Conducting Comprehensive Early Childhood Mental Health Assessments and Local Evaluation with Young Children and Their Families in Northwestern Minnesota
Introductions

- Dr. Jodi Boerger Wilder, LP
  - Clinical Child Psychologist/
    Clinical Supervisor
- Kim Hemberger, MS
  - Early Childhood Specialist/
    Grant Coordinator
- Cynthia Heitman
  - Parent Representative
Service Area

- Northwestern Mental Health Center (NWMHC) serves a 6-county region in Northwestern Minnesota.
- The area covers over 6,600 square miles with a population density of 9 people per square mile.
Range of Services

- Early Childhood
- Cultural competency
- Juvenile Justice
- Family Driven
- Youth Involvement
- Transition aged

Ages Birth-21 years
Barriers/Challenges

- Recruitment
- Wide open spaces
- Budget
- Stigma
- Change....
Addressing Challenges

- Providing outreach assessments
- Co-locating in medical clinics
- Completing comprehensive assessments
Goals of Co-location

Primary care remains Medical Home

Families are served within their own communities

Mental Health Clinician serves children in centralized location

Rule 79 Diagnostic Assessment

Assessment of Parent-Child Attachment relationship

Objective measure of protective factors, behavioral concerns and level of parental stress

Coordination of care and referral for further services
Parent-Child Assessment  
Marschak Interaction Method (MIM)

- Semi-structured, videotaped play assessment of the quality of parent-child relationships.

- Play activities are chosen to encourage:
  - Structuring
  - Challenging
  - Engaging
  - Nurturing
  - Empathy
  - Stress reduction
  - Playfulness
Tasks: Infant/Toddler

1. Play with squeaking animals
2. Play with stacking rings
3. Parent tickles child
4. Parent reads child board book
5. Parent leave room for one minute
6. Parent plays peek-a-boo with child
7. Parent puts lotion on child
8. Parent plays with puppet with child
9. Parent blows bubbles for child
10. Parent shares snack with child
Tasks: Preschool

1. Play with squeaking animals
2. Put puzzle together
3. Parent tickles child
4. Put band aid on pretend injury
5. Parent leave room for one minute
6. Parent builds tower, child builds one just like it
7. Put lotion on one another
8. Tell story about child
9. Match color to parent’s eyes
10. Feed each other
Isaac, Age 3
Wyatt, Age 4
Evaluation Data

- Pre-test and post-test analysis of the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment-Clinical Form (DECA-C) and Parenting Stress Inventory (PSI-SF)
- Conducted at initial date of service, 6-month interval(s) and at closing of services.
Additional Variables Collected

- 50% had been abused or neglected
- 44% had a history of one or more out-of-home placements
- 31% of the children were identified as having a diagnosed developmental delay (31%)
- 19% had a past diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder
Evaluation Data

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>6-month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental Distress</td>
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<td>Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction</td>
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<td>Difficult Child</td>
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<td>Total Stress</td>
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Cynthia, Parent of Leila (age 4)

- Involved in Our Children Succeed Initiative
- Completed Comprehensive Assessment, including MIM, in an outreach clinic
- Received childcare and parent consultation services
- Participated in WRAP Around process
- Has Family Partner
Additional Resources

Link to Our Developing Child Booklet:

PDF file for our placemat: