manifestation and scope of boys at risk and the underlying etiology.
4. Elaborate the bio-psycho-social model and relate it to boys’ development and boys at risk.

Multi-level Strategies to Improve the Well-Being of Children of Immigrants

Presenter(s): Megan Finno-Velasquez, Ph.D., Director, Center on Immigration & Child Welfare
Sophia Sepp, Center for Immigration & Child Welfare
Topic: Immigration and Child Well-being
Thematic Area(s): Advocacy for Change

Session Description: Immigration policies have become increasingly punitive and have dire consequences for children and families in the U.S. More than 18 million children in immigrant families in the U.S. today live with the ongoing psychological and legal stress of the threat of potential deportation or separation from parents and family. Impacts of the immigration-related stress that these children experience may constitute trauma, and social service providers and other professionals should be prepared to respond in a way that mitigates the negative impacts on children. Several strategies for individual and organizational practice will be presented, along with recommendations for policy and systems change.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Identify relevant immigration policies that impact family unity and child well-being.
2. Describe risks to children and typical symptoms of trauma experienced by children affected by recent immigration enforcement efforts.
3. Identify individual- and organizational-level strategies that service providers can implement to mitigate the traumatic impact of immigration policies on children and their parents.

Financial Inclusion and Opportunity for All New Mexicans

Presenter(s): Ona Porter, Founding President and CEO, Prosperity Works
Jill Geltmaker, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Prosperity Works
Topic: Financial Equity and Asset Building
Thematic Area(s): Equity; Family Economic Security

Session Description: New Mexicans are struggling with reaching and maintaining financial security and stability for a variety of reasons. These include high debt burdens for college graduates, low-paying jobs, limited opportunities for advancement within New Mexico’s employment sector, and a range of issues that contribute to the racial and gender wealth gap. In order to ensure financial inclusion and opportunity for all New Mexicans, we must begin to address the root causes of financial instability through implementation of both practical tools and development of effective public policy. This can include employer-based initiatives that better support employees (employer-based lending, support in paying back student loans, adequate benefits like sick time) and in policy that addresses the racial and gender wealth gaps (access to paid family leave and sick time, salary scales based on experience – not the applicant’s recent wages, and access to retirement accounts).

Session Learning Objectives:

1. A better understanding of the realities of the racial and gender wealth gap.
2. Current practical programming and products that can support New Mexico families in becoming financially secure.
3. Potential policy frameworks that can support the reduction of the racial and gender wealth gaps.

Challenging Behavior and Disenrollment in Early Childhood Settings

Presenter(s): Matthew Bernstein, Senior Staff Attorney, Pegasus Legal Services for Children
Claire Dudley-Chavez, Education Policy Advisor to Mayor Keller
Andrew Breidenbach, Research Scientist, UNM Cradle to Career Policy Institute
Lily Hofstra, Student, UNM School of Law & Pegasus Legal Services for Children
Hailey Heinz, Policy Researcher, UNM Cradle to Career Policy Institute
Topic: Early Childhood Education
Thematic Area(s): Education

Session Description: There is growing consensus among policymakers, researchers, and advocates that early childhood education must be a core strategy to improve the well-being and life prospects of children in New Mexico. And yet those most in need of services are the very children most likely to be pushed out of early learning settings due to challenging and disruptive behaviors. We present original, local data collected from early childhood educators about the prevalence of persistently challenging behaviors in their classrooms, their strategies for responding to such behaviors, and how frequently children are dis-enrolled from their classrooms due to behavioral challenges. This presentation will review survey data, place it in the context of national research and best practices from other states, and will present a menu of policy recommendations that New Mexico could pursue to address exclusionary discipline in early childhood.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the national and local landscape of exclusionary discipline in early childhood education.
1. Become familiar with local data on the prevalence of exclusionary discipline in New Mexico.
2. Become aware of policy solutions and best practices that they can advocate for in their own community roles.

Powering the Moonshot: Using Technology to Build Community and Connect Parents

Presenter(s): Jennifer Matthews, Organizer, OLÉ NM

Treashaun Buffin, Member, OLÉ NM
Brian Gillepsie, Member, OLÉ NM
Fred Whiteman-Jennings, Member, OLÉ NM
Michaela Gallegos, Member, OLÉ NM
Organizing Parents, Early Childhood Care
Equity

Topic:

Thematic Area(s):

Session Description: OLÉ members work to expand access to early education for every child in New Mexico by focusing on the unique issues faced by parents and early educators in the classroom. This is a major issue for members at OLÉ because providing high-quality early education has been shown to improve the outcomes of children. This presentation will explore how using a lens of equity versus equality to look at current roles and interactions with New Mexico’s child care system can improve outcomes. Navigating the systems of child care can be challenging and this presentation will highlight common obstacles parents must navigate in search of high-quality, affordable child care, as well as an innovative solution developed by OLÉ’s United Parents group who are experts in navigating access to early childhood education – an app for smartphones to help create a level playing field to access information, which in turn aims to ensure access to early childhood education for our most underserved communities.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Distinguish the difference between equity and equality.
2. Understand the importance of equity in access to high-quality early childhood education.
3. Learn how to use technology to bridge gaps in accessibility, especially in rural areas of New Mexico.

The Power of Language: Overcoming Language Trauma for Improved Academic, Social, and Economic Outcomes

Presenter(s): Edward Tabet-Cubero, Executive Director, The Learning Alliance
Topic: Bilingual Education Practice and Policy
Thematic Area(s): Education; Equity

Session Description: From physical punishment in the past to current school testing practices, New Mexico’s diverse learners have had their native languages replaced with English for generations. Come discuss the impact of linguistic trauma on school children and how to overcome it by investing in one of our greatest assets – our diverse languages across New Mexico! What’s the difference between “bilingual education” and “dual-language education”? Are these programs available to all children, or just speakers of languages other than English? What are the benefits of bilingual and dual-language education programs? How do we ensure early childhood providers with the best of intentions don’t continue inflicting trauma on our youngest New Mexicans? How do advocates leverage our state constitution, over 100 years of progressive language policy, and over 40 years of research to expand bilingual and dual language programs across the state, ensuring more equitable outcomes for all? Please join this discussion on how to move New Mexico forward by reversing generations of linguistic colonization.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Connect personal/family experiences with language and bilingualism to New Mexico’s schooling practices.
2. Develop an understanding the gap between New Mexico’s progressive bilingual education policy and actual practice in the classroom.
3. Analyze how trauma has been induced on linguistically diverse learners from 1912 to 2019.
4. Articulate the academic, social, and economic benefits of providing quality bilingual education.

Promoting Family Economic Security through Education Support Programs

Presenter(s): Robin Brulé, Senior VP of Community Relations, Nusenda
Darrell Garcia, Assistant VP of Community Relations, Nusenda
Topic: Family Economic Security, Asset Building
Thematic Area(s): Family Economic Security; Equity

Session Description: This presentation will discuss achievements, hurdles, and key learnings around the development and implementation of educational support programs that promote economic security for individuals and families: 1) Financial Services Career Explorations, a program that gives high school students an opportunity to obtain employer-relevant education and training through industry-led curricula and internships. Participants will learn how a public-private partnership is effectively promoting education that is in tune with employer needs; and 2) Powering Success, a micro-assistance program that seeks to improve student retention and college graduation rates among vulnerable students in New Mexico. Participants will learn how providing access to capital can help at-risk students persevere in higher education. The presentation will share information on how to leverage community relationships to develop partnerships and demonstrate how this was important for the success of Nusenda's educational support programs.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how public-private partnerships in education present a viable approach to enhance standard curricula in public high schools and provide students with emergency financial and wrap-around supports in higher education.
2. Learn how to create industry-led internship programs to expand educational and career opportunities for New Mexico high school students.
3. Learn how to deploy value-add programming into systems-level efforts that leads to behavioral change, especially among vulnerable populations such as youth in or emerging from foster care.

Creating a Statewide Early Learning Strategic Plan: Preschool Development Grant Birth–5

Presenter(s): Andrew Gomm, MSW, Child & Family Support Bureau Chief, NM DOH
Topic: Early Learning, Early Intervention
Thematic Area(s): Education

Session Description: New Mexico was awarded \$5.4 million for the Preschool Development Grant Birth–5 (PDGB–5) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Department. This 1-year grant aims to help states and territories build a strong early childhood system for children birth to age five and their families. New Mexico has conceptualized an ambitious vision where each and every child, prenatal to age five, and their families in New Mexico will have equitable access to quality early learning opportunities to support their development, health, and well-being, ensuring they are ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Participants will learn about the exciting work being conducted under the PDGB–5 to build a quality early learning system for young children and their families in New Mexico and how they can contribute to the statewide early learning needs assessment and strategic planning process. Participants will also learn about the statewide early learning media campaign and a variety of professional development activities to improve the quality of early learning services being completed under the grant.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Learn about the activities being conducted under the Preschool Development Grant Birth–5 (PDGB–5) to build a quality early learning system in New Mexico.
2. Learn how data and information will be collected through the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS); community and stakeholder engagement, a statewide survey, as well as national research and research conducted with other states.
3. Learn how to contribute to statewide needs assessment and 3-year early learning strategic plan.

Mind-Body Tools for Self-Regulation: An Introduction to Trauma and Resiliency

Presenter(s): Bhanu Joy Harrison, LCSW
Topic: Trauma, Self-regulation, Mindfulness
Thematic Area(s): Culture of Health

Session Description: We experience everything in our lives through our bodies yet most of us do not understand our “operating system” – our nervous system. Stress and trauma affect not only adults but children as well, and kids usually express this through dysregulated behaviors and emotions. My presentation will cover the basics of trauma physiology, polyvagal theory and the need for safety to help you understand what you ‘see’ in your classroom or work with children. Through experiential practice and videos you will take home practical skills to use not only in your interactions with children, but in your own self-care and regulation.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Understand how trauma dysregulates the nervous system.
2. Be able to diagram the three nervous system states as described in Polyvagal Theory.
3. Build a resource list of mindful activities to balance the nervous system.
4. Gain experience by practicing regulation techniques.

How to Better Serve Young Parents and their Families – From a Youth Perspective

Presenter(s): Ezra Spitzer, Executive Director, NMCAN
Panel of NMCAN young parents, TBD
Topic: Foster Care, Young Parents, Juvenile Justice Systems
Thematic Area(s): Education; Equity

Session Description: Given that New Mexico experiences high rates of teen pregnancy, numerous community groups and government agencies provide family planning and parenting education and support. However, young parents impacted by systems are not accessing these resources or the resources are not meeting the needs of parents with a history of trauma. Resources and supports are important in helping these young people avoid cycles of inter-generational poverty and abuse and/or neglect. NMCAN conducted an environment scan to understand the reproductive and parenting needs of young people impacted by the foster care and juvenile justice systems and to identify what is already being done in our community around reproductive and parenting education, young parenting supports, and systemic advocacy. In this session we will present our findings, hear from young parents about their experiences accessing parenting supports, and offer recommendations for providers and the administration to improve services for these families.

Session Learning Objectives

1. Understand how current services are/are not meeting the needs of young parents.
2. Learn from young parents how outreach and services can be improved.

The Impact of the Invisibility Syndrome on New Mexico’s Black Children

Presenter(s): Dr. Stephanie McIver, Founder, NM Black Mental Health Coalition
Cathryn McGill, Founder & Director, NM Black History Organizing Committee
Topic: Mental Health of Black Children in New Mexico
Thematic Area(s): Advocacy for Change; Equity

Session Description: New Mexico has traditionally been referred to as a tri-cultural state (Native American, Anglo, and Hispanic). According to the 2010 Census, Blacks in New Mexico comprise approximately 2.5% of the total population, 60% of whom live in central New Mexico. The historical representation of the state as tri-cultural and the perceived statistical insignificance of Blacks in the total population has resulted in chronic underrepresentation of Blacks in the political, social, and cultural landscape. This is contrary to the consistent presence and contributions of Blacks who have been present in New Mexico since Estavanico in the 1500s. As a result, Black children are being raised and educated in an environment in which 1) their presence is not acknowledged, 2) roles models scarcely exist, 3) cultural practices and foundations are neither understood nor supported, and 4) they are overrepresented in depictions of wrongdoing and aberrant behavior.

Session Learning Objectives

1. Learn the concept of the “invisibility” and its effect on Black New Mexicans.
2. Learn to critically evaluate materials, programs and practices reinforcing the invisibility syndrome.
3. Learn methods for effecting change within organizations and their respective spheres of influence.

Community Collaboration to Address Food Access on the Navajo Nation

Presenter(s): Lydia Soo-Hyun Kim, MD, MPH, Pediatrician, Northern Navajo Medical Center
Jenna Cope, MPH, RD, LD, Public Health Nutritionist, Northern Navajo Medical Center

Topic: Food Insecurity and Access

Thematic Area(s): Culture of Health; Equity

Session Description: Food insecurity is defined as the disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources. The overall rate of food insecurity in the United States is 11.8% of the population, while food insecurity affects 28% of New Mexico’s children. Children and adults who are food insecure are at higher risk for chronic disease such as Type 2 Diabetes and Obesity. A multi-disciplinary team in Shiprock, NM (Navajo Nation), decided to approach food access from multiple levels. This team of providers, dietitians, nursing staff, community health staff, and community members worked on a multidisciplinary approach to improve food access. This includes the expansion of patient and family education, collaboration with local businesses, building partnerships with community organizations, and working on policy implementation. In this session we’ll discuss the background of childhood food insecurity and provide a case presentation of our different approaches to improve food access, including collaboration with local food banks, efforts to improve buying options at the local grocery store, efforts to pass a resolution with local government to promote healthy foods, formation of a community coalition, and the implementation and results of a fruit and vegetable prescription program.

Session Learning Objectives:

1. Learn about the rates of childhood food insecurity locally and nationally.
2. Understand food insecurity’s impact on health outcomes.
3. Learn about different opportunities to increase access to healthy foods in rural and/or tribal communities.