



# RESILIENT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PROGRAM EXPANSION PROJECT

FUNDED BY THE OHIO CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND

## Background

The Resilient Children and Families Program (RCFP) is a multi-generational strategy that promotes the social and emotional wellness of young children and their families. The RCFP, which is facilitated through the Children's Home of Cincinnati, works to embed the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework within Early Childhood programs. RCFP collaborates with interested organizations to identify 2-3 staff members to actively participate in individualized coaching and consultation services. Once trained, these staff members would then be well positioned to train and coach staff within their own organization on successful integration of RCFP into daily practices.

The Children's Home of Cincinnati received funding from the Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF) to expand the current RCFP to Hamilton, Clermont, and Butler counties within Southwest Ohio. The RCFP Expansion Project was awarded funding by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund's through a statewide innovation grant opportunity utilizing CBCAP funds. These expansion efforts were piloted in two home visiting programs that focused on promoting school readiness for children ages 3-5: **SPARK** (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) Cincinnati and, **HIPPY** (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), as well as Learning Together, which is a community based early literacy program that goes into neighborhoods offering early learning/literacy activities for parents and children.



## Goals

The intent of the expansion project was to test the effectiveness of the RCFP practices that had previously been proven to be effective within child care programs with a broader range of organizations serving families with young children. Specific goals included:

- Early Childhood Staff increase knowledge of the protective factors and ways to promote these factors within their scope of services with young children and their families.
- Protective Factors are strengthened for young children and families.
- Family-serving organizations create a plan to integrate and sustain RCFP practices into their scope of services with young children and their families.

## Implementation

Throughout the implementation of the expansion project, RCFP provided bi-monthly coaching and consultation sessions to each organization, which included participation in over 14 team meetings and observations of virtual sessions provided to families by recruited organizations. Coaching sessions focused on strategies for promoting family resilience, enriching children's social emotional development and creating daily practices for promotion of protective factors. SF program self-assessments, The Meet Me Where I Am Workbook (Created by RCFP) and results from family wellness surveys and social emotional screeners were used to inform coaching priorities.

In addition, RCFP facilitated 5 Network meetings and 7 training sessions (topics included protective factors, family engagement and motivational interviewing).

### **COVID-19 Impacts:**

The original proposal of the RCFP was to be conducted through implementation of in-person services. Despite the challenges of the COVID Pandemic, RCFP was successfully able to convert training and coaching to virtual platforms; in some ways this made networking meetings easier and more convenient for staff and participants. The RCFP team reflectively shifted the program assessment tool from DECA to ASQ-SE as a result from the pandemic in order to better meet needs of families and children served. RCFP staff and participants demonstrated great resilience in implementing their project during such challenging times.

## Outcomes

The expansion project served 11 staff, 130 families and 14 children over the grant period. Results from 2020 are as follows:

**Family Wellness Survey results** were used to measure family resilience and risk for toxic stress. Through the expansion project, 25 families were surveyed and 60% (or 15) indicated a need or follow-up. Of those 15 families 40% triggered as needing a check-in while 60% (or 9) families indicated a risk for toxic stress. These at-risk families participated in a motivational interview designed to identify their needs and develop a response plan.

**Parent Adverse Childhood experiences (ACEs)** data collected through these surveys revealed that:

- 44% of parents reported at least one ACE and 18% has three or more ACEs
- Last program year, 60% of parents reported at least one ACE and 11% reported 3 or more ACEs.

**Staff Survey** results are used to measure the impact of RCFP in building confidence and changing practice of early childhood providers. Results collected in September 2020 indicated that:

- 88% of staff reported increased knowledge and reported they learned new skills to apply to their work.
- Staff's confidence in addressing family stress increased by 17%
- Staff's confidence in helping children manage stress increased by 19%

## Success Story

"I feel I have greatly improved my relationships with the families I serve by participating and implementing RCFP practices. Not only have I deepened my understanding of what some families struggle with but also helped me to find more effective ways to help and communicate with my families. I have worked really hard this year to build trust with my families and the responses to our Family Wellness Survey from my families reflects that trust. I make sure to provide targeted support based on my responses to the survey." - Judy Rangel, HIPPY Early Learning Specialist