Building Blocks for Children's Mental Health

August 2023

Children's mental health needs¹ are going unmet, due to a lack of mental health services. Children are waiting for months to access needed treatment and families are too often forced to rely on hospital emergency departments as their front door to care. This crisis is not new and it's getting worse. It is harming children and families, debilitating our emergency systems and needs immediate attention.

The solution is to build the mental health system children and families need to live their best lives. The following Building Blocks outline the investments and infrastructure required to solve the current crisis and provide treatment to our children.

INCREASE Access to Mental Health Services by Increasing Rates

Access to quality, timely mental health care requires increased reimbursement rates

EXPAND Family-Centered In-Home Children's Mental Health Services

Investment is needed for start-up and growth of these effective intensive service models:

- Children's Intensive Behavioral Health Services (CIBHS)
- Youth Assertive Community Treatment (Youth ACT)
- In-Home Children's Therapeutic Services and Supports (CTSS)
- Bridging Services (CIBS)
- High Fidelity (HiFi) Wraparound

BUILD Effective Service Models

- Respite
- Children's Residential Crisis Stabilization
- Community-Based Group Home Care

PRESERVE Children's Mental Health Residential Treatment

- Establish a Youth Care Professional Training Institute
- Professionalize and diversify youth-focused workforce with rightsized compensation

REPLICATE Positve Support Services

Include this Disability Services model throughout the children's mental health continuum to create child-specific strategies that improve challenging behaviors

Contacts:

¹ In this document, "mental health" is inclusive of behavioral health needs for children who may have a variety of presenting diagnoses.