




**The Kindergarten Readiness Debate:**  
Evaluating Social Emotional Development and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services in a Multi-Site Collaborative



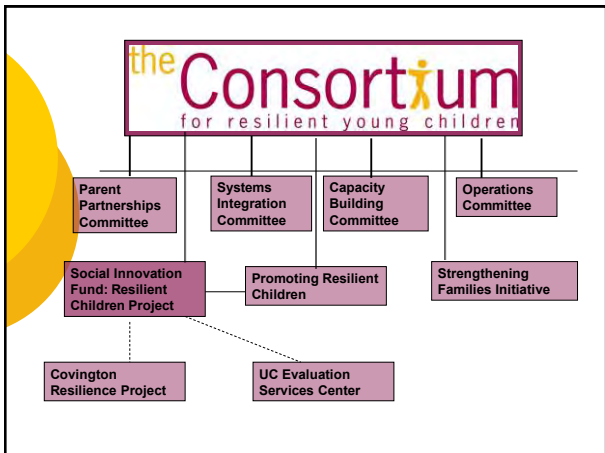

American Evaluation Association Conference 2012



**About the Consortium**



**The CRYC is:**


- A regional collaborative of organizations specializing in Early Childhood Mental Health or Early Childhood Education and Care
- Comprised of 7 non profit agencies and 1 school district in the Greater Cincinnati region
- Not a 501(c)3

**Resilient Children Project**




- Funded in February 2011 by the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Social Innovation Fund
- Expands the scope of two existing early childhood mental health consultation projects
- Provides comprehensive services to support **young children's social and emotional** development
- Increase the capacity of early care and education administrators and caregivers






## Resilient Children Project

- To expand early childhood mental health services in Cincinnati, Covington and Newport
- To increase the level of evidence through rigorous evaluation
- To support the infrastructure of the Consortium to engage the community and share best practices

## RPC Service Goal

To increase the effectiveness of early childhood staff in ensuring the social emotional development of pre-kindergarten children.








## The Complex Ecology of ECMH Services

### Problem Statement

- Preschool expulsion
- Teacher stress & burnout
- Home-School disconnect


Teachers are so focused on managing behavior they were not able to engage children in learning

## The Complex Ecology of ECMH Services


### Benefits of Social and Emotional Learning

Good science links Social & Emotional Learning to the following:



**STUDENT GAINS**



- Social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school
- Positive classroom behavior
- 11 percentile-point gain on standardized achievement tests



**REDUCED RISKS FOR FAILURE**

- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

Source: Durlak, J.A., Weindling, H.B., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., and Schiefelbusch, W. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. Child Development, 82(1), 405-432.

## The Complex Ecology of ECMH Services



On-site early childhood mental health consultation

- Universal, Targeted, and Intensive Services
  - Observation
  - Consultation
  - Coaching
  - Training
  - Assessment
  - Transition Services



## Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation



## Organizational Priorities and Values



- Collaborative
- Deliver High Quality Services
- Data Driven
- Innovative
- Transparent

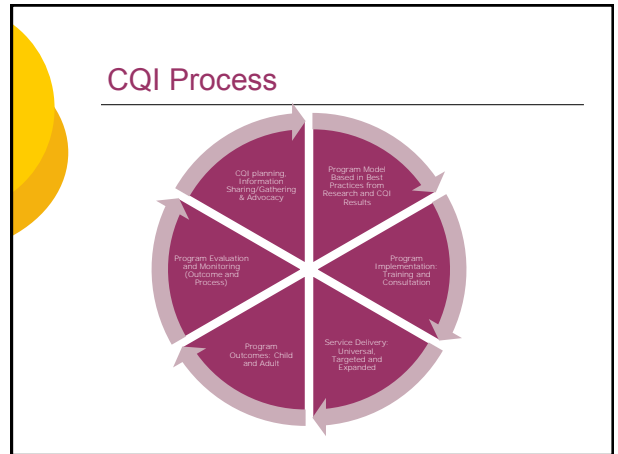
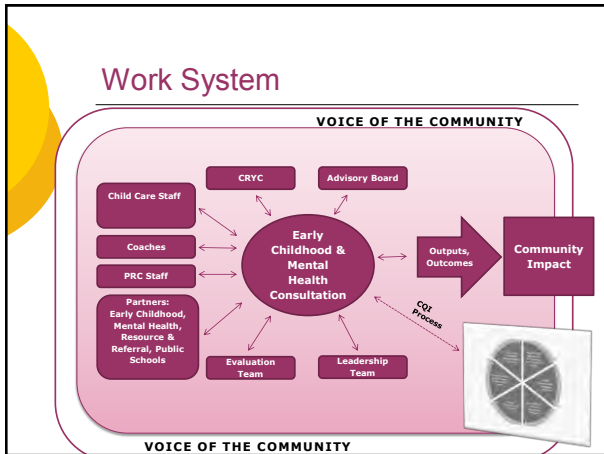


## The Role of Evaluation




- Accountability
- Communicating Impact
- Program Improvement








### Infrastructure and Communication





- Prioritization of data feedback
- Building capacity of coaches to share data
- Sharing data through coaches
- Reporting to participants, stakeholders, community

### About UC Evaluation Services Center



Our mission is to support, educate, and build the capacity of educational and human services programs to make data-based decisions for accountability, meaningful program improvement, and policy development.

## Working the Pyramid: Implementation Evaluation Within An Early Childhood Mental Health Context

Kathlyn M. Steedly, Ph.D.  
University of Cincinnati  
Evaluation Services Center



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## Implementation Questions

How is the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Model being implemented in the Resilient Children Project?

- What are the characteristics of an effective relationship between the consultant and early childhood staff?
- How do consultants support the development of high quality classroom environments? What are the most effective strategies?
- How do consultants support the development of targeted social emotional supports and teaching strategies for children? What are the most effective strategies?



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## Kaufman's Elements of Effective Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

- Solid program infrastructure
- Highly qualified mental health consultants
- High quality services



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## Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children



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## Participants

- Project Directors
- Consultants
- Site Directors



## Data Collection

	Methods				
Research Questions	Project Director Interviews	Focus Groups With Consultants	RCP Program Data	Coach's Survey	Site Director Survey
What are the characteristics of an effective relationship between the consultant and early childhood staff?	x	x		x	x
How do consultants support the development of high quality classroom environments? What are the most effective strategies?	x	x	x	x	x
How do consultants support the development of targeted social emotional supports and teaching strategies for children? What are the most effective strategies?	x	x			x



## RESULTS

### What are the characteristics of an effective relationship between the consultant and early childhood staff?

- Effective relationships take time to develop.
- Trust is central to effective relationships.
- "Positive partnership based on shared goals."



## How do consultants support the development of high quality classroom environments?

- High quality classrooms are focused on the social emotional needs of children
- "[Consultants] help teachers break down the big picture of the classroom into manageable pieces."
- High quality classrooms are built on positive social emotional interaction and do not escalate during conflict



## How do consultants support the development of targeted social emotional supports and teaching strategies for children?

- Significant universal supports are delivered to prevent children's behavioral issues.
- Consultants share resources, strategies, and materials with teachers.
- Suggested resources include: learning centers, sensory tables, learning rugs, manipulatives, and curricula focused on social emotional skills.



## Conclusions


- Solid Program Infrastructure
  - Provide meaningful support to teachers and site directors
  - Engage site leadership
  - Offer a clear model design
- Highly Qualified Mental Health Consultants
  - Gauge teacher capacity and readiness
  - Encourage reflective practice
  - Possess both formal educational training and work experience
- Highly Effective Services
  - Rely on effective teacher/consultant communication
  - Advocate for social emotional skill development in children
  - Require extensive collaboration

## Recommendations

- Increase access to social emotional support for children
- Strengthen communication structures
- Define core social emotional instructional practices
- Codify the process by which Resilient Children Project sites receive support

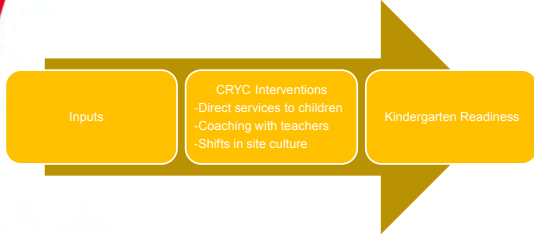
# DECA, KRA-L and DIAL: The Alphabet Soup of Measuring Kindergarten Readiness

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## Basic Logic



```



    graph LR
      A[Inputs] --> B[CRYC Interventions  
-Direct services to children  
-Coaching with teachers  
-Shifts in site culture]
      B --> C[Kindergarten Readiness]
  
```



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## Outcomes/Impacts



- Reduced teacher stress
- Greater SE for SEL
- Improved SEL culture
- Kindergarten Readiness

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## (Partial) Overview of the Evaluation

- All children tested with DECA in a pretest/posttest manner.
- Teachers assessed on classroom priorities, stress, self-efficacy for SEL, culture for SEL and general self-efficacy.
- Site directors surveyed for classroom priorities and culture for SEL.

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## Kindergarten Readiness


- Conceptualizing








## Kindergarten Readiness

- Operationalizing



## Questions?

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## Resilient Children Project Contacts

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