

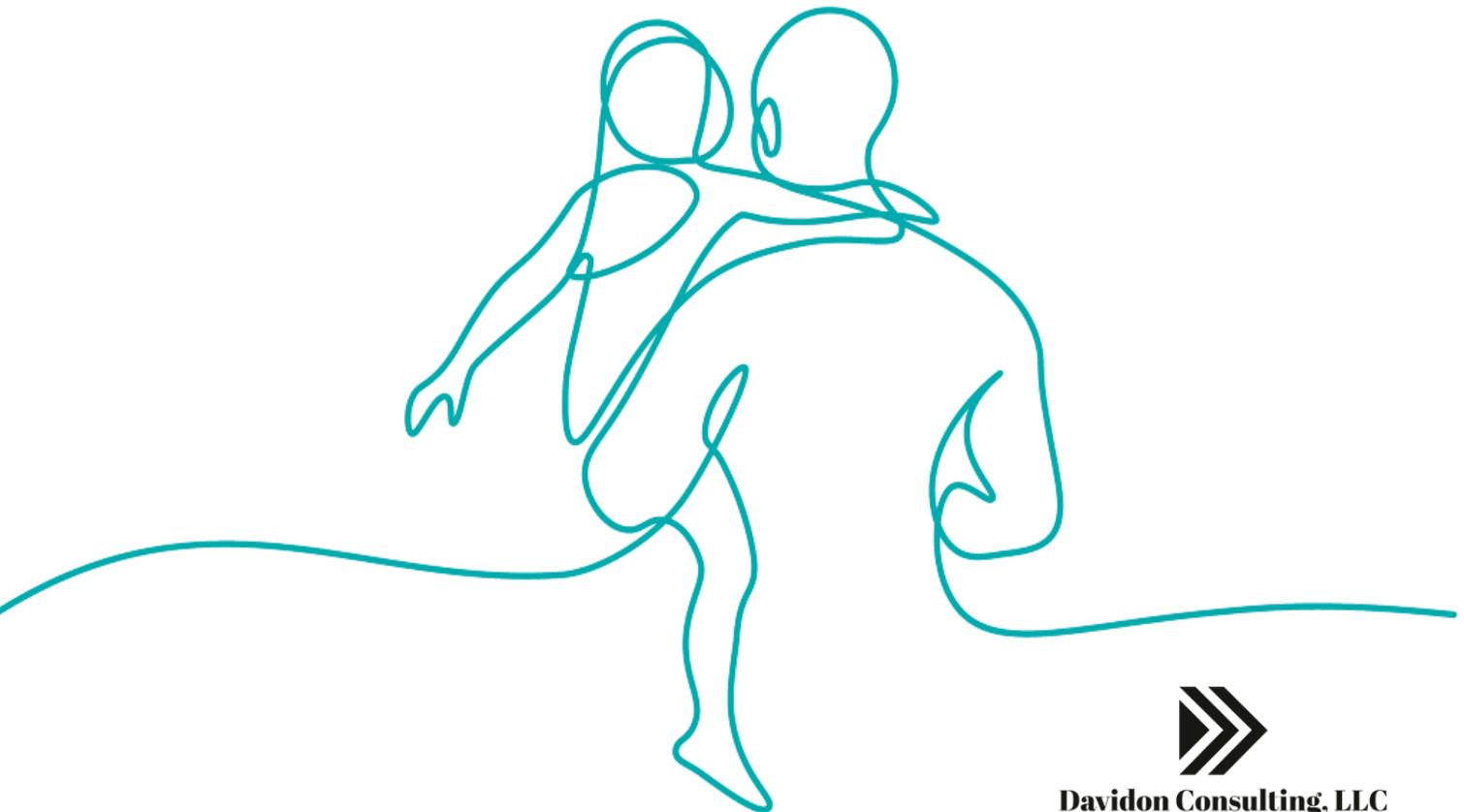


Policy Action Plan

Early Childhood Mental Health in Jefferson County, Colorado



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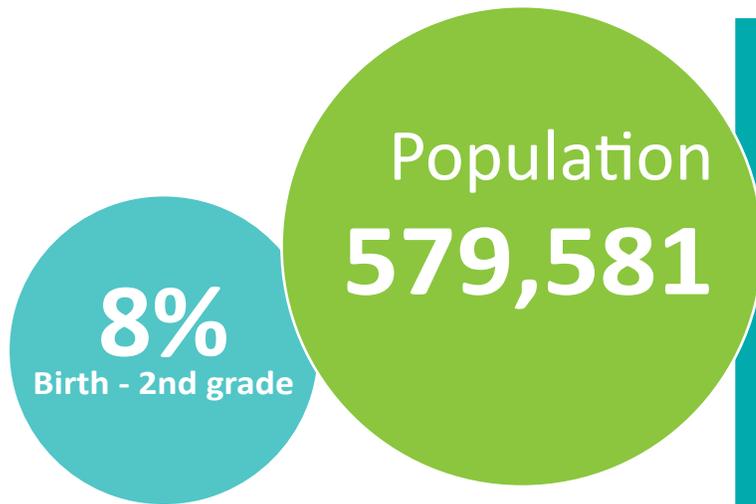
Davidon Consulting, LLC

Guiding children's mental health strategy

Our Purpose

To advance the work of the Jefferson County Bright Futures Roadmap in the areas of early childhood mental health (ECMH), social and emotional development, and behavioral wellness.

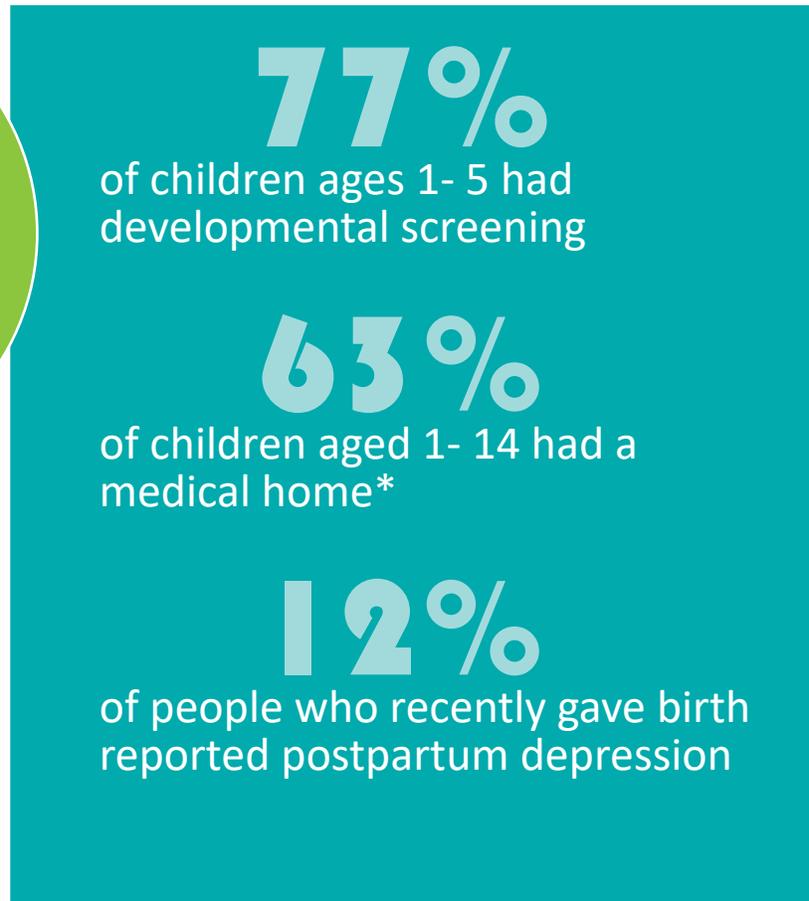




U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Jefferson County, Colorado. July 2021, [census.gov/quickfacts/jeffersoncountycolorado](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/jeffersoncountycolorado)

36,942
children enrolled in
Health First Colorado

Jefferson County Fact Sheet. Colorado Department of Health Care & Financing, 2021, hcpf.colorado.gov/sites/hcpf/files/Jefferson%20County%20fact%20sheet%20FY21.pdf



*Selected 2016 through 2019 Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Indicators by State. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 22 Apr. 2022, [cdc.gov/prams/prams-data/2019-selected-mch-indicators.html](https://www.cdc.gov/prams/prams-data/2019-selected-mch-indicators.html)

988
licensed child care &
preschool programs**

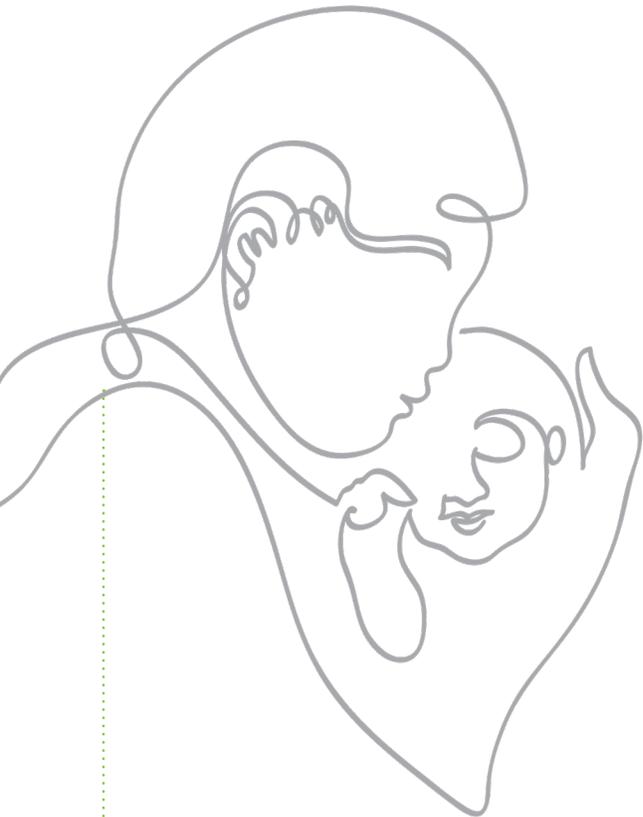
"Colorado Licensed Child Care Facilities Report." Colorado Information Marketplace, May 2022, data.colorado.gov/Early-childhood/Colorado-Licensed-Child-Care-Facilities-Report/a9rr-k8mu

*The medical home is described as an approach to primary care that is patient-centered, comprehensive, team-based, coordinated, accessible, and focused on quality and safety.

**Includes all non-24 hour childcare centers, licensed childcare homes, and preschool programs licensed by Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Early Learning Licensing and Administration (DELLA).



The 2019 - 2021 Jefferson County Community Health Improvement Plan released by Jefferson County Public Health identified **Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment** as one of four priority areas. Mental health, as defined in the Community Health Improvement Plan, refers to cognitive, emotional and behavioral well-being, ranging from wellness activities to medication and therapy.

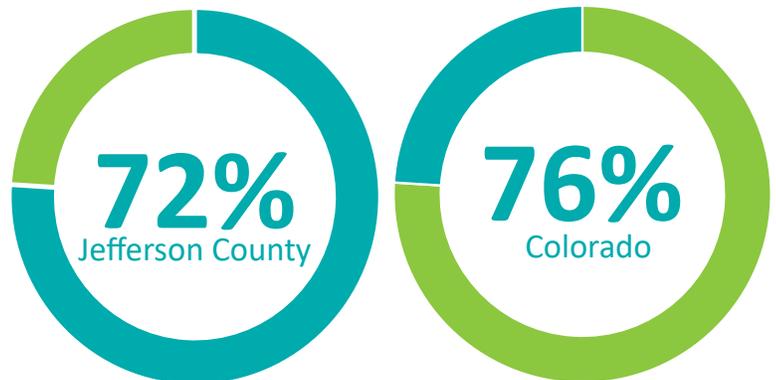


1 in 7

Jeffco residents age 5 or older did not receive the mental health care they needed in 2020.

While this population expands beyond early childhood, it's important to recognize access to mental health in the whole family context on a lifelong continuum.

2021 Colorado Health Access Survey: Health Insurance Coverage. Colorado Health Institute, 2021. Colorado Health Access Survey 2021 | Colorado Health Institute



Women reporting that prenatal care included discussion of what to do if mother became depressed during or after pregnancy (PRAMS, 2015-2017)

Selected 2016 through 2019 Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Indicators by State." Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 22 Apr. 2022, [cdc.gov/prams/prams-data/2019-selected-mch-indicators.html](https://www.cdc.gov/prams/prams-data/2019-selected-mch-indicators.html)

The development of positive social, emotional, and mental health during early childhood years can lay a strong foundation for healthy growth and development throughout childhood and into adulthood.



Introduction

About Early Childhood Mental Health.

Early childhood mental health spans a continuum from health promotion through intervention. “Early childhood social emotional development” and early childhood mental health” are used throughout this document. These phrases refer to the social, emotional, and behavioral growth of young children age birth to 8. There is a broad spectrum of growth that includes healthy development as well as social, emotional/mental health issues that might need services or supports.

In 2019, community partners convened over the course of a year to create the Bright Futures Roadmap - a comprehensive vision to help Jeffco families and children thrive. To further support families and children in Jefferson County (Jeffco), and refresh the work of the Bright Futures Roadmap, this report was developed, which focuses on ECMH strengths, needs, strategies, and opportunities in our community and identifies policy and funding mechanisms that could or do support ECMH.

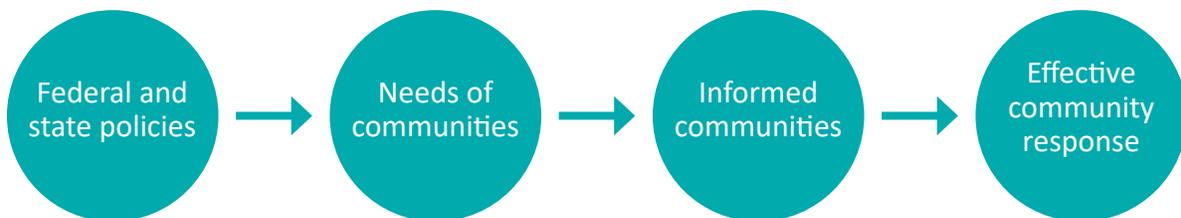
This document is intended to serve as a guide for early childhood mental health (ECMH) policy and funding initiatives and opportunities, and identify actionable strategies in Jeffco to inform community growth and investment from 2022-2025.

Research and expert review, along with eight comprehensive interviews with Jeffco family members, a county commissioner, community Mental Health Center staff, Early Childhood Council staff, a state legislator, Early Intervention staff, and other state and county stakeholders informed this report.



What is Policy?

The term policy means a formalized decision or action that provides direction for how systems, services, funding, or rules will be implemented. We can think of policies as “levers” that can be pulled to address or change systems or regulations on a broad scale.



FEDERAL LAWS



Often federal laws enforce minimum standards, and state laws can expand upon these to improve and scale-up service delivery, access, and funding.

COLORADO LAWS



States interpret federal rules and pass legislation on how to apply them.

COLORADO RULES & REGULATIONS



Once legislation has passed and it becomes law, these laws are put in effect by creating and enforcing rules & regulations.

COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION

Communities operate in the context of federal and state policies that can affect local government decisions relevant to early childhood mental health through laws and regulations, through the allocation of resources, and by shaping political will.

The Jeffco Bright Futures Roadmap reflects a shared community vision to best support the county's children, prenatal to age eight, and their families. The Roadmap identified four goals that serve as the Cornerstones of the Roadmap, with actionable strategies developed under each of the four Cornerstones. The Roadmap was developed in 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Additionally, major policy changes have been enacted in Colorado since the Roadmap was released, including the creation of the Department of Early Childhood and Universal Preschool Program (HB22-1295) and a new Behavioral Health Administration (HB22-1278). Community First Foundation checked in with the community to gauge current priorities, and learned that existing needs, particularly related to early childhood mental health, were critical now more than ever.

Families in Jefferson County have a variety of high-quality early care and education options that meet their needs and are provided through a mixed-delivery system.

CORNERSTONE #1: Options

1. Develop an implementation plan and secure a dedicated public funding stream for universal preschool and other early care and education initiatives by 2024.
2. Recruit, retain and support a qualified early care and education workforce across childcare and preschool settings.
3. Ensure school district and community based enrichment programs and activities (e.g. Library reading programs, before- and after-school programs, summer camps, childcare, etc.) are accessible to all who want to engage across age continuum or prenatal to eight years old.



Families in Jefferson County are supported in their roles as children's first and most important teachers through an array of home visitation services that meet their diverse needs.

CORNERSTONE #2: Home Visitation

1. Develop an implementation plan and explore funding for a universally accessible home visitation system, delivered through a cohesive mixed-delivery model in Jeffco by 2024.
2. Create coordinated intake and referral systems to home visitation in Jeffco, including navigators accessible via technology and in-person, supported by a referral database and beginning with a pilot project.
3. Recruit, retain and support a qualified home visitation workforce.



Programs and providers in Jefferson County have access to mental health consultation in order to fully support families' social-emotional wellbeing.

CORNERSTONE #3: Health & Wellness

1. Build public awareness of the importance and value of supporting social-emotional health of young children and their families.
2. Recruit, retain and support qualified infant and early childhood mental health consultants.
3. Assure the availability of mental health consultation for all types of child-serving settings.



Jefferson County has a robust screening, assessment and referral system that addresses physical, social-emotional, behavioral and social determinants of health.

CORNERSTONE #4: Systems Coordination

1. Create and implement coordinated early childhood development screening, assessment and referral systems to provide the most appropriate services to each individual child.
2. Create consumer-facing cross-agency data sharing technology solutions to improve families' connection to community supports and work more efficiently across agencies.
3. Create a coordinated early childhood navigation system (processes, infrastructure, staff).



Two Roadmap Cornerstones encompass early childhood mental health and social-emotional development, addressing two specific areas: early childhood mental health consultation and screening, assessment, and referral. It is important to recognize that while these two cornerstones are essential to Jeffco's young children and families, there are also other supports and services that must be considered to make a more robust ECMH system.

CORNERSTONE #3

Programs and providers in Jefferson County Have access to mental health consultation in order to fully support families' social-emotional wellbeing.



Social-emotional well-being and mental health begin at birth and lay the foundation for children to learn to manage emotions, cope with life's challenges, have positive relationships, and resolve conflicts. Mental health consultation pairs mental health professionals (consultants) with adults like early educators, health care providers, and others to build their skills to facilitate young children's healthy social-emotional development. Mental health consultation is a service provided to adults working with young children, not a therapeutic service delivered directly to the child. Mental health consultation can take place anywhere where children learn and develop including their homes, child care, elementary school, or health care settings.

CORNERSTONE #4

Jefferson County has a robust screening, assessment and referral system that addresses physical, social-emotional, behavioral and social determinants of health.



Early identification of developmental issues and the delivery of appropriate intervention services are critical to support children's healthy growth. When needs are identified early, children and families can be referred to appropriate intervention services and receive support to address the issue early on. Yet, less than half of Colorado's children receive developmental screenings to identify developmental delays or potential social, emotional and behavioral challenges. Without additional supports, children may continue to struggle throughout life, and their families may face additional challenges like anxiety, depression, and economic hardship. Cornerstone #4 will create coordinated early childhood development screening, assessment, and referral systems, develop consumer-facing, cross-agency data sharing solutions to improve families' connection to community supports and services, and make it easier for families to find and receive the support or intervention for their children.

Best Practices

for communities to support early childhood mental health

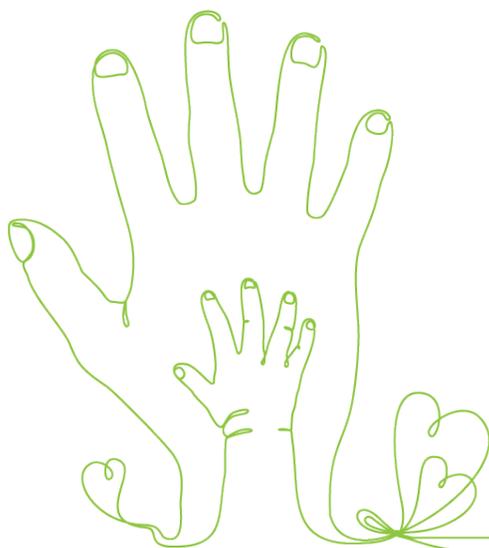
The Jeffco Bright Futures Roadmap provides a foundation for building a comprehensive early childhood system in which mental health can be prioritized. Adopting a plan to assess, identify, prioritize and fund a comprehensive array of early childhood mental health supports is a critical next step, and the following best practices are offered as a framework for addressing early childhood mental health and promoting community-wide strategies.

Early childhood spans the ages of birth through 8, and these best practices are developed specifically for this population of young children. Adopting an early childhood mental health best practice framework can provide guidance for communities to identify strengths, growth opportunities, and priorities, and serve to equalize knowledge, understanding, and messaging across the community.

In 2018, an Early Childhood Mental Health Toolkit was developed through the children's mental health strategy team at Mental Health Colorado. This Toolkit included best practices in early childhood mental health that, if available across communities, could provide a support system for the mental health and social emotional growth of young children and families. For this report, we have adapted and added to these best practices to ensure a revised, contemporary framework for early childhood mental health.

The following pages offer

- Identification of 12 best practices, alignment with Roadmap Cornerstones, and recommended strategies;
- Identification of existing implementation of each practice in Jeffco; and
- Identification of related systems-level policies, funding sources, and initiatives that correspond to each practice.



These best practices are adapted from the Early Childhood Mental Health Toolkit (Mental Health Colorado, 2018) mentalhealthcolorado.org/earlychildhoodtoolkit/.

Roadmap Cornerstones Recap

CORNERSTONE #1: Options



Families in Jefferson County have a variety of high-quality early care and education options that meet their needs and are provided through a mixed-delivery system.

CORNERSTONE #2: Home Visitation



Families in Jefferson County are supported in their roles as children's first and most important teachers through an array of home visitation services that meet their diverse needs.

CORNERSTONE #3: Health & Wellness



Programs and providers in Jefferson County have access to mental health consultation in order to fully support families' social-emotional wellbeing.

CORNERSTONE #4: Systems Coordination



Jefferson County has a robust screening, assessment and referral system that addresses physical, social-emotional, behavioral and social determinants of health.

In the table of best practices on the following pages, Roadmap Cornerstones have been identified that most closely align with each best practice. The following Cornerstone symbols are used to denote the corresponding Cornerstone.



CORNERSTONE #1:
Options



CORNERSTONE #2:
Home Visitation



CORNERSTONE #3:
Health & Wellness



CORNERSTONE #4:
Systems Coordination

Best Practices

for communities to support early childhood mental health

Best Practice	Cornerstone	Recommended Strategies
<p>Social emotional screening of young children is integrated in well-child visits and valued as part of a comprehensive children's health system.</p>		<p>Ensure that primary care practices can conduct and be reimbursed for at least three social emotional screens for children between the ages of birth and 3, or ideally per the Bright Futures recommended periodicity schedule.</p>
<p>Screening for pregnancy-related depression and anxiety in mothers occurs as part of a well child visit or new mother's healthcare follow up.</p>		<p>Ensure periodic and accessible maternal screening available in both pediatric and ob/gyn practices.</p>
<p>Parent and caregiver education and support is offered to strengthen children's healthy social and emotional development.</p>		<p>Ensure family support and education programs are part of a comprehensive children's mental health system.</p> <p>Incorporate parent education into well child visits specific to social emotional development and mental health.</p>
<p>Early childhood mental health consultation to early learning and home visiting professionals is available.</p>		<p>Ensure every early learning center, family child care center, and home visiting program has access to an early childhood mental health consultant.</p>
<p>Child mental health professionals medicine, and other primary health care settings where young children are seen.</p>		<p>Engage primary care, mental health providers, and others to collaborate and share information.</p> <p>Utilize the HealthySteps program to incorporate developmental/mental health specialists into pediatric practices.</p>
<p>Caregivers' wellness is supported to strengthen their own abilities to supports young children's mental health.</p>		<p>Ensure every new parent has access to parenting and caregiver wellness supports.</p> <p>In early learning settings, administrators can support their teachers and staff by creating these opportunities as a component of professional development.</p>

Best Practices

for communities to support early childhood mental health, cont.

Best Practice	Cornerstone	Recommended Strategies
<p>Trauma-informed practice and healing-centered engagement* are used across communities, including early care and learning settings.</p>		<p>Programs should fully integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices so caregivers can identify and understand signs of trauma.</p> <p>Communities can enhance deficit and risk-reduction models by including a model of community well-being and environmental context.</p>
<p>Early care and learning are environments where social emotional learning occurs and positive solutions behavioral challenges are developed.</p>		<p>Every early learning environment needs to provide intentional opportunities for social emotional learning and for practicing strategies for mental health.</p>
<p>The workforce that supports young children and their families has specific knowledge of early childhood mental health commensurate with their professional capacity.</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>All professionals working with young children should be familiar with and meet the requirements for the Colorado Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health (IMH-E[®]).</p>
<p>Developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools specific to young children are available and used when indicated in clinical settings</p>	<p>NA</p>	<p>The DC:0–5™ Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood needs to be used intentionally and formally in clinical practices serving early childhood mental health.</p>
<p>Quality improvement strategies in early care and learning settings consider how teachers and other staff support children’s social emotional and mental health.</p>		<p>Ensure that early learning quality ratings and quality improvement strategies have an intentional focus on caregiver interactions with children, as well as on the classroom environmental factors that impact children’s social emotional development.</p>
<p>Use of suspension and expulsion of young children from early care and learning settings is mitigated to reduce cycles of inequity.</p>		<p>Implement strategies, guidance, and policies that limit suspension and expulsion of young children and provide resources that support alternative behavioral and social emotional interventions.</p>

*Ginwright, Shawn. “The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement.” Medium, 9 Dec. 2020, [ginwright.medium.com/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c](https://www.medium.com/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c)

Existing implementation of each practice in Jeffco

Jeffco has an array of supports and services in the county that prioritize the early childhood mental health of young children and their families. The following table shows the programs, services, and supports identified through comprehensive interviews with Jeffco families, service organizations, policymakers, and county representatives.

Best Practice	Jeffco Implementation
<p>Social emotional screening of young children is integrated in well-child visits and valued as part of a comprehensive children’s health system.</p>	<p>Health care providers, and limited early care and learning settings, can provide families in Jeffco with a screening questionnaire, including the ASQ-SE (Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional) which focuses on the parts of a child’s development that have to do with how they relate to others, understand and manage their feelings.</p>
<p>Screening for pregnancy-related depression and anxiety in mothers occurs as part of a well child visit or new mother’s healthcare follow up.</p>	<p>Jeffco Public Health provides online access to the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale Test to screen for symptoms of pregnancy-related depression.</p> <p>Pregnancy-related depression/anxiety screenings occurring regularly as part of the well-child visit are reported to occur less frequently than at a new mother’s health care visit (typically in an ob/gyn office).</p>
<p>Parent and caregiver education and support is offered to strengthen children’s healthy social and emotional development.</p>	<p>JeffcoFamiliesColorado.org connects families in Jeffco to parenting and community resources.</p>
<p>Early childhood mental health consultation to early learning and home visiting professionals is available.</p>	<p>Jefferson Center for Mental Health provides early childhood mental health consultants to programs across the county.</p> <p>Each classroom at Jefferson County Head Start has an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist assigned to support the development of socialemotional competency for all children.</p>
<p>Child mental health professionals medicine, and other primary health care settings where young children are seen.</p>	<p>Parents and professionals reported that they haven’t encountered child mental health professionals in children’s pediatric care or perinatal health care, with the exception of Kaiser Permanente.</p> <p>Jeffco has only one HealthySteps Network pediatric practice.</p>
<p>Caregivers’ wellness is supported support young children’s mental health.</p>	<p>Jefferson Center for Mental Health offers a range of programs for parents and caregivers.</p> <p>Jeffco Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is open year round, and professional EAP counselors are available to support employees. This is a free, confidential counseling/consultation service for employees.</p> <p>Mountain Resource Center can help with food, emergency financial & utility assistance, family education, veterans support & onsite healthcare through STRIDE Community Health Center.</p>

*Ginwright, Shawn. “The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement.” Medium, 9 Dec. 2020, [ginwright.medium.com/the-future-ofhealing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c](https://medium.com/the-future-ofhealing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c)

Existing implementation of each practice in Jeffco, cont.

Best Practice	Jeffco Implementation
<p>Trauma-informed practice and healing centered engagement are used across communities, including early care and learning settings.</p>	<p>Jefferson Center for Mental Health has provided trainings on trauma informed care for early childhood providers and programs.</p> <p>Jefferson County Head Start implements trauma-informed programs.</p>
<p>Early care and learning settings are environments where social emotional learning occurs and positive solutions to behavioral challenges are developed.</p>	<p>Social emotional learning frameworks and curricula are used in ECE: primarily Pyramid Model, Conscious Discipline, and Incredible Years.</p>
<p>The workforce that supports young children and their families has specific knowledge of early childhood mental health commensurate with their professional capacity and role.</p>	<p>Jeffco licensed early care and education providers must adhere to state regulations regarding training, which ensure that all staff who work with children in child care must complete at least 3 clock hours of training in social emotional development. All child care center directors and assistant directors must take the Working with an Early Child Mental Health Consultant course within 90 days of employment.</p>
<p>Developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools specific to young children are available and used when indicated in clinical settings.</p>	<p>Early child hood mental health clinicians can use the DC:o-5 tm Diagnostic Classification of Mental health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood. Colorado offers a billing/ coding crosswalk to clinicians who assess and treat very young children.</p> <p>It is unclear the extent of use across the county.</p>
<p>Quality improvement strategies in early care and learning settings consider how teachers and other staff support children's social, emotional and mental health.</p>	<p>Jeffco public preschools use the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) to gauge and support interactions.</p> <p>Jeffco has received quality improvement grants and training through the Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care Initiative.</p>
<p>Use of suspension and expulsion of young children from early care and learning settings is mitigated to reduce cycles of inequity.</p>	<p>Public preschools have improved in reducing early childhood suspensions and expulsions. This may be related to the availability of para-educators in preschool classrooms and the school district's stricter criteria around early childhood expulsion.</p> <p>Licensed child care facilities must develop, adopt and implement a team-based positive behavior support plan with the intent to reduce challenging behavior and prevent suspensions and expulsions.</p>

Related systems-level policies, funding sources and initiatives that correspond to each practice

Best Practice	Relevant Policies, Initiatives and Funding Sources (described fully in Appendix A)
<p>Social emotional screening of young children is integrated in well-child visits and valued as part of a comprehensive children's health system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright Futures provides guidance for screenings in pediatric care. • Colorado Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) equips partners in developmental screenings, referrals and support. • Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) ensures timely screening.
<p>Screening for pregnancy-related depression and anxiety in mothers occurs as part of a well-child visit or new mother's health care follow up.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid/Health First Colorado covers these screenings. • HB22-1289 provides Medicaid coverage for pregnant people who would be eligible if not for their immigration status. • SB21-137 requires coverage of caregiver screening if their child is enrolled in Medicaid, even if the caregiver is not. • SB21-194 extended all pregnancy-related and postpartum services (including behavioral health care) for Medicaid members from 60 Days to 12 Months
<p>Parent and caregiver education and support is offered to strengthen children's healthy social emotional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle of Parents® provides caregiver training to raise strong, resilient children. • Colorín Colorado is a bilingual resource for parents and educators. • Early Childhood Mental Health Support Line through the CO Dept. of Human Services helps caregivers with children's mental health. • Jeffco Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters.(HIPPY) empowers and helps prepare parents. • SafeCare® Colorado offers voluntary parent support.
<p>Early childhood mental health consultation to early learning and home visiting professionals is available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRS 26-6.5-402 to 407 codified the early childhood mental health consultation statewide program. • Philanthropic funding funds ECMH consultants.
<p>Child mental health professionals are available in pediatric, family medicine, and other primary health care settings where young children are seen.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado Community Health Alliance has an Integrated Care Coordination Model. • HealthySteps offers a developmental specialist in pediatric care. • Medicaid covers the Primary Care Medical Provider short term behavioral health services program. • SB22-147 creates the Colorado Pediatric Psychiatry Consultation and Access Program (CoPPCAP).
<p>Caregivers' wellness is supported to strengthen their own abilities to support young children's mental health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jefferson County Public Schools Employee Assistance Program offers mental health counseling and support. • Mountain Family Resource Center offers family support. • Nurse Family Partnership connects nurses with expectant mothers. • Special Connections offers treatment for high-risk mothers.

Related systems-level policies, funding sources and initiatives that correspond to each practice, cont.

Best Practice

Relevant Policies, Initiatives and Funding Sources (described fully in Appendix A)

Trauma-informed practice and healing-centered engagement are used across communities, including early care and learning settings.

- Jefferson County Head Start is a trauma-informed program.

Early care and learning settings are environments where social emotional learning occurs and positive solutions to behavioral challenges are developed.

- Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines include social emotional readiness and development.
- CRS 26.5-3-603 Colorado Social Emotional Learning Programs Grant Program funds the Incredible Years.
- Jefferson County Head Start has a strong emphasis on social emotional development.
- Pyramid Colorado Network Hub offers key materials, tools, resources, and connections with others in the Pyramid Network.

The workforce that supports young children and their families has specific knowledge of early childhood mental health commensurate with their professional capacity.

- Colorado Infant Mental Health Endorsement prepares the workforce.
- Irving Harris Program in Child Development and Infant Mental Health provides clinical training, consultation, advocacy, and research in ECMH.
- Right Start for Colorado builds statewide workforce capacity for professionals serving young children birth to 5.

Developmentally appropriate diagnostic tools specific to young children are available and used when indicated in clinical settings.

- DC:0–5™ Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood is a developmentally appropriate system for young children.

Quality improvement strategies in early care and learning settings consider how teachers and other staff support children's social emotional and mental health.

- Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care increases the quality and availability of responsive care for infants and toddlers throughout Colorado.

Use of suspension and expulsion of young children from early care and learning settings is mitigated to reduce cycles of inequity.

- HB19-1194 School Discipline for Preschool through 2nd Grade limits suspensions and expulsions for young children.
- HB22-1243 funds the Behavioral Health Care Professional Matching Grant Program for public schools.

Recommendations & Opportunities

for supporting best practices in Jeffco

Offer a validated social emotional screening system (including support with data management) to a pilot group of Jeffco pediatric practices.

Expand linkages among Jeffco birthing hospitals, pediatric care, and OB/GYN practices to ensure periodic maternal PRD and anxiety screening.

Expand parent/caregiver education and support opportunities related to social emotional development in ECE settings, schools, and parent groups, and prioritize funding for two generation approaches.

Ensure philanthropy is a solid partner in Colorado's early childhood mental health consultation Network Hub.

Increase the number of pediatric provider offices that offer HealthySteps Specialists.

Expand availability of wellness events and opportunities specifically for new parents with onsite infant & early childhood care.

Using Jeffco Head Start as a model, increase access to trauma informed resources for all Jeffco ECE and health care providers.

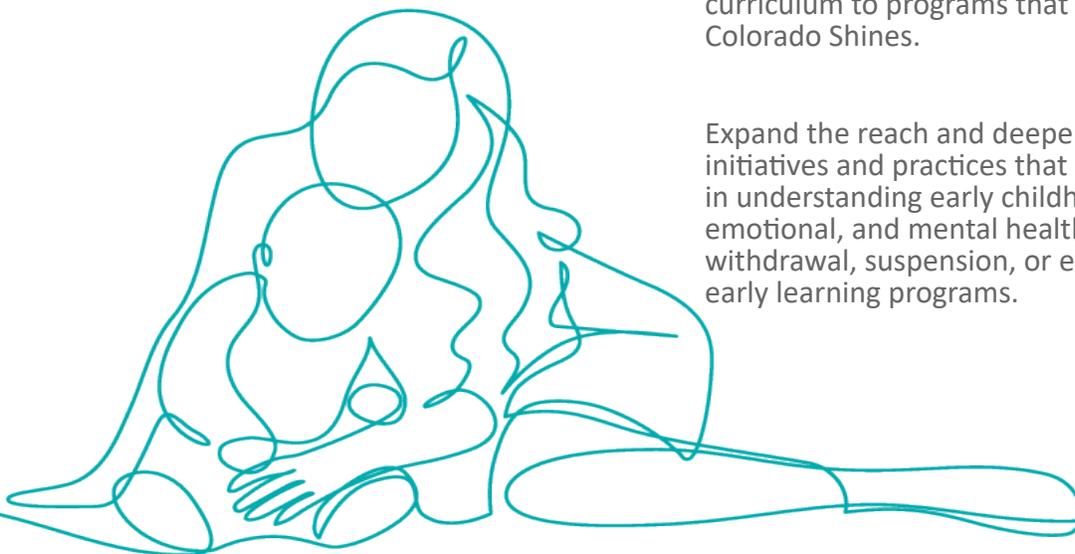
Ensure all ECE settings in Jeffco have access to social emotional learning programs and curricula.

Expand opportunities to support the early childhood workforce to obtain their Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement, in particular Jeffco clinicians who are IMatter providers.

Work with pediatric and ECMH partners, including the Colorado American Academy of Pediatrics and the Irving Harris Program in Child Development and Infant Mental Health, to assess pediatric practice use of the DC:0-5 in Jeffco.

Incentivize early care and education programs by providing access to early childhood mental health consultation services and/or an evidence-based social emotional learning curriculum to programs that participate in Colorado Shines.

Expand the reach and deepen the impact of initiatives and practices that support teachers in understanding early childhood social, emotional, and mental health and mitigate withdrawal, suspension, or expulsion from early learning programs.



Next Steps Information to Action

[Colorado's Risk, Reach, and Resources: An Analysis of Colorado's Early Childhood Mental Health Investments](#) publication in 2018 identified that Colorado's record includes long-standing public investments in ECMH consultation, public and private investments in integrated behavioral health, and success attracting federal dollars to community partnerships focused on ECMH (Colorado Health Institute, 2018). This report reviewed relative risk factors including nine data indicators on family background and mental health. Jefferson County ranked in the lowest relative risk category compared to other counties in the state. Jeffco also ranked highest in relative density of early childhood mental health programs. However, when it comes to per capita investments for children age birth to 8, Jeffco is in the category of low relative concentration of investments (at \$73 per child age birth to 8). This study found that even in counties like Jeffco, with high density of early childhood mental health programs, less than 1/3 of children in this age group are receiving services or supports. While not all young children and their families need clinical services, this report was looking primarily at prevention services, from which all children and families could benefit.

Colorado's philanthropic community has an opportunity to leverage state and federal funding and public policies by helping ECMH programs and services prove their success, potentially leading to a shift from philanthropic investments into longer term, more sustainable funding.

In addition to reviewing and prioritizing the recommendations from the previous page, an important next step in supporting Jeffco's young children and their families is to review the Roadmap and its Cornerstones for opportunities to expand early childhood mental health beyond ECMH consultation (Cornerstone 3) and screenings, assessments, and referrals (Cornerstone 4). A robust early childhood mental health system includes a comprehensive array of best practices that can support all children and families with promotion of positive social emotional development, prevention of mental health problems, and intervention/treatment when they do occur.

“While no standard enumerates how many services children should receive or the level of investment each child requires, we speculate that current levels are inadequate to meet the mental health needs of all children. If anything, all counties in Colorado need additional ECMH funding and support.”

**- Risk, Reach, and Resources,
Colorado Health Institute,
2018**



Appendix A

Early Childhood Mental Health Policies (P), Funding Sources (F), and Initiatives (I)

Bright Futures (I)

Bright Futures is a national health promotion initiative that aims to build strong relationships between health professionals, children, families, and the communities as partners in health practice. The initiative is carried out through the American Academy of Pediatrics and a collaborative of other federally- and State-funded Bright Futures projects. brightfutures.org/

Circle of Parents (I)

Circle of Parents aims to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen families through free, weekly mutual self-help parent support groups. circleofparents.org/about/join-the-network

Colorado Assuring Better Child Health & Development (ABCD) (I)

ABCD educates, equips, and partners with primary care, early childhood, and community agencies who serve children to make it easier for Colorado families to access developmental screenings, referrals and support. coloradoabcd.org/about-us

Colorado Community Health Alliance Integrated Care Coordination Model (F,I)

Colorado Community Health Alliance (CCHA) is the regional organization for Health First Colorado members who receive primary care in Jefferson County. The Colorado Community Health Alliance Integrated Care Coordination Model aims to promote coordinated physical and behavioral health care, identify signs of substance use and mental health concerns, improve access to behavioral health services, and connect members with resources for non-medical needs that impact their health. The model also aims to support providers with a range of services, tools and payment opportunities to help them achieve performance targets and provide quality care to members. chacares.com/for-members/member-benefits-services/

Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines (P,I)

The Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines provide practical tips, resources, and points of reference for parents, caregivers, educators, and child advocates. The guidelines are designed to support the physical, intellectual, and emotional growth of children across different cultures, languages and abilities. earlylearningco.org/

Colorado Infant Mental Health Endorsement (I)

This endorsement, provided by the Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health (COAIMH), is one of the first and most comprehensive efforts in the country to identify best practice competencies at multiple levels and across disciplines, and to offer a pathway for professional development in the infant, early childhood, and family field.

Colorado Social Emotional Learning Programs Grant Program/Incredible Years CRS 26.5-3-603 (P,F,I)

CRS 26.5-3-603 establishes the Incredible Years Program, which provides grants to operate interlocking, comprehensive, and developmentally based programs for parents, teachers, and children. incredibleyears.com/programs/

Colorin Colorado (I)

Colorín Colorado provides free online resources, research-based information, activities, and advice for educators and families of English language learners (ELLs) in grades pre-k through 12. colorincolorado.org/

CRS 26-6.5-402-407 Early childhood mental health consultation - statewide program - creation - purpose – rules (P,I)

CRS 26-6.5-402 through CRS 26-6.5-407 outline provisions of the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program, including the program’s purpose and rules; standards and guidelines for the program’s model; a statewide professional development plan, competencies, and qualifications for early childhood mental health consultants; data collection and reporting; and funding. casetext.com/statute/colorado-revised-statutes/title-26-human-services-code/article-65-early-childhood-and-school-readiness/part-4-early-childhood-mental-health-consultation-program

DC:0-5 (P,I)

DC:0–5™ Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood is a comprehensive guide for diagnosing mental health and developmental disorders in infants and toddlers. zerotothree.org/resources/2221-dc-0-5-manual-and-training

Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Support Line/Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood (I)

The ECMH Support Line is a no-cost, confidential resource for anyone who cares for children under six. The support line helps families and caregivers to better understand and support the wellbeing of young children in their care.

coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/oec/OEC_Providers?p=Providers&s=Early-Childhood-Mental-Health-Consultation&lang=en

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) (P,F,I)

The EPSDT benefit provides comprehensive and preventive health care services for children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid. medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/early-and-periodic-screening-diagnostic-and-treatment/index.html

Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care (EQIT) (I)

The Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care (EQ) Initiative works with Early Childhood Councils, infant and toddler specialists, and Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care (EQIT) trainers to enhance the quality and availability of care for infants and toddlers. EQIT provides professional development and skills training to early childhood professionals across Colorado.

HB19-1194: School Discipline For Preschool Through Second Grade (P)

HB 19-1194 limits the suspensions and expulsions of children in preschool through second grade. If a school imposes an out-of-school suspension, the length of the suspension is limited to 3 school days unless the executive officer or chief administrative officer of the enrolling entity determines that a longer period is necessary to resolve the safety threat or recommends that the student be expelled. The bill also requires districts to report on any children in these grades who are removed from class, suspended or expelled, and the incident that led to the disciplinary action.

HB22-1243: School Security and School Behavioral Health Services Funding (P,I)

The bill creates the School Security Disbursement Program Cash Fund to disburse funds to school districts, charter schools, and boards of cooperative services to improve security within public schools. The bill also extends the I Matter program, which provides up to three free behavioral health sessions to Colorado youth aged 18 or younger or 21 or younger if receiving special education services.

HB22-1289: Health Benefits For Colorado Children And Pregnant Persons (Cover All Coloradans) (P,F)

This bill provides full health care coverage using existing federal funding for pregnant people who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid and CHP+ if not for their immigration status. It also continues coverage through 12 months postpartum and provides full health care coverage to children, regardless of their immigration status, through age 18.

HealthySteps (I)

HealthySteps, a program of ZERO TO THREE, is an evidence-based, team-based pediatric primary care program that promotes the health, well-being and school readiness of babies and toddlers, with an emphasis on families living in low-income communities. healthysteps.org/

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) (I)

HIPPY is a developmentally appropriate, early literacy curriculum designed to promote children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. The curriculum consists of a set of easy-to-use educational activity packets and storybooks developed for parents of children ages 2-5. Parents engage with the curriculum by role playing the parent-child activities with a home visitor who is from the same community and is supervised by a professionally trained program coordinator. hippy-international.org/program/

Irving Harris Program in Child Development and Infant Mental Health (I)

The Irving Harris Program in Child Development and Infant Mental Health provides clinical training, consultation, advocacy, and research in infant and early childhood mental health to academic programs and community agencies across Colorado and the country. The program also offers postdoctoral and community fellowships to qualified professionals seeking advanced training in infant and early childhood mental health.

Jefferson County Head Start (I)

Jefferson County Head Start is a comprehensive, no-cost preschool program for children aged 3 to 5 in Jefferson County (excluding Lakewood). The programs provide a range of support and services for children and families, including education, mental health services, nutrition services, transportation, physical health services, and family support. jeffco.us/816/Head-Start

Jeffco Public Schools Employee Assistance Program (I)

The Jeffco Employee Assistance Program offers Jeffco employees and their family members over the age of 15 mental health consultation, preventive education, counseling, crisis intervention, traumatic incident response, and referral to community resources.

Medicaid/Health First (P,F)

Health First Colorado is Colorado's Medicaid program, providing public health insurance for Coloradans who qualify. The program is funded jointly by the federal government and Colorado state government and is administered by the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing. healthfirstcolorado.com/health-first-colorado/

Medicaid Primary Care Medical Provider short term behavioral health services (F,I)

Since July 1, 2018, the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) has increased access to short-term behavioral health services within primary care settings for Health First Colorado members. Providers may bill up to six behavioral health services, with or without a covered behavioral health diagnosis, to HCPF fee-for-service as they would a medical service. hcpf.colorado.gov/sites/hcpf/files/Short-term%20Behavioral%20Health%20Services%20in%20Primary%20Care%20Fact%20Sheet%20Jan%202019.pdf

Mountain Family Resource Center (I)

Mountain Family Resource Center provides a wide array of services to residents in Jeffco and Park Counties, including early childhood and family education, emergency financial assistance, and employment assistance. mrcco.org/

Nurse Family Partnership (I)

Nurse-Family Partnership connects trained nurses with expecting mothers, beginning early in pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday. nursefamilypartnership.org/

Pyramid Colorado Network Hub (I)

The Pyramid Colorado Network Hub is a network of over 250 early childhood professionals who support the ongoing professional development and implementation of the Pyramid Model in childcare programs, school districts, Head Start programs, and other community settings. Members of the Hub can access key materials, tools, resources, and connect with others in the Pyramid Network. healthychildcareco.org/hubs/pyramid-hub/

Right Start for Colorado (I)

Right Start for Colorado is an initiative that aims to expand infant and early childhood mental health services across Colorado by increasing statewide workforce capacity for professionals serving young children birth to 5 years of age. Right Start for Colorado provides no cost/ low cost, relationship-based, and developmentally specific evidence-based training to clinicians and allied providers across the state.

SafeCare Colorado (I)

SafeCare Colorado is a free, voluntary support program for parents and caregivers with children ages five and younger who need extra support to keep their families safe and healthy. SafeCare® Colorado providers work side-by-side with families once a week in their home or through virtual visits to help parents and caregivers build on their existing skills in the areas of parent-child interactions, home safety and child health. coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/OEC_Families?p=Family&s=SafeCare-Colorado&lang=en

SB21-137 coverage of caregiver PRD screening if child is enrolled in Medicaid, even if caregiver is not (P,F)

This bill requires Colorado's Medicaid program to include screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders for the caregiver of each child enrolled in Medicaid, regardless of whether the caregiver is enrolled in Medicaid. leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb21-137

SB21-194 Maternal Health Providers (P,F)

This bill ensures that someone who was eligible for Medicaid while pregnant and who remains eligible for all pregnancy-related and postpartum services under their Medicaid plan for the sixty days following their pregnancy remains continuously eligible for all services under the plan for the twelve-month postpartum period.

SB22-147 Behavioral Healthcare Services for Children (P,F,I)

This bill creates the Colorado Pediatric Psychiatry Consultation and Access Program (CoPPCAP) with the University of Colorado. CoPPCAP aims to support primary care providers in identifying and treating mild to moderate behavioral health conditions in children in primary care practices and school-based health centers. In addition to providing \$4.6 million to fund CoPPCAP, the bill allocates \$5 million to the Behavioral Health Care Professional Matching Grant Program to expand access to behavioral health-care services for children and families and \$1.5 million to the School-Based Health Center Grant Program. leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb22-147

Special Connections (P,F,I)

Special Connections provides gender-responsive treatment and postpartum treatment services for pregnant and parenting women who are Medicaid-eligible. Special Connections providers offer pregnancy risk assessments, care coordination services, group counseling sessions, individual counseling sessions, health education groups, and residential substance use disorder treatment in a women-only setting. hcpf.colorado.gov/special-connections

Appendix B

Development Process

This practice and policy scan was developed between March and May, 2022 through a combination of key informant interviews, research, and review of existing documents and resources related to the Jeffco landscape and early childhood mental health, including the Jefferson County Bright Futures Roadmap, the Jefferson County Community Needs Assessment, and the 2019-2021 Jefferson County Community Health Improvement Plan. The content was informed by eight qualitative interviews with people who have informed perspectives and/or first-hand knowledge about the Jeffco community or at the state/federal policy level. Those interviewed represented:

- Families of young children
- Jefferson County Commissioners
- Jefferson Center for Mental Health
- Colorado State Legislature
- Triad Early Childhood Council
- Developmental Disabilities Resource Center Early Intervention

Best practices in ECMH were used as the framework for interviews and research. Interviewees were asked about existing initiatives or programs available in Jeffco, and recommendations or opportunities. A policy scan was conducted within each of the best practice areas that included state legislation, federal laws or mandates, state funding sources, federal funding sources, state rules and regulations, and guidance from nationally-recognized professional organizations as identified in Attachment A.