

**WISCONSIN OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH:**

**Policy Priorities for Supporting Healthy Early Brain Development**  
***RE: Wisconsin Legislative Council Staff Memorandum Memo No.1***

**Environmental Framework for Creating Socially and Emotionally Healthy Children and Families:**

**A Population-Based Workforce**



**Behavioral Health  
Providers, Therapists,  
School Counselors, etc.**

**Trauma-Informed, Pyramid Model,  
Infant Mental Health Coaches / Consultants**

**Youth & Parent Peer Specialists**

**Supportive and Skilled Child-Serving Workforce**

**Safe, Stable and Nurturing Families**

## Conceptual Framework for Creating Socially and Emotionally Healthy Children and Families: **A Public Health Approach**



### Primary Prevention: **Increase Resilience**

Resilience can substantially mitigate the impact of ACEs and toxic stress. Many studies show that the primary factor in a child's resilience to toxic stress is having caring relationships that create stability, love and trust, offer encouragement and reassurance within and outside the family.

- **Encourage public health nurse home visits after newborns and their families go home from the hospital.** (*Representative Ballweg*) p.4
- Integrate the Pyramid Model with coaching in the classroom into requirements for teacher, childcare provider, and home visitors. (*Senator Lassa; Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health*) p.3
- Ensure access to basic medical care, including prenatal and early childhood nutrition and screening for maternal depression, for pregnant women and children. (*Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief*) p.4
- Build executive functioning skills into early childhood programs. (*Family Impact Seminar Issue Brief*) p.2
- Instruct school districts, early childhood learning centers, teachers, and parents in the science of ACEs and resiliency as a preventive and recovery tool. (Senator Darling) p.3
- Require a TIC curriculum as part of the educational requirements for any profession dealing with children, including criminal justice. (Senator Lassa--refers to Texas; Representative Berceau) p.5



## Secondary Prevention: **Decrease Toxic Stress**

Reducing toxic stressors impacting children, families and communities plays an essential role in promoting mental health. ACEs alone (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional abuse; domestic violence; parental substance abuse, etc.) may explain 45% of all childhood-onset mental disorders and 29% of all adult-onset mental disorders.

- **Ensure that existing advisory boards to state agencies dealing with children have members with lived experience to give better direction on policy development.** (Senator Lassa) p.3
- Support the further development of parent peer specialists and provide reimbursement under MA. (Senator Lassa) p.4 Utilize parent mentoring and person-to-person contact so parents can make better-informed decisions. (Representative Rodriguez) p.4



## Tertiary Prevention: **Increase Access to Effective Children's Mental Health Services - Innovate**

46% of WI children who needed mental health services did not access treatment.<sup>6</sup> For those who do engage in services, we lack basic knowledge related to which approaches work best for whom under what circumstances.

- **Develop an integrated data system allowing data sharing across state agencies and divisions; increase the scope of data collected by Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) from various systems** (OCMH; Senator Lassa; Senator Darling) p.1 Compile an inventory of current state and county trauma-informed care programs. (Representative Ballweg) p.1
- Design and pilot prevention and intervention strategies with children and parents involved in corrections. (Children's Trust Fund; Senator Lassa) p.5

- Make the following changes to Medicaid (MA): create a benefits package for individuals with elevated Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) scores; provide reimbursement for evidence-based prevention initiatives, including home visitation; and provide reimbursement for in-home didactic counseling for both child and parent. (Senator Lassa; Children's Trust Fund) p.4

**References:**

- On ACEs and resilience, see e.g. Shonkoff et al 2011:  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e232.full>
- On decreasing toxic stress: Green et al 2010:  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e232.full>
- On access to mental health services: DHS Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (DMHSAS) Mental Health And Substance Abuse Needs Assessment, February 14, 2013, p.30