



Train educators, cause a ripple effect.



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## NCIT Capacity-Building Hub State Implementation Grantees Meeting





# Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (I/ECMH)

Allison Lowe-Fotos  
Policy Manager, Illinois Policy Team  
The Ounce of Prevention Fund



It's amazing what they absorb before they're five.

A close-up photograph of a baby's face. The baby has dark skin and large, dark eyes, looking upwards. The top of the baby's head is covered by a large, yellow, porous sponge, which is the subject of the text above.



## The Ounce of Prevention Fund

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The Ounce gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest-quality care and education from birth to age five.



# What We Do

Programs

Policy & Advocacy



Professional Development

Research

# What is I/ECMH?



“Lahwaah, buwba buwbaah, gullygah abawaa mey ayeeyaah. Is that normal?”

Not this!



## I/ECMH is....

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The developing capacity of the infant and toddler to:

- Form close and secure adult and peer relationships
- Experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions
- Explore the environment and learn

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.





## I/ECMH is not

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- Focused on mental *illness* in young children
- A philosophy that infants and toddlers necessarily *need* MH intervention to develop healthy personalities
- Only focused on young children already identified as having problems or being at risk
- Focused solely on the child
- Synonymous only with social-emotional development and/or self-regulation



## Our Guiding Principles

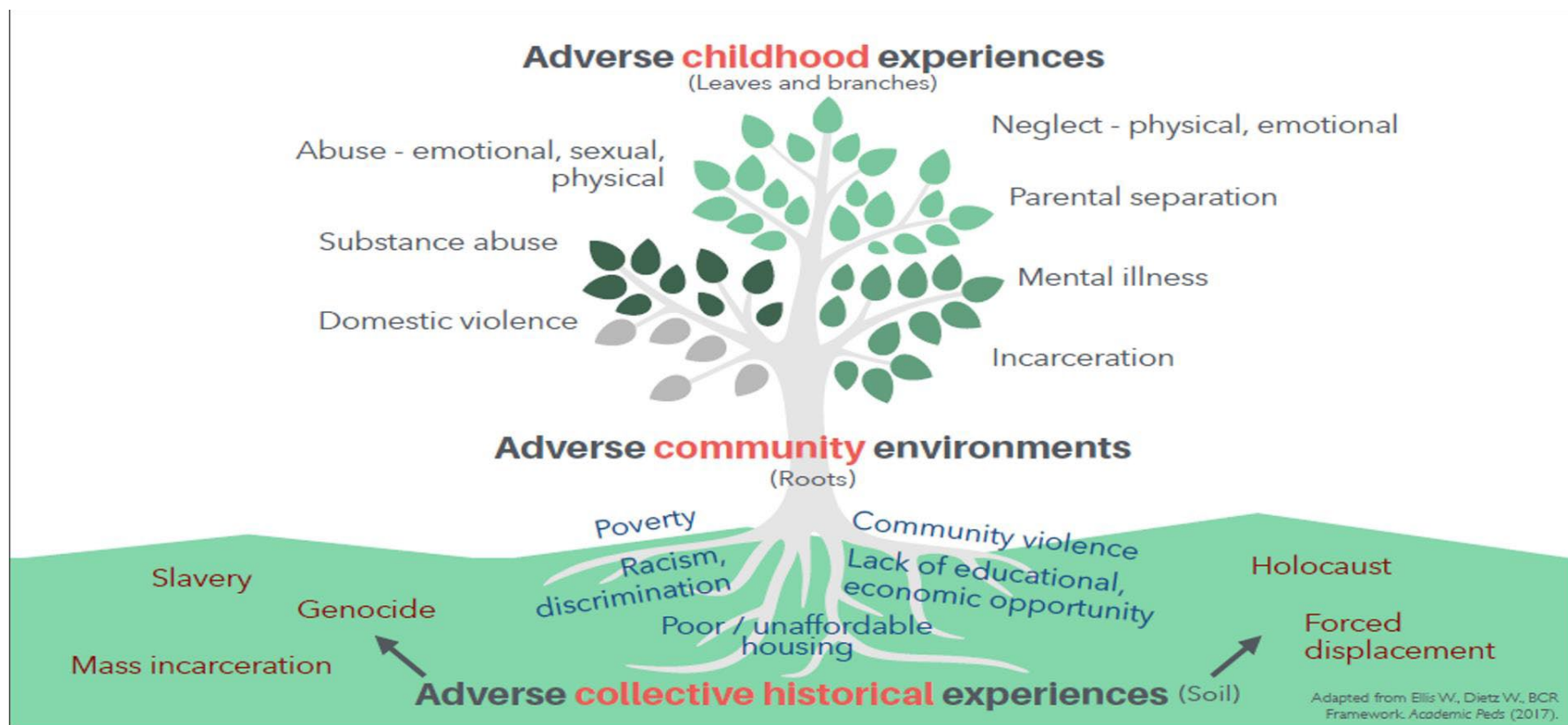
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- 1.) **Strengths-based perspective: *health*, not *illness***
- 2.) **The importance of culture and equity**
- 3.) **An infant's development begins and continues within the context of an emotional relationship**
- 4.) **The importance of brain science**
- 5.) **Social-emotional skills provide a foundation for all other domains of development**
- 6.) **Children aren't born with these skills, but with the potential to develop them**
- 7.) **Relationships matter, but so do environments**



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

The ACES study is the largest of its kind that looks at the health and social effects of ACES over a lifespan.



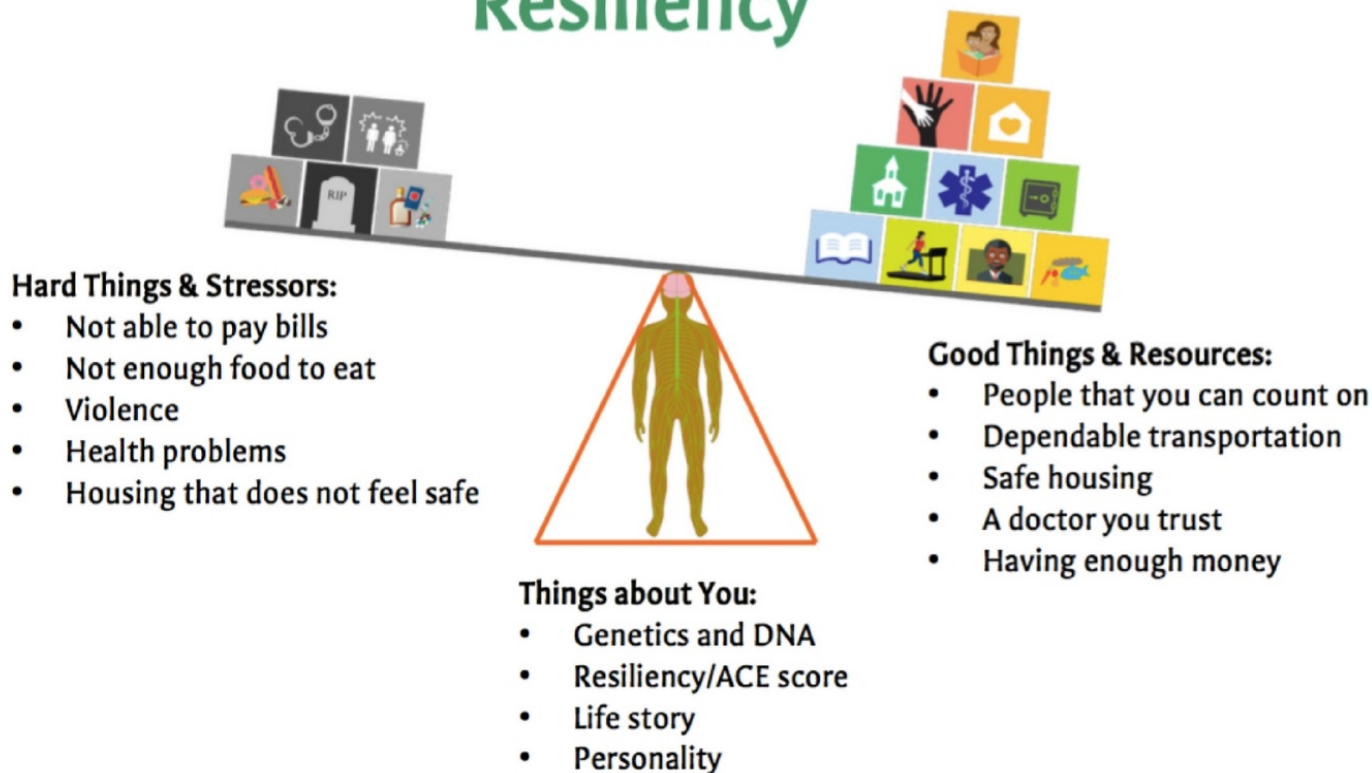


# Childhood Trauma

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- “The three Es”: The experience of an event by a child that is emotionally painful or distressful, which often results in lasting mental and physical effects
- 3 levels of Stress Response:
  - Positive
  - Tolerable
  - Toxic
- Historical trauma/intergenerational trauma: passed down by generations

# Resiliency



**Resiliency is when the scale tips toward the good even when there are stressors and hard things.**



## Early Mental Health Challenges are Real

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- 9-14% of children 0 – 5 experience mental health challenges. When they reach 2 – 5 years, the rate is the same that we would find in adolescence
- Infants, toddlers, and young children can experience significant psychological distress
- However, with appropriate interventions, challenges can be addressed and positive outcomes achieved



## I/ECMH Red Flags

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- Changes in feeding, toileting, and sleeping habits
- Excessive externalizing behavior problems, like crying, biting, tantrums, and aggression
- Internalizing behavior problems, like social withdrawal and fearfulness
- Regressions to earlier stages of development



## Addressing I/ECMH

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- Mental health promotion is important for all children & families
- Need for multi-pronged, multi-level approach
- Need to address disparities
- Programs, staff, and families need to be equipped with the best tools and support



# Addressing I/ECMH

## Framework for a Coordinated Mental Health System in Illinois for Children and Families



*The supports and services are along the continuum of promotion to prevention/intervention to treatment.*



## How the I/ECMH Approach is Different

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- A multidisciplinary field
- Promotes and supports the child's healthy development, within the context of relationships, while considering multiple determinants
- Honoring a family's culture with a combination of respect and appreciation.
- Reflection
- Requires a unique set of competencies informing and guiding an I/ECMH approach





## Optimal times to utilize an I/ECMH approach

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- During pregnancy
- Post-delivery
- Infant/child has special needs, medical issues, or is fussy
- Caregiver/family loss, crisis or trauma
- Caregiver concerns
- Attunement/mismatch
- Child abuse and neglect
- Expulsion and suspension from child care/school



## Types of I/ECMH Services

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- Consultation
- Emotional support
- Developmental guidance
- Parent-child interaction guidance
- Relationship assessment and support
- Dyadic therapies
- Crisis intervention
- Concrete assistance, linkage, case management
- Advocacy



## Best Practices: Ways to Address I/ECMH in Programs

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- Comprehensive services provided to children and their families, including mental health
- Champion I/ECMH values from the top down, at all levels
- Focus on social-emotional learning
- Implement a tiered system of supports
- Training, professional development, and supports for staff
- Support developmental screening for all children
- Parental screening and services
- Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation



## Best Practices: Ways to Address I/ECMH in Programs

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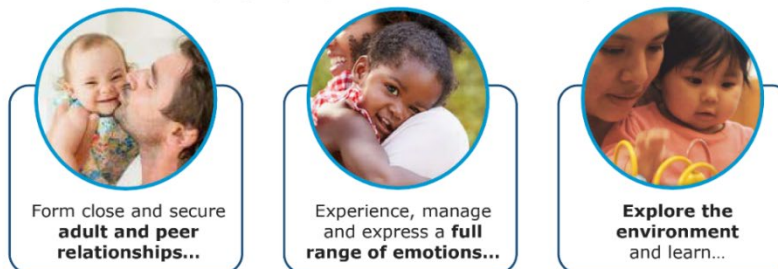
- Qualifications and credentials
- Basic knowledge of I/ECMH ("I/ECMH 101")
- Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children, and Families
- Trauma and trauma-informed practice
- Access to reflective supervision & reflective practice groups

# Building a System of Care

## Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health The foundation of all future development

*Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being*

Social and emotional development, or **infant and early childhood mental health**, is the developing capacity of a child from birth to 5 years old to...



...all in the context of family, community, and culture.



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Early connections



last a lifetime.



## IL State Strategies

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- *IL Action Plan to Integrate Early Childhood Mental Health into Child- and Family-Serving Systems, Prenatal through Age Five*
- Mental Health Consultation Initiative
- Pyramid Model Partnership
- A standardized “What is I/ECMH” training to be utilized by various state agencies
- Incorporating the DC0-5 diagnoses into state agencies
- Parental depression screening
- Provider rate increase for Early Intervention
- Distributing updated Core Competencies for a Trauma-Informed Workforce
- Tying mental health supports into the rule-making for PA100-0105 (early childhood expulsion legislation).
- Making comments on various laws/rules to incorporate more I/ECMH.





## Contact Us!

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Visit our Advocacy Action Center at:

[www.theOunce.org/advocacy](http://www.theOunce.org/advocacy)

Allison Lowe-Fotos

[alowefotos@ounceofprevention.org](mailto:alowefotos@ounceofprevention.org)

312-453-1837