

children's institute

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Joining together to raise every child's complete wellbeing



We foster change with and across health, human services, education, and family systems that ensures children's holistic wellbeing and creates more racially and socially just and equitable communities.

Turning Struggle to Success

Our Mission & Vision



OUR MISSION

Joining together to
raise every child's
complete wellbeing



OUR VISION

Supportive
communities where
every family can
raise children who
thrive as they live,
learn, & play.



Our Core Values

These principles guide our work and define what matters most as we fulfill our mission:

- Racial and Social Justice
- Children and Families First
- Transformation with an Engaged Presence
- Partnerships Are Essential
- Interdependence of Research and Practice
- Ethical and Responsible Use of Resources

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What We Do

Children's Institute bridges gaps and brings new opportunities based in research to support the social-emotional development and holistic wellbeing of infants, children, and youth. We work on behalf of the complete wellbeing of children, partnering with their families, schools, human services, health providers, and government agencies. We help caring adults rise to challenges in children's growth as these emerge in a context of rapid changes in community life, structural inequities, local, national and global stressors, and a continuing COVID-19 crisis.

Caring for Each Other Matters

Now, more than ever, we are called to model the world we seek to live in, putting health, safety, and all the areas of wellbeing of children and families at the forefront. Before the pandemic, about 1 in 5 young children exhibited school behaviors that inhibit learning – a rate now increasing. Adults who care for children are also experiencing higher levels of stress and burn out, and as children's demands increase, their need for resources, self-care and supportive routines is paramount. We need to care for each other.

Key to Growth - Knowledge / Skills / Relationships

Together, we lean in to what we know – time-tested practices informed by scholarship, research and data-driven processes and adapted culturally – sharing skills and building strong relationships to be resilient in this moment. We help children and adults innovate to move forward with confidence and achieve goals for children's development – through proven, preventive strategies and centered on social and emotionally-responsive approaches that raise wellbeing both individually and collectively. A moment of challenge can become a moment of growth, and Children's Institute unpacks pathways that provide early steps for children's overall success

In response to COVID and other challenges;

- With **Primary Project and Whole Child Connection**, we help child-serving professionals and families by providing relevant resources, practices and innovative virtual programs to help children adjust to the classroom, and to provide for social and emotional learning.
- With **Get Ready to GROW**, we are comprehensively screening children where they are – in care environments, in neighborhoods with the GROW Mobile, or virtually – at home.
- Through our **research and evaluation** we promote continuous improvement in how adults in systems work with children to best support children's learning and functioning, now and for the future.



A Caring Connector introduced Children's Institute's **Behavioral Health Consultation** services to two families; now both children are back and engaged in preschool.

Another family with several children under the stress of COVID and trauma leveraged **Caring Connections** to add family support and keep the preschool-aged children engaged in learning, virtually and from home.

"I loved the comradery of the ladies in the RAPP program and the facilitators made the conversations flow seamlessly. I can't wait until the night sessions. We need more programs like this in support of single mothers."



Healthy development of social-emotional life experiences among children and adults

Child-centered and play-based practices that are culturally responsive and relevant

Information and quality enhancements to support children reaching their full potential holistically

PROGRAM SUPPORT • PARTNERSHIPS • SYSTEM CHANGE • COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- Partnering with parents and adults to expand children's skills and strengths in social & emotional wellbeing
- Consultation and training to advance prevention and promotion-oriented program and system solutions
- Incorporating whole child needs universally, applying principles of equity and anti-racism
- Community check-ins and training to support self-care of adults working with children
- Infant mental health service expansion & alignment in health & human service systems within communities
- Community initiative leadership to integrate parents, schools, childcare centers & health care provider views
- Training to help adults respond to racism's effects on children

EDUCATION • HEALTH • HUMAN SERVICES • CHILD CARE • YOUTH DEVELOPMENT • FAMILIES

- Offerings tailored to the unique needs of schools & other child-centered environments - in-person & virtual
- Programs that bridge the digital divide for pre-K & young families with caring, fun, home-based check-ins
- Work with parents together, strengthening relationships with their children
- Behavioral health consultation, opening up discussions of racism and trauma with adults and children
- In-person & virtual screening to comprehensively assess children's developmental and health needs
- Rich, cross-domain community partnerships leveraging existing service and delivery systems
- Services delivered with cultural humility & capacity-building practices

EVALUATION • RESEARCH • CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT • TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

- Observations and strength-based quality measures that help teachers optimize classroom experiences
- Data integration between school district and child care centers, coordinated with parents and health providers, providing timely checks, referral and follow-up, optimizing opportunities for growth and learning
- Training and support in virtual classroom quality assessment and online play-based therapies for children
- Research, evaluation, publications and continuous improvement processes embedded in real settings
- Community data collection and information development using ethical and secure methods to help families, providers, teachers and communities make decisions and take action
- Practical approaches to help people better visualize & plan systems together to drive and meet specific goals

RECENT INITIATIVES AT CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE



PRIMARY PROJECT

Adaptations to maintain the quality of this unique program during COVID, include guidelines for virtual programs, a focus on relationships, and training using a Learning Management System (LMS) and modular videos.

RAPP

The Rochester Area Parent Program has implemented the EzParent online learning system from our partners - the Chicago Parent Program - to foster virtual parent learning groups, serving over 80 parents as of August 2021.

CARING CONNECTIONS

Creating equity in digital access to learning and pre-K family supports in Rochester in response to challenges caused by the pandemic.

GET READY TO GROW

Our GROW bus for developmental screenings for ages 12 months to 60 months is now in action in our community! GROW checks are also available virtually. We are strengthening integration with pediatric practice workflows, enhancing parent linkage as we launch our new Parent Portal in partnership with COMET Informatics, and scaling to new geographies.

RACISM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Children's Institute's strategic direction is anti-racist. Our Racism and Social Justice webpage has resources on how to talk about racism with children, racism as a public health crisis and anti-racism as a core component of social and emotional learning.

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN (BSC)

Supporting family and early childhood education staff wellbeing and stress reduction, improved classroom social-emotional climate and teacher-child relationships, decreased children's behavior problems, and improved social-emotional competence of children and reduced behavioral concerns.

WHOLE CHILD CONNECTION

The Whole Child Connection incorporated explicit content and activities related to exploring SEL within the context of equity and anti-racism. Also the team hosts virtual convenings of youth leaders and adults who support them, focused on the transformative power of genuine relationships.

PROJECT LAUNCH

A community collaboration, including a Young Child Wellness Council of family members, providing effective and innovative early childhood mental health practices and services across community settings to prepare children to thrive in school and beyond.

