

Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Webinar



Strategies to Promote the Mental Health and Well-being of Children, Families, and the Early Care and Education Workforce

May 9, 2024



Overview of Today's Webinar

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- ✓ Dr. Jennifer Oppenheim, Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families
- ✓ Xavier Becerra, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- ✓ Jeff Hild, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary with Delegable Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Administration for Children and Families

Introduction of New Federal Resources

Tribal, Local, and State Strategies & Panel Discussion

- ✓ Josie Babcock, Donna Barrows, and Marty Elquist





Welcome

Jeff Hild, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary with Delegable Duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Administration for Children and Families



Opening Remarks

**Xavier Becerra, Secretary, U.S.
Department of Health and
Human Services**



Examples of Recent Efforts

- ✓ Policy guidance
- ✓ Proposed regulations
- ✓ Technical assistance
- ✓ Funding opportunities



HHS Proposes New Rule to Strengthen the Head Start Workforce, Increase Wages & Support Quality Programming

[Read More](#)

When finalized, the new proposal would increase parity and raise Head Start teacher wages by more than \$10,000 on average.

December 16, 2024

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) today announced a new proposal to strengthen Head Start quality, increase teacher wages, and provide support for program operations and family engagement. The new proposal will increase the 2025 pay scale for Head Start direct care staff, including classroom teachers, and support program operations, including family engagement and community health services, and Head Start staff responsible for these functions. The proposal also includes a new pay scale for Head Start staff responsible for program operations, including family engagement and community health services, and Head Start staff responsible for these functions. The proposal also includes a new pay scale for Head Start staff responsible for these functions.

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New Policy Guidance



The screenshot shows the website for the Office of Early Childhood Development, an office of the Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The page title is "Policy and Guidance for State, Territory, and Tribal Leaders". Below the title is a "Last Updated" button and a photograph of a woman smiling while interacting with two young children at a table with colorful toys. The main heading is "Policy and Guidance for State Leaders and Administrators". Below this heading is a list of four bullet points:

- ***NEW*** Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Birth through Five (B-5) Information Memorandum (IM) (PDF) provides recommendations to PDG B-5 grant recipients on key strategies for promoting the mental health and well-being of children, families, and the early care and education workforce.
- ***NEW*** Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Information Memoranda (IM) (PDF) provides recommendations to CCDF lead agencies on how CCDF funds can be used to improve the mental health and well-being of children, families, and the child care workforce.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a Dear Colleague Letter to state, territorial, Tribal, and local policymakers and administrators of systems, agencies, and programs that support the early care and education workforce.
- HHS-ED Dear Colleague Letter on Social and Emotional Development and Mental Health: The Departments of Health and Human (HHS) and Education (ED) issued a Dear Colleague Letter and four recommendations to state, territorial, tribal, and local policymakers and administrators of systems, agencies, and programs responsible for young children's





ACF Resources
 Visit our website to learn more:
www.acf.hhs.gov/behavioral-health



We Can Make a Difference Together

We all have a role to play in promoting positive childhood experiences.

All children deserve to have *positive childhood experiences*. These experiences help children have safe, stable, nurturing relationships and *environments*.

What parents and caregivers can do:

- **Praise children often.** Praise can build a child's self-esteem and reinforce positive behaviors and interactions.
- **Establish consistent routines and expectations.** Children feel secure and thrive when their environment is structured and predictable.
- **Make time for play or meaningful connection.** Building playful learning into everyday moments can help *young children* develop skills to solve hard problems, collaborate with others, and think critically. For *older children*, take time to meaningfully connect and support their interests.

Spotlight: Playful Parenting

- Dedicate 10–15 minutes two to three times a week for *child-led play* or focused time with your child. Incorporate it in your household routine, for example after dinnertime.
- For younger children, name the special playtime after the child, e.g., "Roberto's Time."
- Play with toys your child chooses and can be enjoyed together without distraction from devices or phones.
- This can be adapted for older children by identifying an ongoing activity you can do together. Select an activity that aligns with your child's interests, even if it's something new or different for you!

What pediatric health care providers can do:

- **Explore ways to help families address challenges** when they or their children have experienced trauma.
- **Model positive parenting skills**, such as PRIDE (Praise, Reflect, Imitate, Describe, Enthusiasm) during a clinical visit.
- **Share tips and use conversation guides with caregivers for promoting healthy mental development** in children, such as emotion coaching, playful parenting, relaxation techniques, and self-care.

Spotlight: Relational Care

- An *approach* that fosters strong, trusted, respectful, and supportive relationships with patients and their caregivers.
- Examples include: "Tell me more about..." and "I can understand why you felt..."

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES |

 Prevent Child Abuse America |

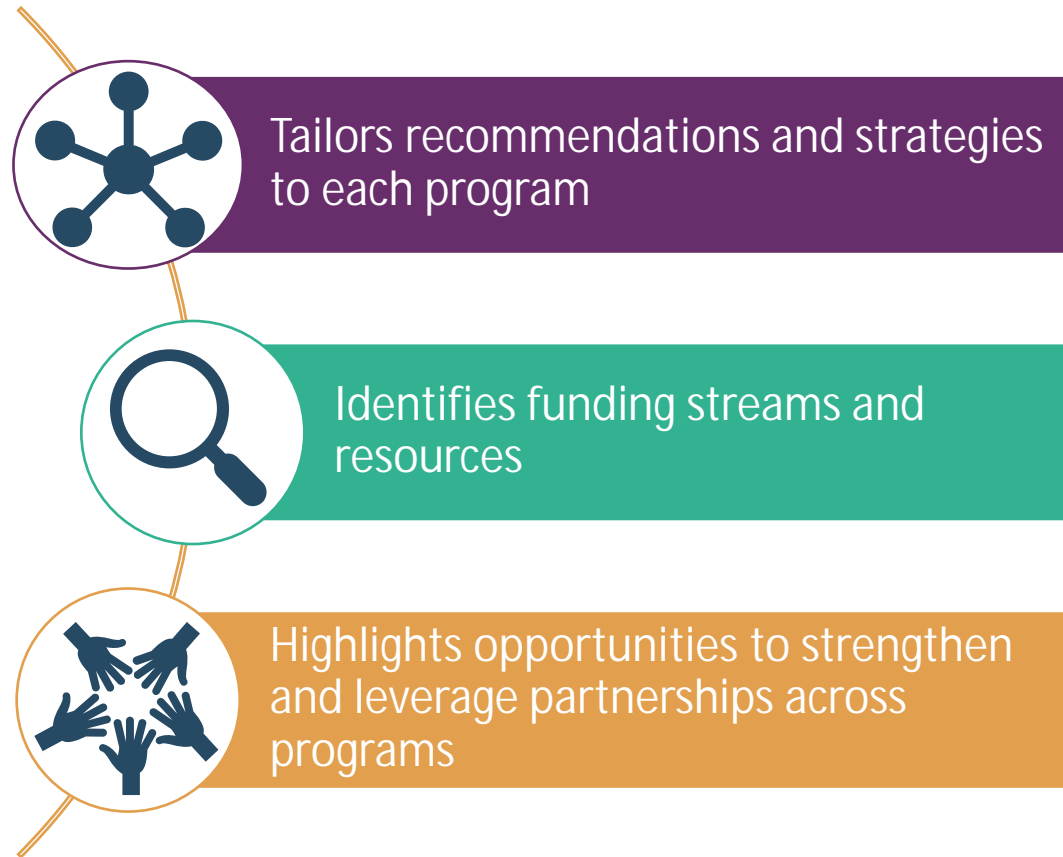
 CDC

Promoting Child, Family, and ECE Workforce Well-Being

Unified framework across policy guidance focused on 3 areas:

1. Increase mental health **PROMOTION**
2. Implement **PREVENTION and FAMILY STRENGTHENING** services and supports
3. Improve access to behavioral health **TREATMENT**

Developed with support and consultation from federal partners



Policy Guidance Framework

Mental Health Promotion

- Sharing culturally and linguistically appropriate information about early childhood development and mental health
- Social emotional screening and referrals
- Professional development on early childhood mental health
- Promoting workforce wellness

Prevention & Family Strengthening

- Implementing social-emotional learning curricula and approaches
- Offering family strengthening and parenting programs
- Utilizing infant and early childhood mental health consultation

Increasing Access to Behavioral Health Care

- Integrating treatment services and supports into early childhood settings
- Embedding or linking to community health workers, promotores, and family navigators
- Partnering with behavioral health to increase access to treatment for children, families and the workforce



Highlighting Tribal, Local, and State Strategies

- **Josie Babcock**, Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan
- **Donna Barrow**, Rutland County Head Start, Vermont
- **Marty Elquist**, Nevada Children's Cabinet





Childhood is Sacred Messaging Campaign from the
Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan

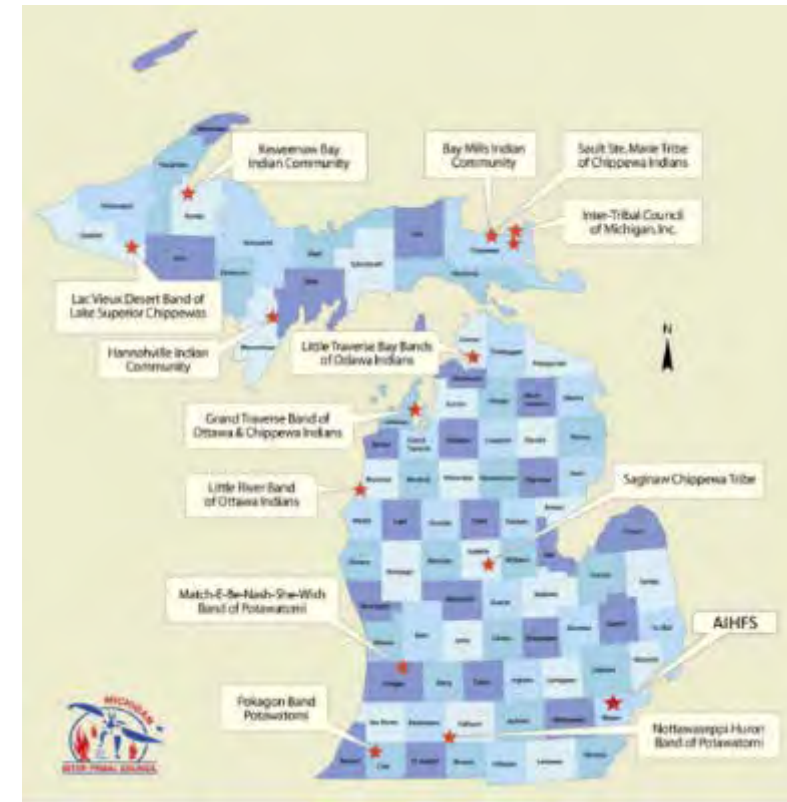


Josie Babcock, MPH

Tribal Home Visiting Data and Reporting Manager,
Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan

Providing Support to Home Visitors Statewide

- Infant Mental Health Credentialing through the MI-AIMH
- Training Resources:
 - Conscious Discipline
 - GoZen
 - Kognito
 - ACEs
- Self Care & Mindfulness Activities at Quarterly Meetings
- Reflective Supervision
- Childhood is Sacred Materials



Childhood Is Sacred: Promoting Well-Being Through Connection



Childhood is Sacred
Be Active. Be Playful. Be True.



Fatherhood Involvement



Making Connections to Heal, Grow,
and Build Resiliency



Donna Barrow, M.S., Ed.D.

Director, Rutland County Head Start/Early Head Start

Trauma Informed Practices at Rutland County Head Start

Dr. Donna Barrow, Director
Head Start/Early Head Start
Rutland County Head Start
Rutland, Vermont



The Need: Extreme Behavioral Challenges and Unmet Mental Health and Special-Ed Needs

Fall 2022

- **31% Enrollment: 37 of 117 slots filled, 3 of 8 classrooms open**
- **27% Staffed: Down 13 teaching positions**
- **Extreme classroom behaviors, daily evacuations in most classrooms, teachers unequipped to respond**
- **Teachers crying in the classroom due to stress**

Enduring Challenges

- **25-30% of RCHS children have IEPs. 50% have mental health plans for trauma and mental health diagnoses. Long delays in evaluations for most of the children who fail developmental screenings. The rural location has a shortage of specialists. The County is experiencing an extreme housing crisis. 25% of RCHS children are experiencing homelessness, a dramatic increasing trend.**

% RCHS children experiencing homelessness 2019-Today



Phase 1 Innovation to Address Challenges

Reached out to VTSU@Castleton and developed partnership to support our team practices in responding to behavior and mental health (staff, families, and children)

- **Hybrid Functional Assessment**
- **All Staff Positive Behavioral Training**
- **School Mural Project**

Partnership helped us elevate mental health as program and budget priority.



*"Rutland County Head Start needs much more mental health support than what we can do through our partnership alone. You need a program-wide response to the behaviors/children's needs and staff support."
[Dr. Leigh Ann Brown, Castleton Professor, Spring 2023]*

Phase 2 Innovation & Results

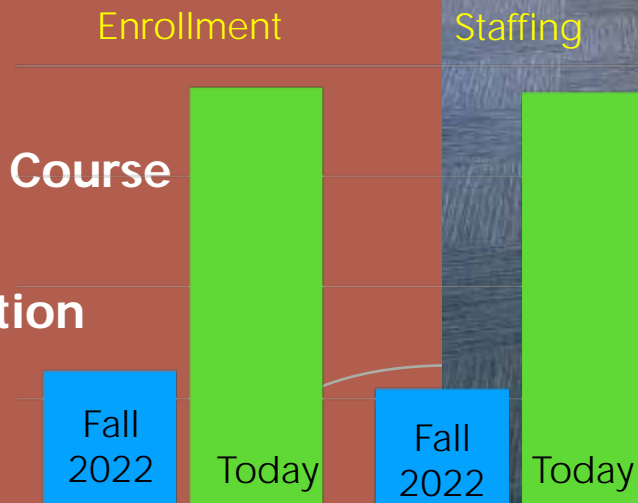
Summer 2023: 4-week paid pre-service: group and individualized behavior/trauma-informed Mental Health Consultation 5-10 hours a week

- Head Start Preschool (Reflections Meetings with each HS team with mental health consultant: Positive Behavior Support and Reflective Team Meetings)
- Early Head Start Circle of Security Training for all staff and reflection meetings with all teaching teams developed and delivered by Rutland Mental Health.
- Program/child/family consultation and individualized support

Early Head Start: program change to convert slots to infant/toddler care

VTSU@Castleton on-site Creative Arts and Expression Course and ongoing Consultation

Exploring Pilot University /Head Start Lab demonstration project





Marty Elquist

Director of Early Childhood Programming,
The Children's Cabinet, Nevada



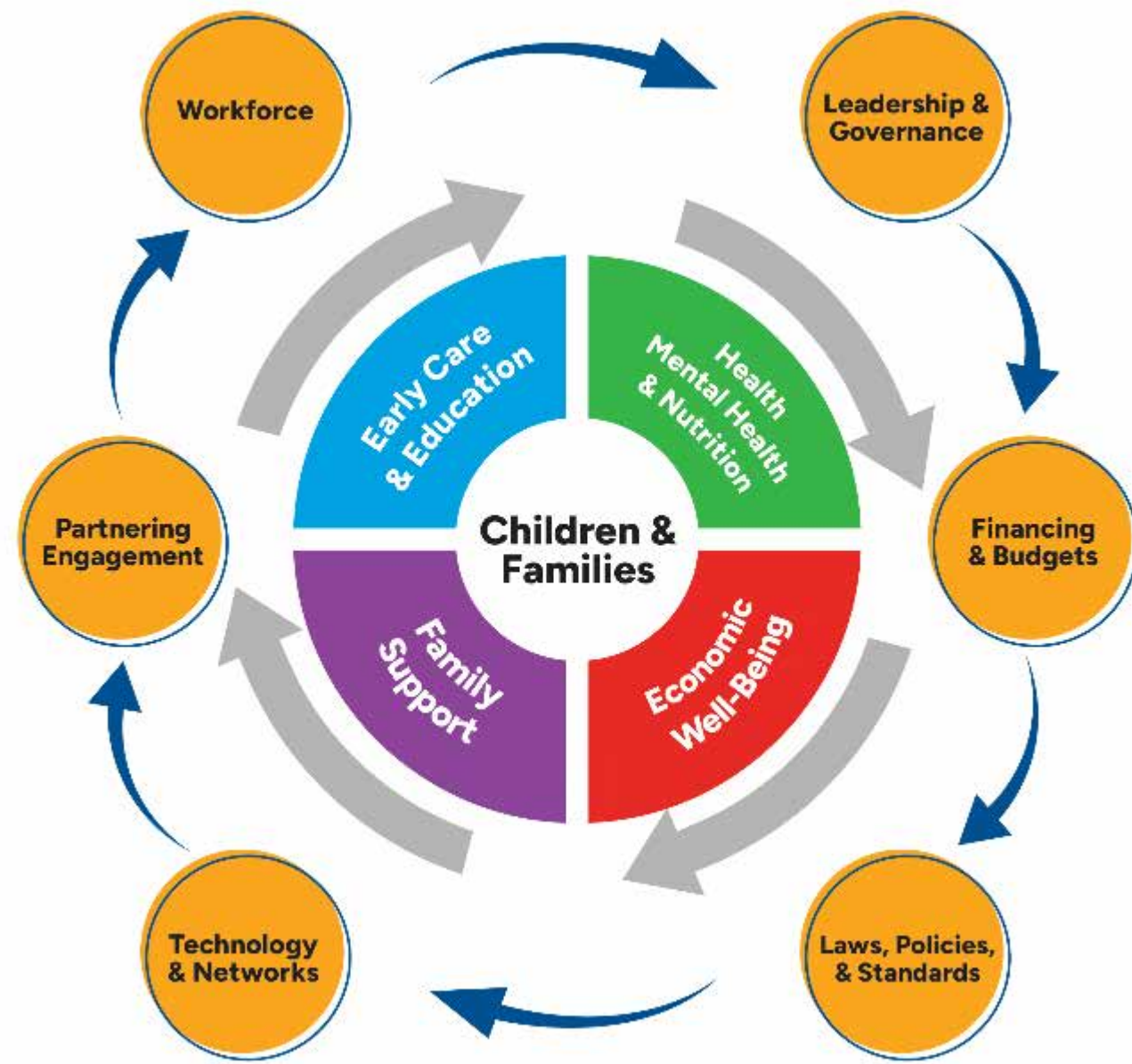


Community Health Workers in Early Childhood Settings

- COVID Response – Pilot in FY21-22
- Access to Services for Families & Workforce
- EC Endorsement for CHWs
- Process Evaluation
- 21 Full-Time Staff (18 EC CHWs)/\$1.5M
- FY22-23 | 99 EC sites: 54p + 103f plans
- FY23-24 | 205 EC sites: 413p + 245f plans

Early Childhood System Building

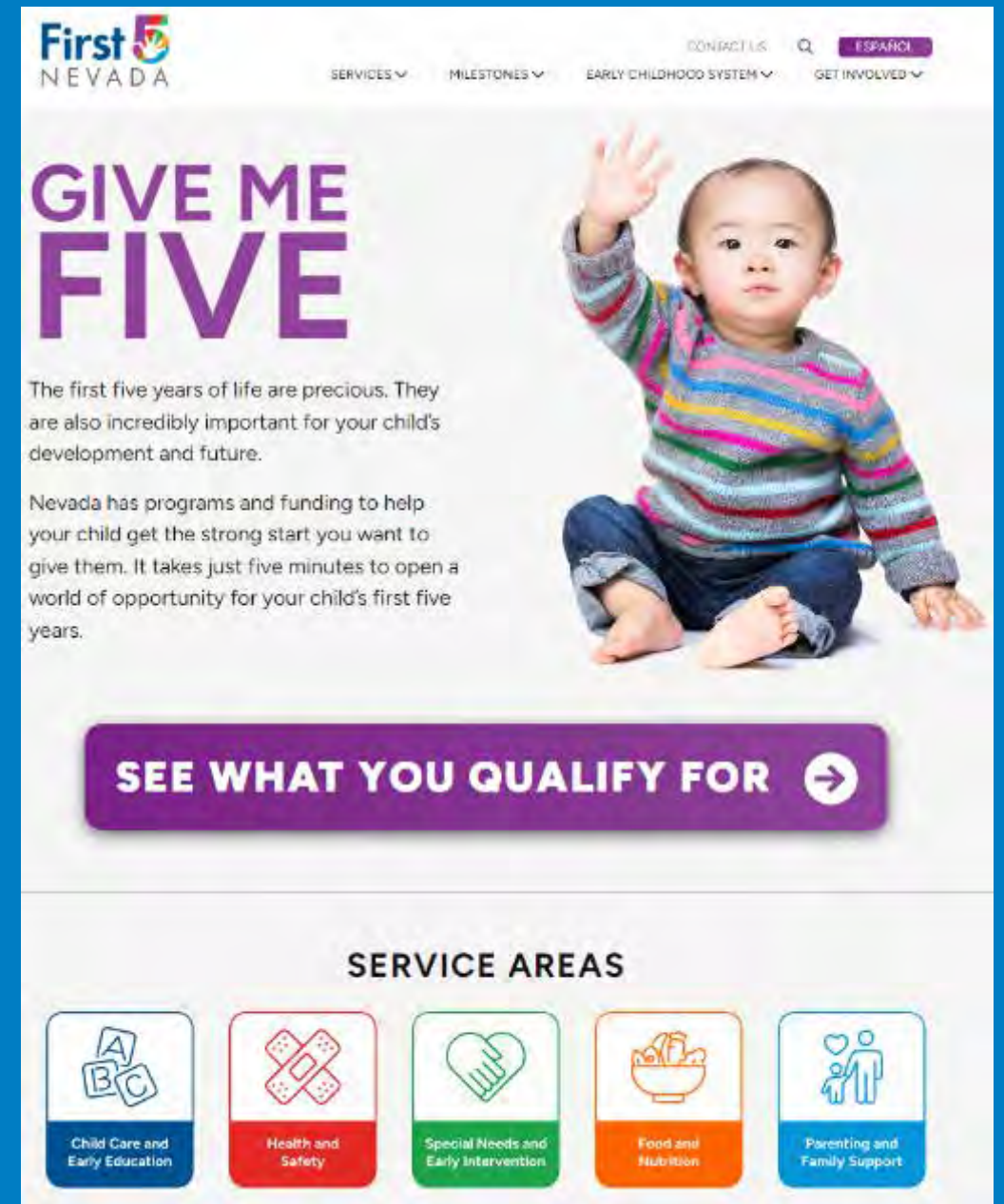
- ∅ Centered on Children & Families
- ∅ Direct Services by Sector
- ∅ Support Structures



Exciting New Website!!!

Find services and resources across Nevada's early childhood system!

- First5nevada.org



The screenshot shows the homepage of the First 5 Nevada website. At the top left is the logo for First 5 Nevada. To the right of the logo are navigation links: SERVICES, MILESTONES, EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM, and GET INVOLVED. Further right are links for CONTACT US and ESPANOL. The main heading is "GIVE ME FIVE" in large purple letters. Below this is a photograph of a young child sitting on the floor, waving. To the right of the photo is a purple button that says "SEE WHAT YOU QUALIFY FOR" with a right-pointing arrow. Below the button is a section titled "SERVICE AREAS" with five icons and their corresponding labels: "Child Care and Early Education" (ABC blocks), "Health and Safety" (band-aids), "Special Needs and Early Intervention" (hand holding heart), "Food and Nutrition" (bowl of food), and "Parenting and Family Support" (family silhouette).

Panel Discussion



Josie Babcock
Inter-Tribal Council of
Michigan



Donna Barrow
Rutland County Head Start, VT



Marty Elquist
The Children's Cabinet,
Nevada

For more information:

§ Visit our website for more Behavioral Health resources for children and families

§ Email us at:

§ EarlyChildhoodDevelopment@acf.hhs.gov

§ **Contact** your Federal Project Officer, Regional Office Regional Program Specialist, or TA Specialist



www.acf.hhs.gov/ece/initiatives/behavioral-health



Thank you!

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CHILDREN & FAMILIES