

March 2018

## Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health: Building community capacity to promote attachment and self-regulation in young children and families

Re: Practice Change Champions - Expression of Interest

### Background

Early childhood experiences and secure attachments in the early years are foundational to healthy development and wellness across the lifespan. The experiences children have in their first six years, last a lifetime.

Recognizing the critical need to support attachment and emotional health, the Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative (OCYI) launched the Practice Change Champions initiative in 2016. The initiative trained 30 community-based professional on promoting attachment and early childhood mental health over the course of 8-months using a mix of online and in-person training. In addition, the initiative also included a small community of practice and used “learning labs” to explore how a shift in practice would impact professionals, organizations and systems to help identify potential challenges over time.

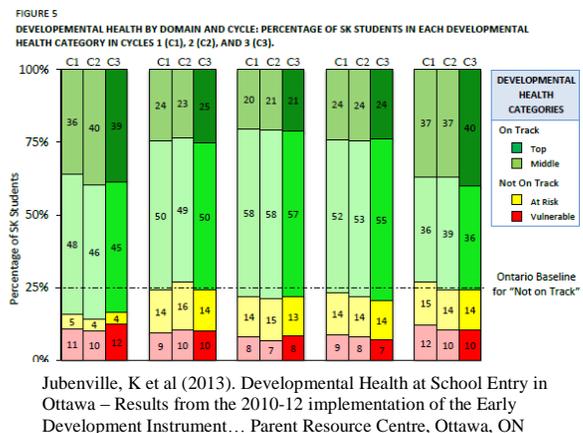
### Issue

Over the last decade, our community has come together and made significant impact in improving the system, services and programs for infants, young children and their families, especially in the areas of language and communication. However, despite these strides, 25% of children are considered “vulnerable” and not ready to start school.

Specifically, schools, child care, and early learning programs are dealing with a decrease in early skills related to emotional maturity and a child’s ability to deal with everyday stress (source: [State of Ottawa’s Health, 2014](#)).

A comprehensive, community plan that aims to enhance self-regulation skills and strengthen early child mental health promotion will help support families and the 10% of children considered vulnerable in emotional maturity and the 8% struggling with social competence.

Training and education for professionals working with young children and their families in the community on promotion and prevention will strengthen professional competencies, and build overall community awareness on the importance of mental health across the age span. We hope this increase will lead to system wide practice and policy change.



## Expression of Interest: Practice Change Champion

On behalf of the Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative, we are inviting agencies to express their interest in having their staff become Practice Change Champions.

### What is the Goal of Creating Practice Champions?

Through Practice Champions, we are aiming to influence practice and organizational change to include attachment and early childhood mental health in community programs and services.

The goal of the training is to increase knowledge in:

- Child development and brain development
- Attachment and temperament
- Risk factors for insecure attachment
- Impact of trauma and parent mental health
- Common behaviors and resilience practices
- Understanding and Supporting children/families with challenging behaviours
- Effective role modeling – being and teaching to be a role model

### What is a Practice Champion and who should become one?

A Practice Champion is a community-based professional who works with young children and/or their families who promotes attachment and early childhood mental health. We are seeking individuals who work in the early years/child sector - professionals such as Early Childhood Educators, Public Health Nurses, Community and Social Services, Child Care Providers, Child and Youth Workers, etc.

### What is the commitment?

To become a Practice Champion, we require your organization's approval and your commitment to:

- Dedicated time for you to receive the on-line training and in-person learning labs (estimated 52 hours over 8 months)
- Attendance to a ½ day strategic planning session at the end of the training to identify practice change opportunities and develop recommendations for broader application
- Willingness to champion this work within your organization (both in programs and services, as well as in policy and planning) and promote the work throughout your community networks
- Make recommendations for succession planning
- Participate in the evaluation

### What is the curriculum?

Along with the training materials listed below, Practice Champions will receive help in identifying opportunities for practice change across their agency and the community in the early year's sector.

- [Making Sense of Preschoolers](#), Neufeld Institute: **Self-directed online learning module and 2 in-person group learning labs**

To make sense of a preschooler is to possess the keys for unlocking the mysteries of human nature as well as for the unfolding of human potential. This fascinating material takes the best that today's science has to offer and delivers it in a usable form to all those involved with this enchanted and ensorcelled age group. This course is designed for all those involved with 2-5 year olds.

- **Reaching In, Reaching Out (RiRo): 2 days of local in-person training plus 2 – 90 minute learning labs.**  
Provides service providers working in early learning, child care, community/mental health and other settings with the knowledge and skills they need to model and teach resilience approaches to young children, from birth to eight years of age. Supports children's resilience by training adults how to role model thinking and coping strategies while simultaneously enhancing adult-child relationships.
- **Infant Mental Health Promotion Community Training Institute: Online modules and 90-minute facilitated group learning lab**  
This training program aims to increase knowledge about infant mental health among all staff within community-based agencies in order to affect a cultural shift among agency staff, to empower individuals to be agents of change in their roles and to ensure that every child served by their organization has access to the best mental health outcomes possible. Aims to raise awareness and understanding of the unique needs of infants and toddlers in order to promote healthy social emotional development in the early years and reduce the likelihood of poor mental and physical health outcomes in the later years.
- **Stuart Shanker's Self-Reg Model, Penny Mayo: Four-module session with theory, interactive exercises, and strategies**  
What stress is and is not and reframing our understanding of it, identifying the 5 domains of stress within ourselves and in children, developing reduction strategies, and reflection and responding.

\*\*Course certificates are awarded for completion of online and in-person sessions. Participants will maintain access to "Making Sense of Preschoolers" online materials for 3 months after completion of the course.

### **What is the cost?**

The cost of the training is \$750 for one Practice Champion. This cost of the training includes:

- Online training and certification (Infant Mental Health Promotion & Making Sense of Preschoolers)
- Facilitated in-person learning labs with other Practice Champions
- In-person training (Reaching In Reaching Out; Making Sense of Preschoolers; Stuart Shanker's Self-Reg Model)
- Your organization highlighted as a Practice Champion

If you are interested in becoming a Practice Champion, please contact Marisa Moher by April 30<sup>th</sup> [mmoher@growingupgreat.ca](mailto:mmoher@growingupgreat.ca) or (613) 737-7600 ext. 6154

\*\*If you are interested in becoming a Practice Champion but feel that the cost is prohibitive please contact us as we are actively seeking funding opportunities to reduce barriers. We cannot guarantee that we will secure funds but would like to have a full scope of who is interested.