



Martin O'Malley, Governor

Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor

Brought to You by

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Family Health Administration

Center for Maternal and Child Health

201 West Preston Street, Room 317

Baltimore, Maryland 21201

410-767-6713

1-877-4MD-DHMH (463-3464)

Fax 410-333-5233

The services and facilities of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) are operated on a non-discriminatory basis. This policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, or national origin and applies to the provisions of employment and granting of advantages, privileges and accommodations.

The Department, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, ensures that qualified individuals with disabilities are given an opportunity to participate in and benefit from DHMH services, programs, benefits, and employment opportunities. Ma

Maryland's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Building Initiative

GROWING HEALTHY CHILDREN



Through this initiative, Maryland will:

Promote the health and well being of young children,

Prepare young children to enter school ready and able to learn,

Reduce gaps in our current services, and

Improve the coordination of existing services.

www.MarylandEarlyChildhood.org



Giving Maryland children roots to grow... strong and healthy minds and bodies.

Vision: All children and their families thrive in safe and supportive communities that help every child arrive at school healthy and ready to learn.



Mission: Partnerships and collaborations work to develop and sustain a comprehensive early childhood system.



Goal: To improve outcomes for children and families by building a coordinated, comprehensive system, to address five critical components: access to health insurance and medical homes, social-emotional development/mental health, early care and education, family support and parent education.

Significance

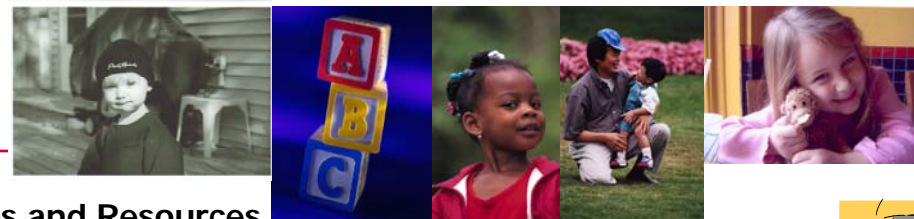
Although one of the wealthiest states in the nation, too many Maryland children still enter school unhealthy and unprepared to succeed. Indicators affecting this readiness to succeed include: health disparities, child safety, low birth weight, lead poisoning/exposure, poverty, poor dental care, homelessness, abuse and neglect, mental health concerns and psychosocial issues. In Maryland 40% of children are still not ready for school. Health indicators for Maryland's children reveal areas of critical need that could benefit from additional financial and social resources, partnership collaboration, and public awareness including:



Maryland Statistics 2005

- 11% of children 0-5 live in poverty
- 9% children 0-5 have no insurance
- 14.9% of minority children die at birth
- 31% of all children ages 24-59 months are in childcare
- 27% of all Medicaid children do not have medical home access
- 1311 children 1-5 have elevated blood lead levels
- 29% of children 2-5 are overweight
- 42% of school children have untreated tooth decay

Overall Goal: With adequate support systems and access to benefits the whole family will be able to help their child achieve school readiness.



Medical Home



A medical home is not a building, house or hospital. It is an approach to providing health care services in a high-quality and cost effective manner. Pediatric health care professionals and families act as partners in a medical home to identify and access all the medical and non-medical services needed to help the family achieve its maximum potential.

- **Develop strategies to increase availability of a medical home to both health and dental providers.**

Mental Health



Maternal depression can have a negative impact on a child's development of social-emotional competence if not identified and addressed early on in the child's development. Children whose mothers experience untreated maternal depression are at high risk for developing depression, anxiety and behavioral disorders.

- **Help women recognize their needs and know how to seek help for mental health screening and treatment of depression.**

Child Care

Children that demonstrate consistently challenging and inappropriate behaviors do not currently have the support systems needed. There is a gap in the availability of services to address the needs of children at-risk for the development of mental health problems.

- **Ensure that health consultants will be available to advise licensed child-care providers.**



Parent Education/Family Support

In order for a child to be able to enter school ready to learn, the parent must have the knowledge, skills, and resources to meet their child's needs.

- **Education and support will offer models to increase parent bonding, decrease child abuse and increase family literacy.**



- **Supporting: public acceptance of breastfeeding in all public areas and, initiation of breastfeeding at birth until 1st birthday.**



Partnerships and Resources in Maryland

Maryland is addressing child and family issues through unified partnerships and planning efforts. Program development and implementation occurs collaboratively with other state and local agencies. These agencies have braided their efforts and funding for greater success in achieving school readiness.

A major collaborative early childhood initiative for Maryland has been development of an Action Agenda for Improving School Readiness by the Early Care and Education (ECE) Committee. This Committee brings together all state agencies and public/private partners that represent Maryland's children.

Target Populations

A child's quality of health is directly related to the mother's health therefore, comprehensive services need to include women of child bearing age from pre-conception through the child's school entry. The rationale for this shared focus is that for a child to have quality physical and emotional health, mom must be healthy before, during and after pregnancy.

Throughout *Growing Healthy Children*, women are an integral part of the ECCS plan.



So, how does Maryland get children ready for school?



School readiness in Maryland has been steadily improving since measurement began in the 2001-2002 school year. There is a strong correlation between the health of young children and their ability to enter school ready to learn. The National Education Goals Panel states that in order to be ready for school all children need to, "experience high quality learning; have enough to eat and the ability to live in safe and stable neighborhoods; be able to see a doctor under any circumstance; have parents who are caring and attentive, armed with the support they need to be strong and capable caregivers; and attend schools prepared to receive children at school age." Using this knowledge in the state plan will increase understanding of these issues and be a call to action for key stakeholders to further decrease the existing disparities.

Maryland believes that *Growing Healthy Children* is a priority for the health and wellness of the state as a whole and we look forward to achieving the progress necessary to help every Maryland family achieve the dream that their child will enter school healthy and ready to learn.

