



# Early Childhood Screening and Parent Engagement

MNAFEE April 13, 2023

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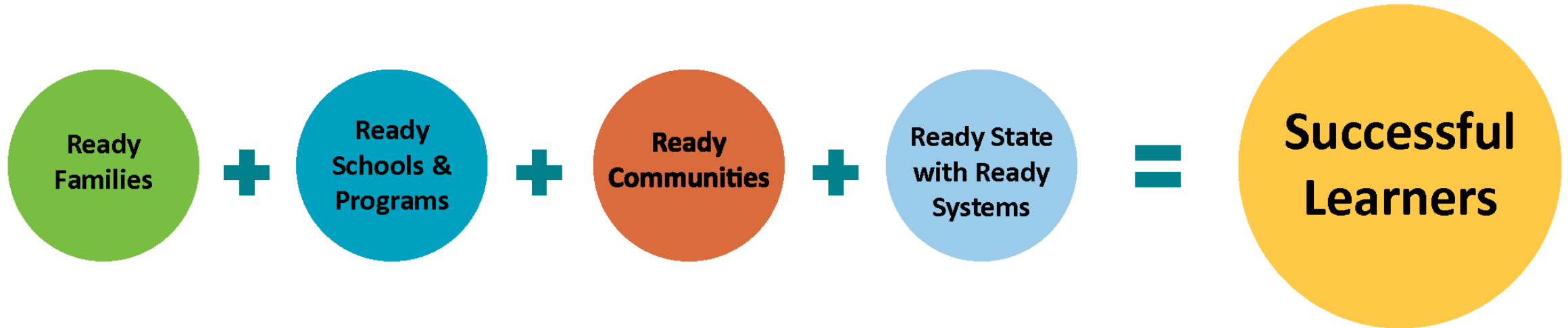
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# Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

1. Prioritize equity.
2. Start from within.
3. Measure what matters.
4. Go local.
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. Improve conditions for learning.
10. Give students options.



# Successful Learner Equation



- The [Successful Learner Equation](#) reminds us that it is not the responsibility of the child to be “ready” for school. It is the responsibility of adults, schools/programs, environments, communities, and systems to be ready to support each child.

# Early childhood developmental screening vision

By focusing on children facing racial, geographic, systemic and economic inequities, all Minnesota children, including those residing in our State's sovereign Tribal Nations, are supported in reaching their self-identified optimal health and development.

# Early childhood developmental screening mission

All children in Minnesota birth through age 5 will receive equitable, high quality, family-centered, culturally and linguistically sensitive, routine and periodic developmental and social-emotional screening in a coordinated system that ensures linkages to services and resources that support healthy child development and family well-being.

# What is screening and why is it important?

# Screening as a cultural norm

## Reflection Time

- Have all families and communities adopted the practice that screening at 3 is a good idea?
- Is our definition of screening or “listening” widely understood?
- How to do we re-frame screening assumptions, outreach and purpose to reach more families?
- When doing ~~outreach~~ in-reach in the community and with parents, who else could we include? Who else has influence in parents lives?

# Have all families and communities adopted the practice that screening at 3 is a good idea?

What does the screening data show?

[Early Childhood Education Outcomes Screening Report](#) (ECEO) 2020-2021:

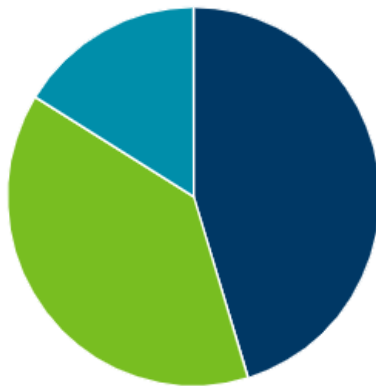
- 25% less students screened statewide.
- 1% decrease in referral rate (450 less) for speech, cognitive, motor, and social emotional.
- North American Indian children are the least likely to be screened at 3 according to public data within the [Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System](#) (ECLDS).
  - Compare your district data to statewide data over several years.
  - Explore your district demographic data by race, ethnicity, age, and other factors.
  - Screening reports found under the “birth to prekindergarten” and the “kindergarten” attendance tabs.



# Early childhood longitudinal data system (ECLDS): screening

2020 Total Children Screened = 46,572

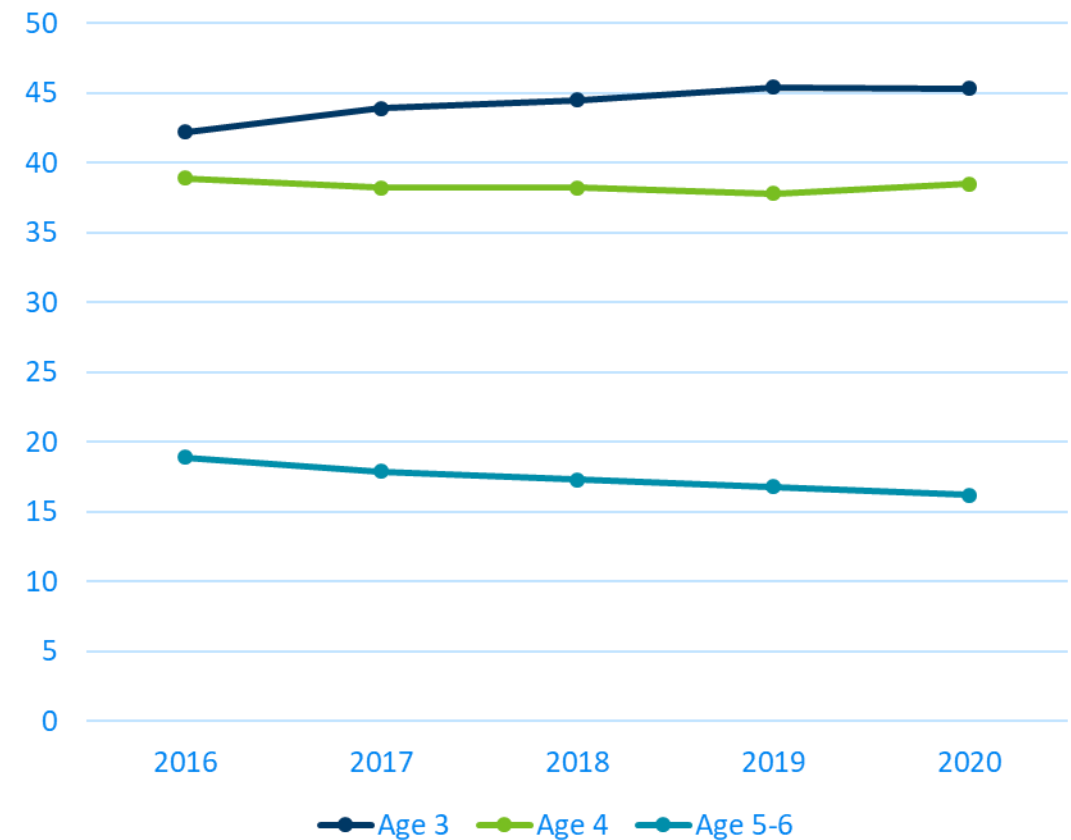
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Age 3 Age 4 Age 5-6


Screening Age	Count (Percent)
Age 3	21,090 (45.3%)
Age 4	17,926 (38.5%)
Age 5-6	7,556 (16.2%)

Statewide All Children




# Parent perceptions of screening

- Some report they feel fear, and wonder, “what are they looking for”?
- My child is ok they do not need to be screened
- Our early childhood provider has no concerns, why should I have them screened?



What have  
parents shared  
with you?



How can we  
address fears, and  
build trust ?

## **What parents say about how they want to communication to happen:**

- Build trust. Take time to build it.
- Two-way conversations. Best in person.
- Technology, mobile friendly preferred. Short, clear. Some lack internet
- ~~-Outreach~~ Prefer the word “in-reach”, parents are in our community

[Wilder parent communication preference study 2019](#)

# What is screening?

## Is our definition of screening widely understood?

- It is a quick check of how a child is growing and learning.
- We tell parents it is an opportunity for school staff to listen to parents and children, celebrate their skills and also discuss any concerns.
- Monitor? Screen? Evaluate? [CDC Monitor and Screening](#)
- Who is providing the screening? (Staff and program)



# Early childhood screening: A “Conversation” or “listening”

- What are parents most proud of?
- What are parents most concerned about?
- Promotes successful learners.
- [ECS Parent Video in English](#)
- More information about screening including [frequently asked questions for parents](#).
- Takes one to one and a half hours.



# EC screening messaging found on different district websites

- “Early Childhood Screening is a free and simple check of how a child is growing, developing, and learning.”
- “All 3 to 5 year old children in Minnesota are required to complete early childhood screening. The screening includes a hearing and vision check, a speech and developmental screening, and a health and immunization screening.”
- “Do you have a child ages 3-5? Early Childhood Screening is a FREE and simple check to assist parents in improving the educational readiness and health of young children through the early detection of factors that may impede their learning, growth, and development.”
- “All children must be screened once before kindergarten entry or participation in Early Childhood programs. Screening is free, it’s fun and it’s a great opportunity for you to see your child’s total growth.”

# Engage families in early childhood screening

- Share introductory info with families
- Explain your program philosophy, purpose and range of services and resources
- Share any handouts that help give them better idea of how screening works
- Encourage family to discuss general concerns and interests
- Engage in two-way communication
- Discuss procedures for confidentiality

[ASQ: Power of parent engagement](#)

# In-reach



# ECS: provide a welcoming environment

ECS is often a family's first experience with a school district.

ECS links families to free early learning opportunities and resources (dental, nutrition, health care, homelessness).



## Approach to the child

- Allow time to warm up
- Address child directly

## Approach to the parent

- Welcoming, respectful
- Recognize parent as the expert
- Explain the plan
- Elicit parent concerns (**and joys!**)
- Staff who reflect community
- Bilingual staff or interpreters

Ensure all know of Early Childhood Screening:

- Families of diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds
  - Families of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds
  - Families of diverse language needs
  - Families of diverse immigrant, refugee or migrant backgrounds
  - Families in urban and rural areas
- \* Use your ECFE Community Needs Assessment to plan ECS in-reach

# In-reach materials and options

ECS translated materials shared by Cultural Liaisons and:

- Community Education mailings, website
- ECFE may send cards on child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday
- Radio/newspapers/TV serving diverse populations
- Mayor's Office, County, Library or Public Health
- Ask businesses to advertise/provide incentives
- Parent Advisory Groups
- Link to MDE ECS Parent Video
- Voice mail in the languages of the community



Where do you offer screening?

- Go to families instead of expecting them to come to district
- Partner with community based organizations to host screening
  - Can they talk with families about screening?
- Build relationships to screen in libraries, public housing, homeless shelters
- Consider offering screening on Saturdays or evenings

# In-reach: Connecting with hard-to-reach families

- Hard-to-reach (underrepresented, invisible, overlooked)
- [Connecting with hard-to-reach families video](#): 21:50-27:18
  - Dr. Rosemarie Allen, historical trauma and what impacts to families look like

Question for group:

- What do you take away from this for your own program?
- Have you met with community based organizations that may be in touch with these families?

# Answering parent questions

What do I tell parents that are nervous or scared about the screening?

- Screening is for parents and it is empowering!
- It is a way to see how the child is doing and offers help so the child may be a successful learner.
- If there are questions, parents should be sure all their questions are answered.
- It is a way to start connecting with a district where your child will be going to school one day.

What happens if a parent does not want their child screened?

- Screening is required for kindergarten or first grade within first 30 days and within 90 days for prekindergarten programs. However, a parent may refuse or conscientiously object. They can submit a statement in writing that they refuse to the screener or principal of the school.

# Questions parents ask about screening tools

What if my child only speaks Spanish, how will screening work?

- The tools are standardized in language and culture for Spanish, Hmong, Somali as well as English.
- When the screener or interpreter provides the screening the child can answer in either Spanish or English and either answer is ok. Either language is ok to use.

What if the questions do not make sense in my culture?

- There is no perfect screening tool.
- If questions do not make sense in your culture, tell the screener. Some can be ignored or re-framed, which means they can be explained in a different way-- that does make sense (ASQ).

What if my 3 year old can't answer all the questions?

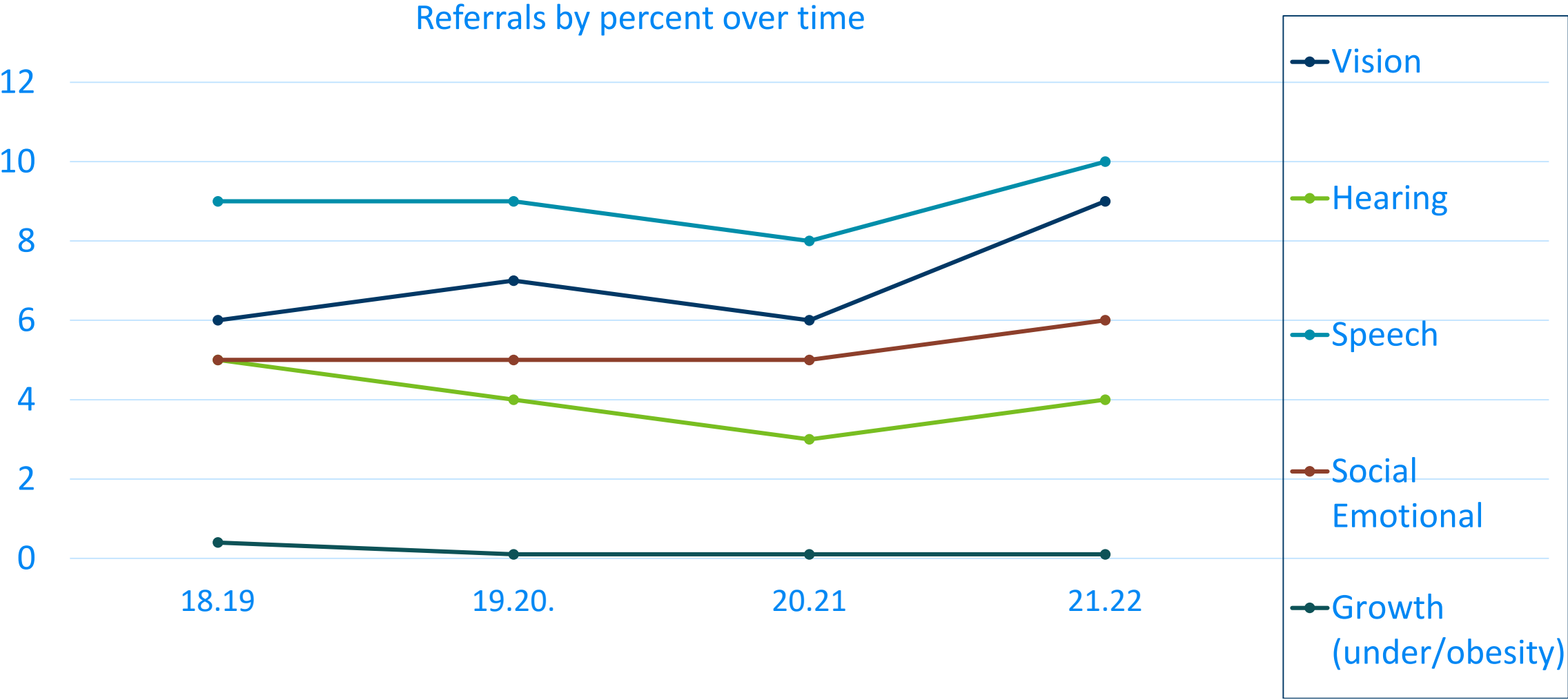
- A child who is screened at 3 is not expected to answer as many questions as at 5. It's ok!

# Screening trends

Total screened	Total not screened (by end of kindergarten)
• 18.19: 61,859	10,073
• 19.20: 45,040	9,963
• 20.21: 49,078	11,782
• 21.22: 60,248	13,236



# Early childhood screening referral trends 2018-2022



# Why is parent / family engagement important?

*(Beyond: “It’s just the right thing to do!”)*

# Healthy development happens through relationships

- Development happens in the context of relationships.
- The child's relationships and interaction with parents literally helps wire healthy brain development.
- One of our most important jobs is to partner with parents to support them, as they support their child's development.



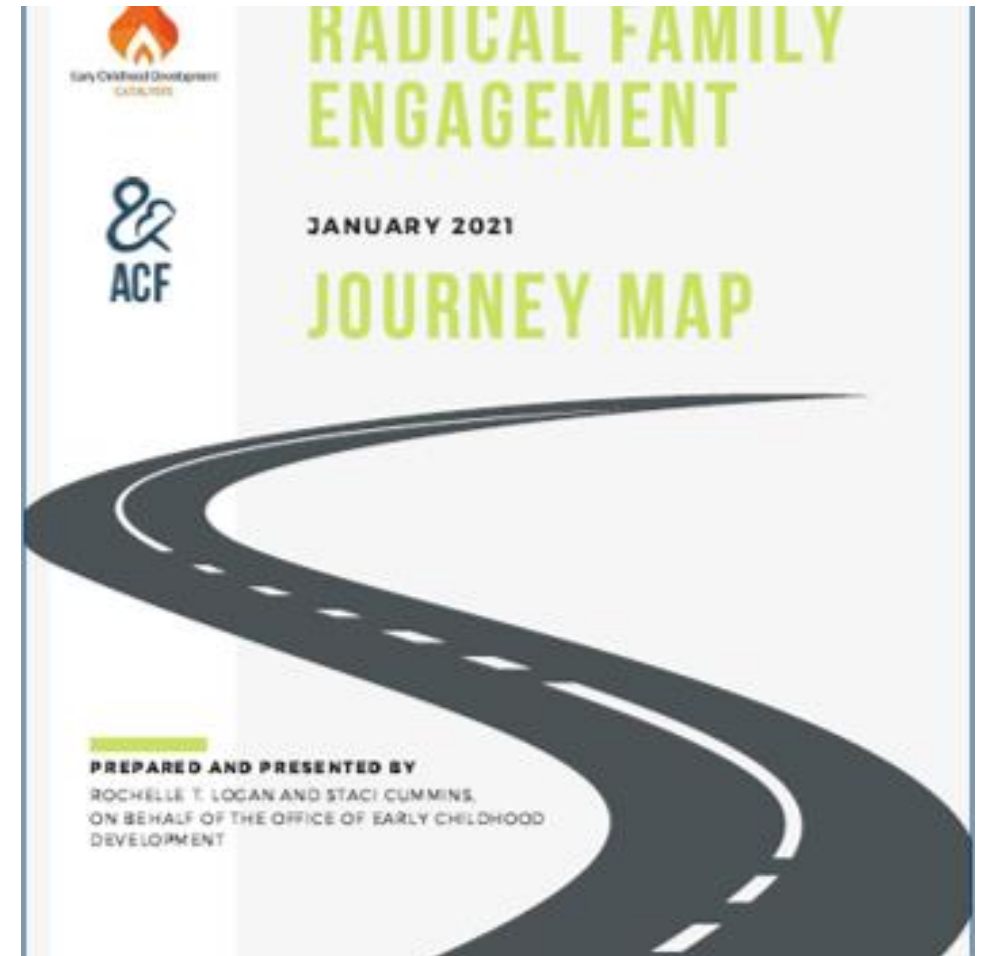
*“We (screeners) walk alongside families in what is an unfolding journey...”*

- Public health: accompaniment
- What might this look like to walk beside a family on their path rather than leading in front?

# Radical Family Engagement

Family engagement is unique to each community and should be driven by the families in that community rather than defined by others and imposed upon school systems and families.

For family engagement to be radical, we all need to embrace the idea that there is nothing more important to the education process than a child's parent.



# Self-Awareness and Culturally Responsive

## Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement

### Competency

### Professional Practice

### Selected examples – See role-specific resources for more examples

2. Self-Aware and Culturally Responsive Relationships

Respects and responds to the cultures, languages, values, and family structures of each family

- > Understands that each family has unique strengths and resiliencies
- > Reflects on one's own beliefs, values, experiences ethics, and biases to enhance self-awareness
- > Engages in relationships that are responsive to others' cultures, languages, and values

# Trust Building Behaviors

## Respect

- Relational trust is grounded in the social respect that comes from the kinds of social discourse that take place across the school community.

## Personal Regard

- Personal regard represents another important criterion in determining how individuals discern trust. Such regard springs from the willingness of participants to extend themselves beyond the formal requirements of a job definition or a union contract.

## Competence in Core Role Responsibilities

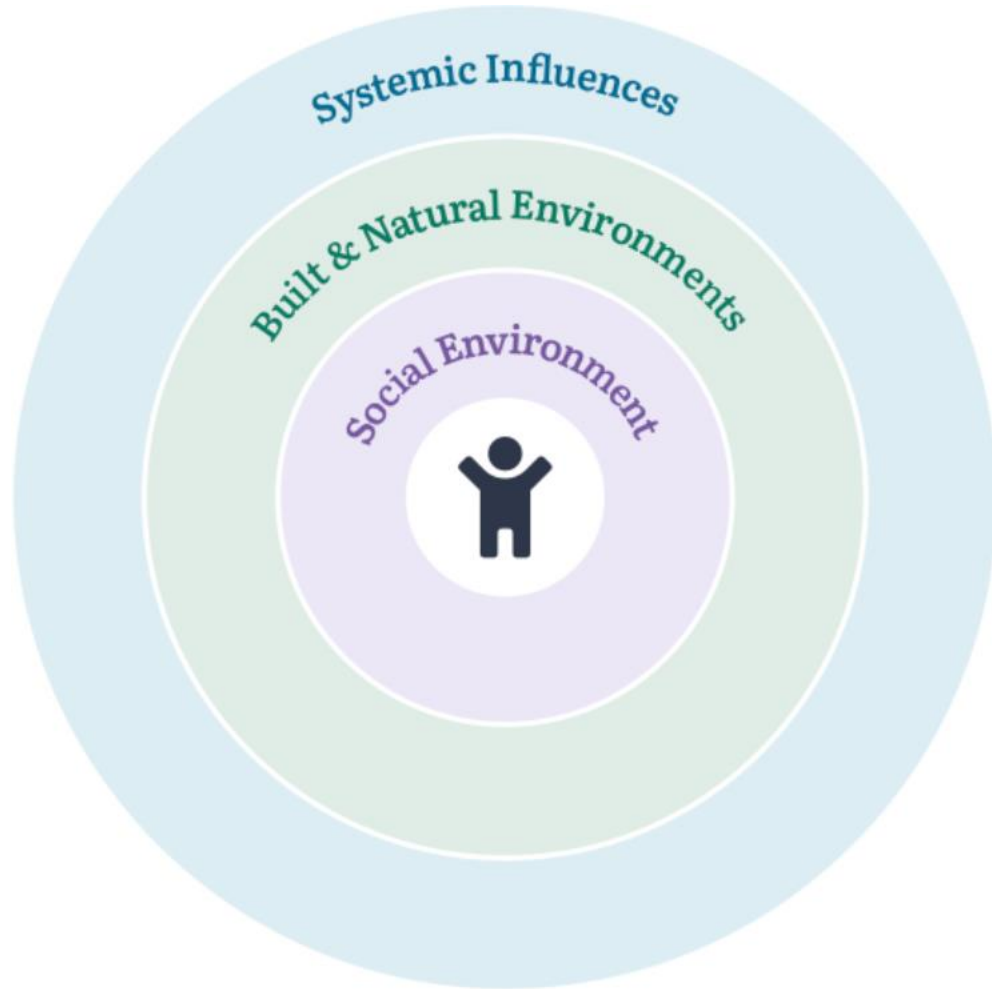
- School community members also want their interactions with others to produce desired outcomes.

## Personal Integrity

- Perceptions about personal integrity also shape individuals' discernment that trust exists. The first question that we ask is whether we can trust others to keep their word. Integrity also demands that a moral-ethical perspective guides one's work.

From [Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform](#), by Barbara Schneider, ASCD

# Place Matters: What surrounds us Shapes us



What is the screening environment like in your district?

- For the child? For the parent?
- What about social, systemic?
- [Place matters: what surrounds us shapes us, Harvard Center for Developing Child.](#)



# Hard conversations are a part of parent engagement

[Hard conversations in Early Childhood](#) video 17:17-22:29

Benefits of intentional reflection and engaging in team processing...

- Do you take time to prepare or practice how you are doing to talk about a topic that makes you uncomfortable with a family?
- Is this something your team or program currently supports?
- How could this process be built into your collaborative work?

# Validating parent choices

- Being clear is kind. Being unclear is unkind.
- Some families are not ready for referrals. They came to screen by choice because they love their child. Sometimes they are not ready to take the referral and that is why we share about other services they may connect with later if not now.
- Do you know who in your program or community you can connect the family with?
- Food insecurity, Homelessness, refugee, new immigrant services?
- Get to know local early childhood mental health providers for warm handoff.

# Mindset: Disposition for Kindness

## [Toolkit for Healing-Centered Practice](#)

- Disposition for Kindness Video 4:50-8:54

Be clear, truthful, listening, sensing what is going on for family.

- Take time to explain what you are doing with family and child
- Give grace for emotions families may have with hard conversations
- Leave time for them to ask questions

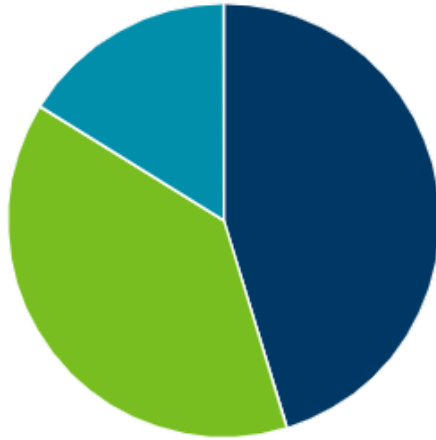
# Case Study

# Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System: Screening

2020 Total Children Screened = 46,572



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Age 3   Age 4   Age 5-6

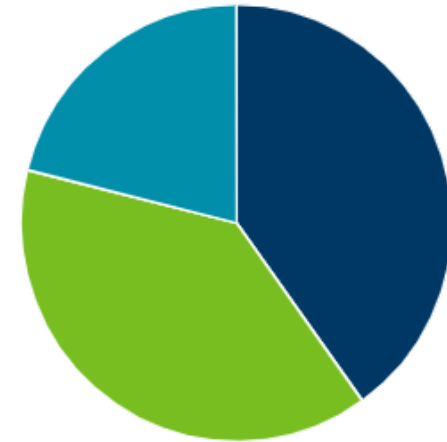
Screening Age	Count (Percent)
Age 3	21,090 (45.3%)
Age 4	17,926 (38.5%)
Age 5-6	7,556 (16.2%)

2020 Total Children Screened = 446



Statewide North American Indian

Export to PDF

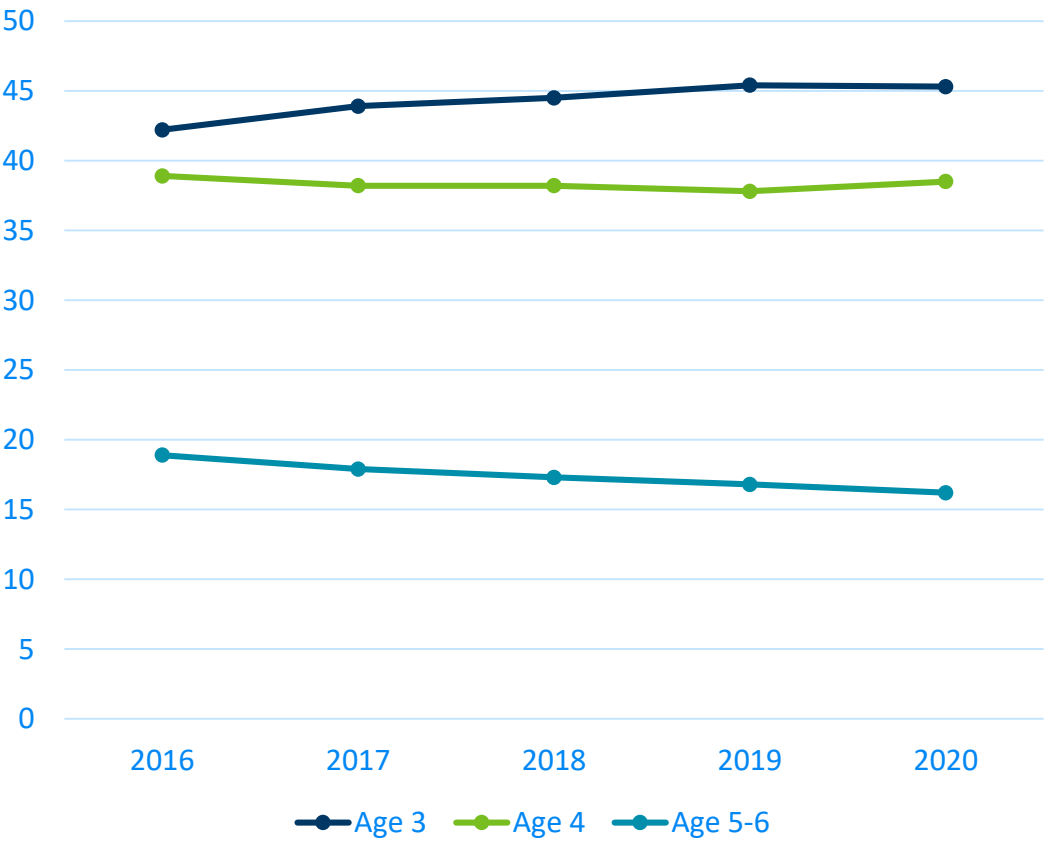


Age 3   Age 4   Age 5-6

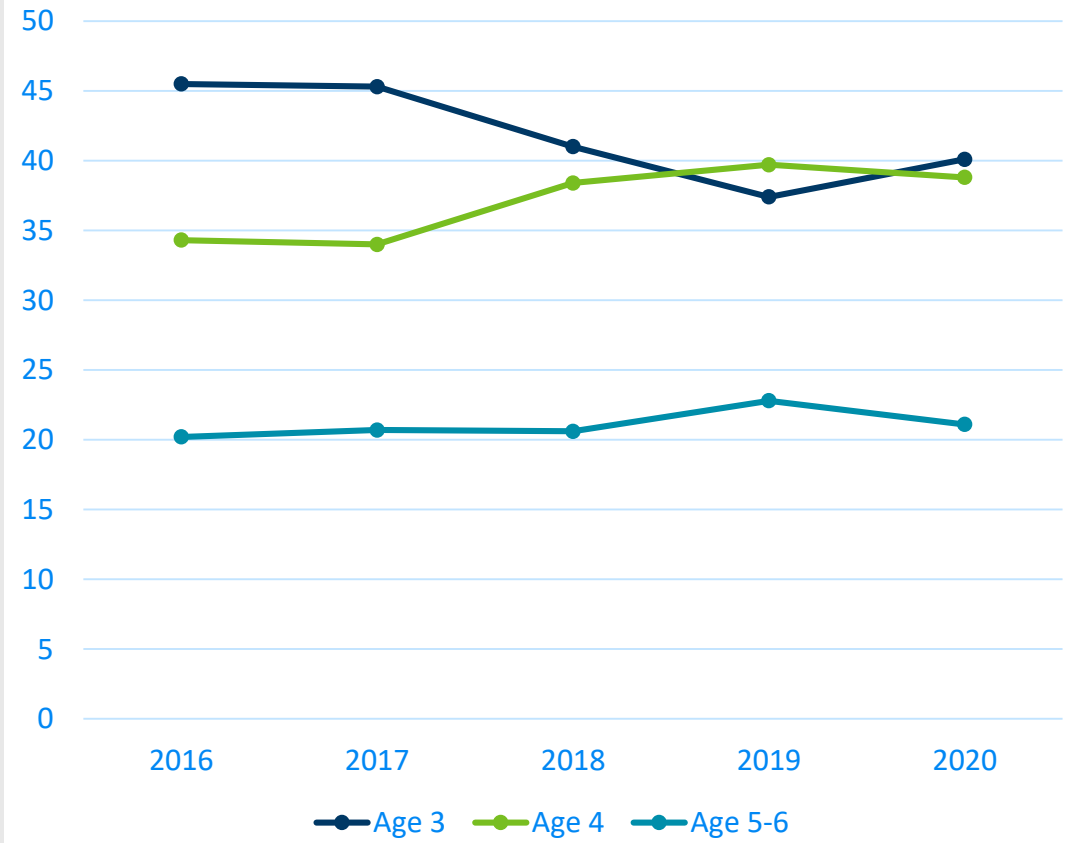
Screening Age	Count (Percent)
Age 3	179 (40.1%)
Age 4	173 (38.8%)
Age 5-6	94 (21.1%)

# Screening Age Trends

Statewide All Children



Statewide American Indian Children



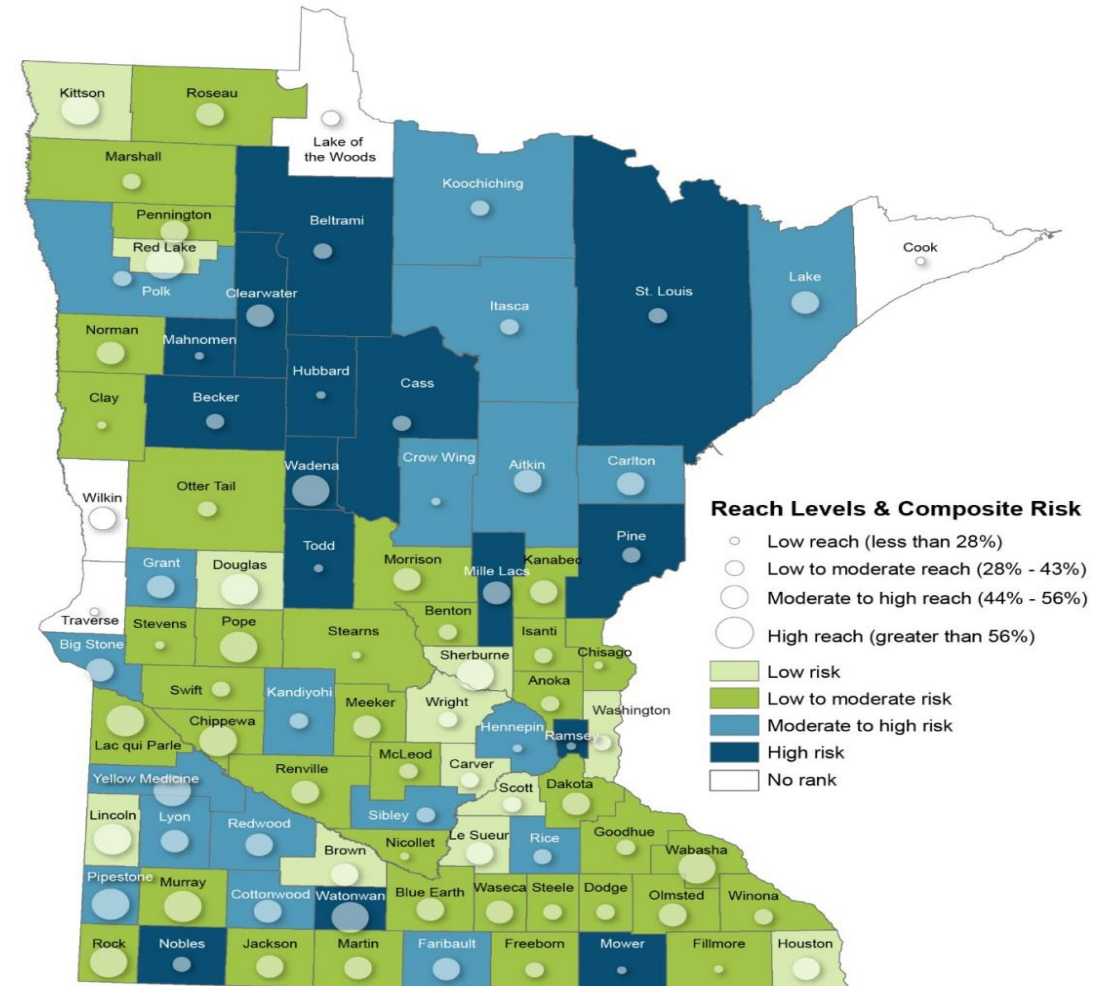
# Early Childhood Screening of MN 3 year olds

ECS completed for 3 year olds by county reach and composite risk levels.

Statewide: 33% screened age 3

**Source:** Wilder Research analysis of 2013 data from the Minnesota Department of Education.

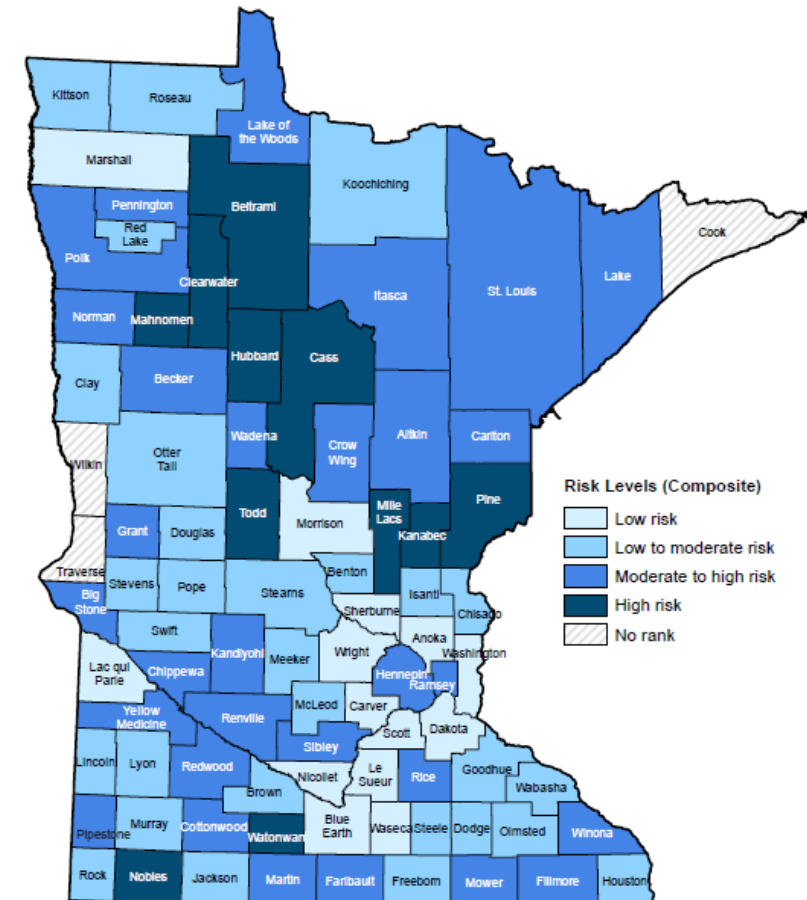
[http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ceed/MN\\_Early\\_Childhood\\_Risk\\_and\\_Reach\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ceed/MN_Early_Childhood_Risk_and_Reach_Report_2015.pdf)



# Risk, reach, and resilience

- Identifying risk, reach, and resilience:
  - Child mobility (children under age 5 who have moved residences at least once in the past year)
  - Foster Care
  - Health Care Coverage
  - Immunizations
  - Poverty
  - Prenatal Care
  - Low Birth Rate
  - Statewide: 38% screened age 3.

Overall risk status  
By county, 2018



[Minnesota Early Childhood Risk, Reach, and Resilience](#)



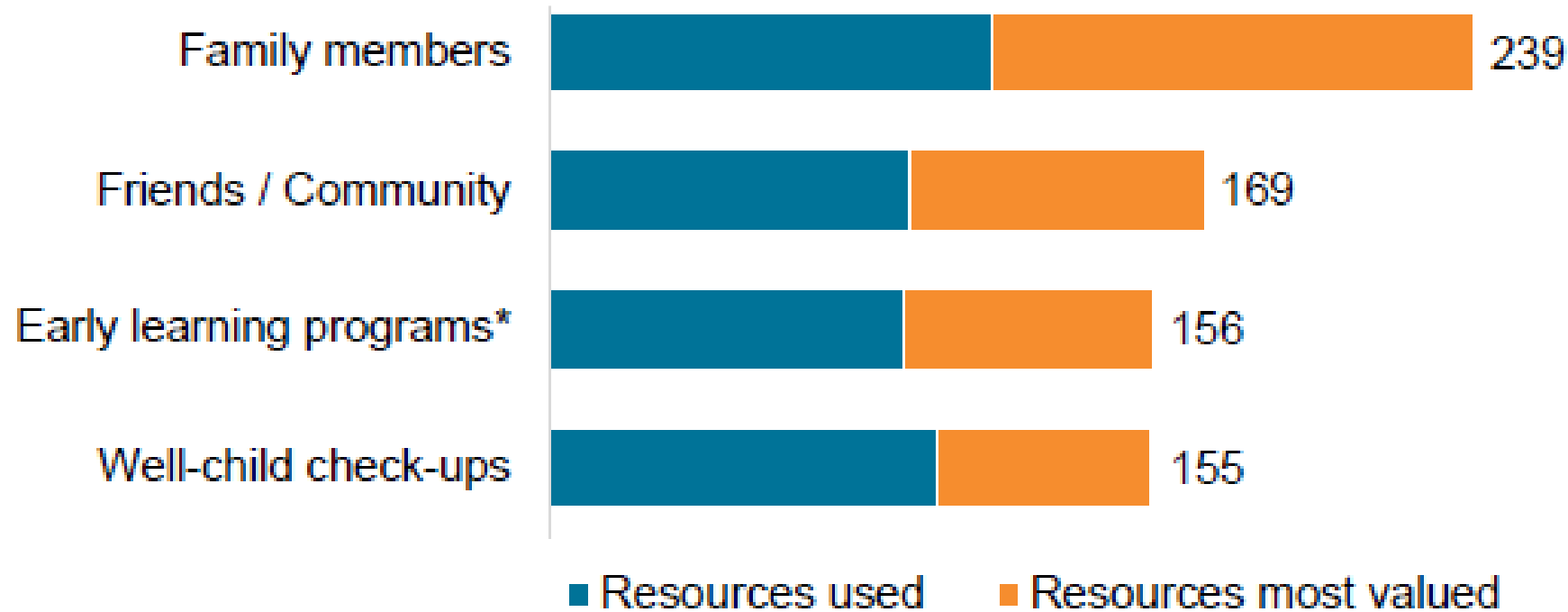
# PDG Indigenous Evaluation

## Characteristics of Indigenous Children, [First Year Recap: PDG Indigenous Evaluation](#)

Characteristic	All children (403,568)	Indigenous children (11,076)
Median household income	\$100,000	\$76,300*
Live in greater Minnesota	44%	69%*
All parents are working	70%	83%*
Live with parent	97%	82%*
Not moved in the past year	85%	66%*
Live in two parent households	87%	62%*
Not living in rental housing	77%	51%*
Attend preschool	54%	46%
Insured	98%	95%
Not living in poverty	89%	83%
Living in affordable housing (<30% of family income is going to housing)	78%	69%
* indicates statistically significant differences		

The contrasting income and housing opportunities among households with Indigenous children point to a need for targeted, culturally specific interventions to support Indigenous families and communities.

- Indigenous caregivers rely on family members, friends and community, early learning programs and well-child check-ups to help their children thrive



- Culturally based early childhood programs
- Culture and language reclamation
- Increase in American Indian family/child serving professionals
- Investment into community led solutions



# Strength vs. Resilience

- Familial and community bonds
- Pride, strong identity, self expression
- History, culture and language
- Understand Native Minnesota,  
<https://www.understandnativemn.org/>



# Indigenous Knowledge Grandma Test

- Indigenous early childhood educators are creating the “Grandma Test” observation tool to assess a young child’s development from an Indigenous worldview, which emphasizes balance and development of cultural values and aligned behaviors.
- Modeled after the Seven Grandfather Teachings, <https://www.lltc.edu/about-us/our-philosophy/>



## **Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom)**

- Seek guidance from others
- Take time to reflect upon experiences
- Acknowledge the opportunity to learn from others
- Persist in acquiring knowledge and improving skills
- Strive to accomplish goals and dreams

# Indigenous Cultural Norming

- We want to increase cultural relevancy of the Ages and Stages Questionnaires
  - It was nationally normed and with very few Indigenous voices (1%).
  - The process would be similar to how adaptations were done for other cultural groups.
  - Families are better served by culturally normed tools.
  - Minnesota is committed to using culturally relevant ways to support families in the Early Childhood Screening program and create stronger relationships for American Indian communities and parents.
  - This is work being done by Minnesota Screening Task Force (MDH, MDE, DHS, Johns' Hopkins).



# Tribal Early Childhood Research Council (TRC) screening in-reach

[MDE screening website](#) under 'resources' and Tribal Early Childhood Research Center:

Partnering with American Indian and Alaska Native Families to Support Children's Development – A TRC Resource for Professionals

5 Things families need to know:

1. Understand why screening matters
2. Know what to expect
3. Trust people guiding them through process
4. Have confidence that culture will be considered in interpreting results
5. Get feedback on screening results

# TRC: Supporting your child through developmental screening

For families:

- “Screening can show areas where your child is doing well, so you can celebrate growth, and areas where your child may need help, so you can work with others to find additional support”
- “You may be worried about screening because of past experiences, concerns about labeling, or fear of the results. It is reasonable that you want to protect your child and do what is best for them. **Screening can help you do that** by identifying your child’s needs and helping early childhood professionals connect you and your child to additional support



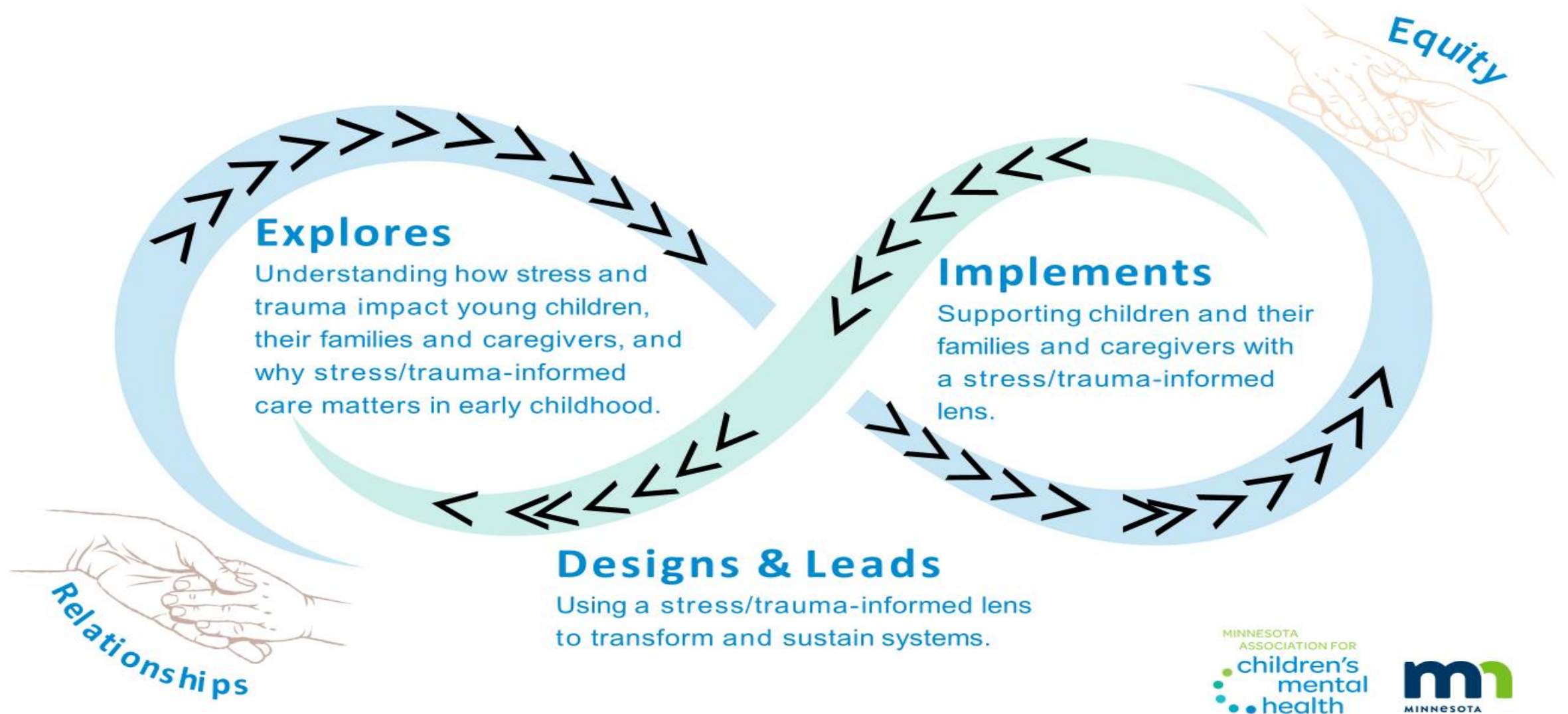
# Resources

# Toolkit for Healing-Centered Practice for professionals

Designed for professionals who work with children prenatal to age 6, their families and those who care for them.

- Resources on stress and trauma-informed care.
  - Explores impact of stress and trauma on children and their families and caregivers
  - Explains why trauma-informed care matters in early childhood.
  - Resources on ways to support children and families with a stress and trauma lens.
  - [Toolkit for Healing-Centered Practice](#)

# Roadmap for Healing- Centered Practice

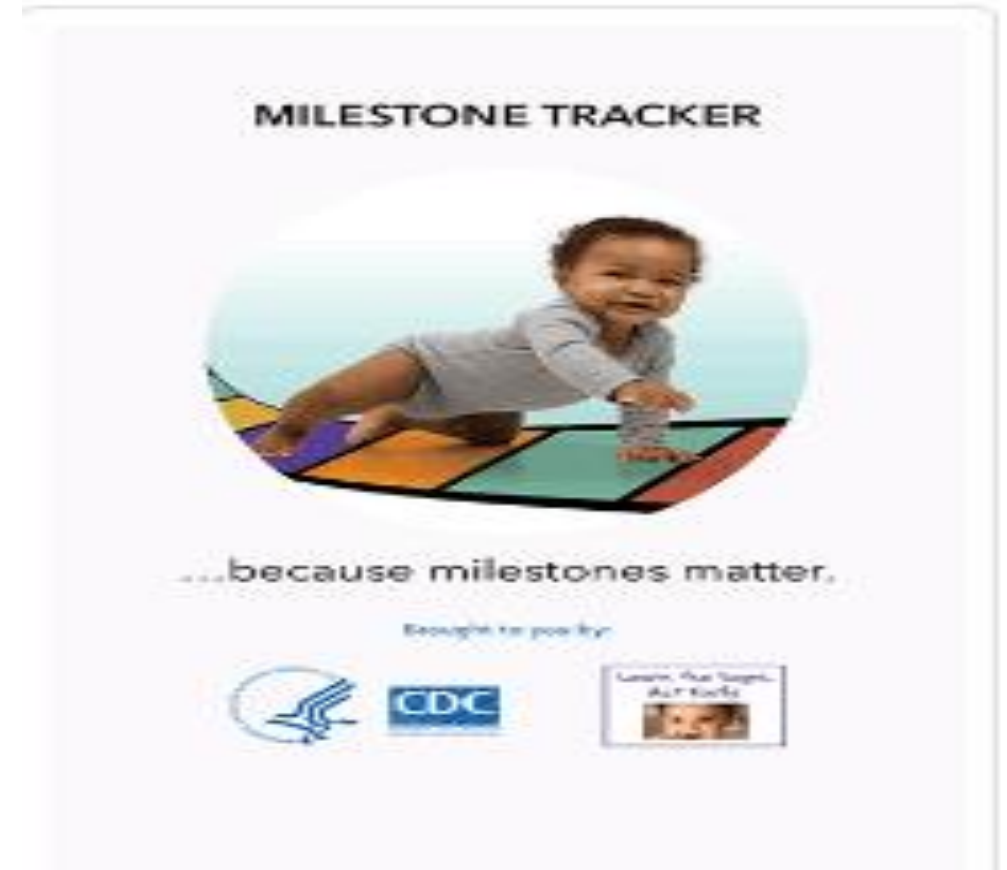


# MDH refugee, new immigrant supports

- [Minnesota Refugee Health Program](#)
- [MDH Directories for Organizations Serving Diverse Communities](#)
- [MDH Center for Excellence on Newcomer Health](#)
  - Trains clinicians and service providers on newcomer health
  - Promotes communication among refugee and other newcomer health professionals
  - Posted health related webinars on specific refugee populations

# Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Developmental Screening App for parents

- [CDC Developmental Milestone Tracker](#)
- Phone App for parents with children between ages 2 and 5 years.
- Links to videos and resources and sends updates about child development.
- Available in English or Spanish



# Help Me Connect will connect parents to local screening

[Help Me Connect](#) links to local district early childhood screening programs and other helpful resources for young families across the state.



The banner features the text "help me" in white lowercase letters, followed by the word "CONNECT" in large, colorful, blocky letters. Below this, a line of text reads: "A navigator connecting expectant families, families with young children (birth – 8 years old) and those working with families to services in their local communities that support healthy child development and family well-being."

Below the banner are three cards, each with a photograph and a circular icon:

- Healthy Development and Screening:** The photo shows a doctor in a blue coat examining a young child. The icon is a white circle containing three blue blocks.
- Developmental and Behavior Concerns:** The photo shows a young child climbing wooden stairs. The icon is a white circle containing two green arrows pointing in opposite directions.
- Disability Services and Resources:** The photo shows a woman wearing a green hijab smiling at a young child. The icon is a white circle containing a red wheelchair symbol.

# Screening Advisory made up of Regional Screening Coordinators

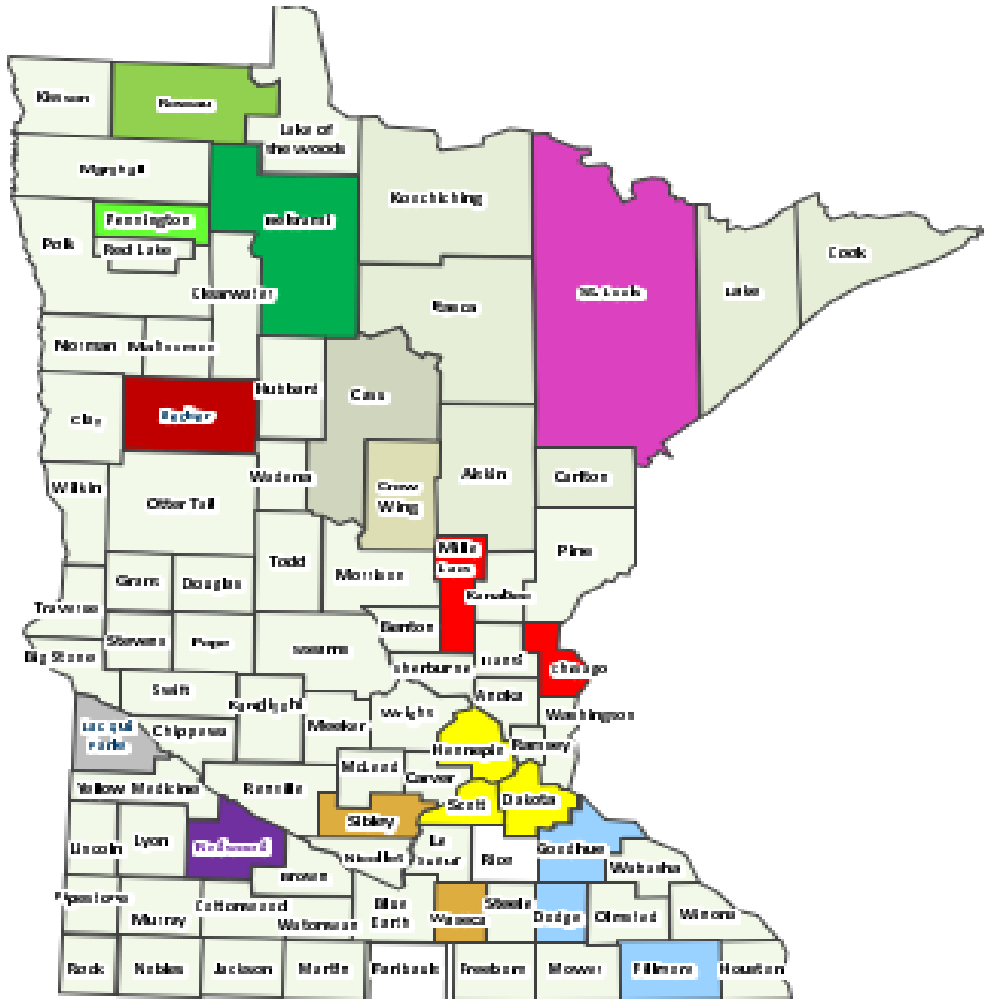
- Collaborating across 11 regions to improve statewide technical assistance.
- Voluntary Role: Gather info from local regions to report back to state. Provide input on creation of helpful resources, training.
- Meeting quarterly for one or two year terms.
- Virtual meetings first Thursday 12-1:00pm (Feb/May/Aug/Oct).
- Created of a [parent satisfaction survey](#) for local program improvement.

# Screening parent satisfaction survey

- Use for program improvement
- Edit, shorten, add.
- Put your own district info on for parents to return, remove MDE logo.
- Anonymous.
- Families to complete by paper, online or by mobile device like a QR code.
- [MDE District Screening](#), under resources



# ECS current Advisory by region



Region 1: [Lisa Hinrichs: Thief River Falls, ISD 61, Pennington \(day may not work?\)\\* Brita Comstock, Warroad, Roseau County](#)

Region 2: [Janelle Slough, Bemidji, Beltrami County](#)

Region 3: [Gabrielle Christianson: St. Louis County Public Schools, ISD 2142, St. Louis County](#)

[Heather Seppala ISD 2711, Mesabi East, St. Louis County\\*](#) [Brandon Otway ISD 118, IASE, Northland, Cass County\\*](#)

Region 4: [Annie Vigen, Detroit Lakes, Frazee Vargas, Becker County](#)

Region 5: [Brandi Wynn: Baxter ISD 181, Crow Wing \(day may not work?\);](#)

[Brandon Otway ISD 118, IASE, Northland, Cass County\\*](#)

Region 6: [Andrea Young and Scott VanDerMillen, ISD 2853 La Qui Parle](#)

Region 7: [Larmer Woeltge: Chisago ISD 2144, Chisago](#)

[Leah Graczyk: Isle, 473, Mille Lacs](#)

Region 8: [Amber Beadell, Wabasso, ISD 640, Redwood County](#)

Region 9: [Tonia Shiro: GFW \(Gibbon, Fairfax, Wintrop\) Schools ISD 2365, Sibley](#)

[Lisa Schroeder: Janesville, Waldorf, Pemberton, ISD 2835, Waseca](#)

Region 10: [Mary Bell: Kasson-Mantorville, ISD 27, Dodge County](#)

[Terra Haugen Kenyon Wanamingo, ISD 2172, Goodhue \(day may not work?\);](#)

[Aimee Rodger, Fillmore Public Health, Preston, Fillmore](#)

[Olivia Sage, Faribault ISD 656, Goodhue](#)

Region 11: [Christy DeGoey: Eagan, ISD 196, Dakota](#)

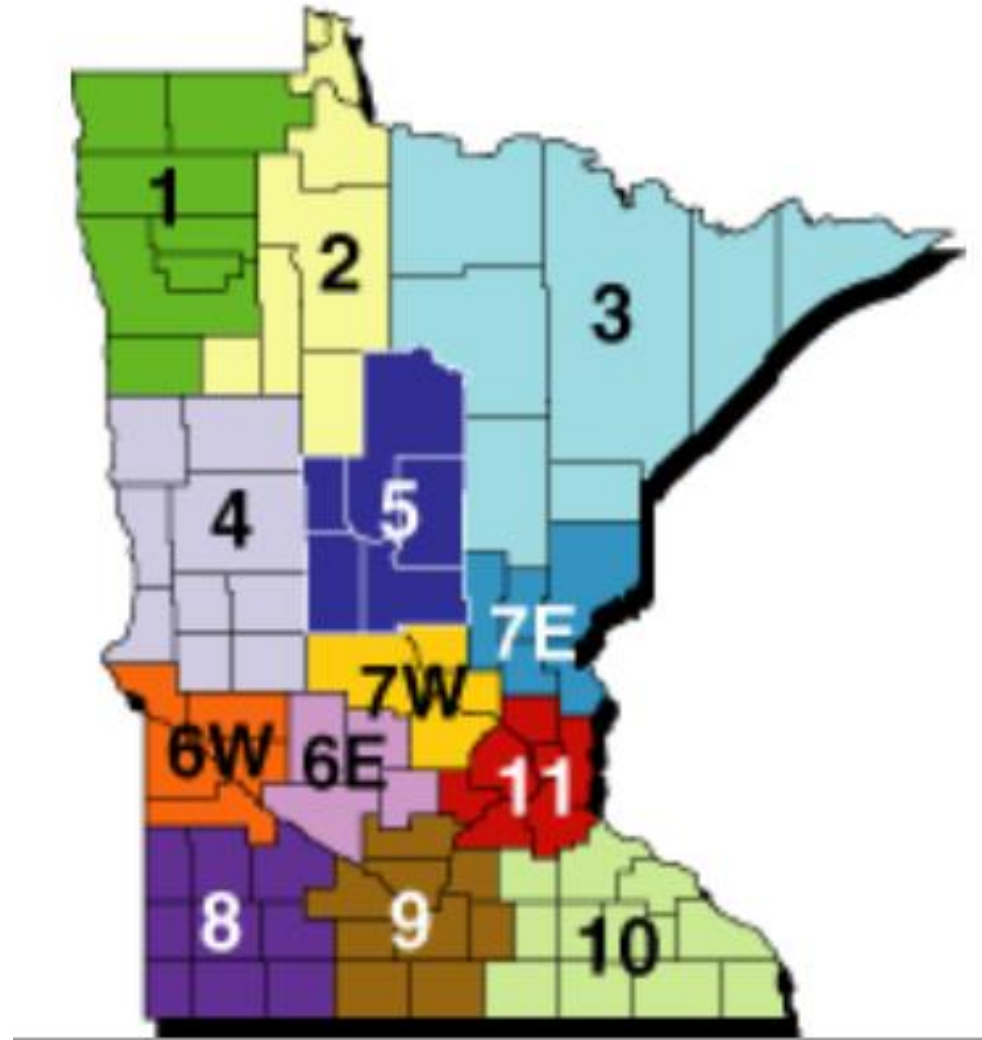
[Angie McGinnis: Hastings, ISD, Dakota](#)

[Gina Hendrickson: Prior Lake Savage, ISD 719, Scott](#)

[Ifu Hunte, Minneapolis, Hennepin](#)

[Ama Odom, Brooklyn Center, ISD 286, Hennepin \(day may not work?\)](#)

# Minnesota 11 economic regions



# Screening training and open office hours

## Screening Trainings MDE/MDH

- April 19, 12:00-2:00 pm  
Developmental Social Emotional  
Screening and Referral. [Register.](#)
- April 25, 12:00-2:00 pm Program  
Administration, In-reach. [Register.](#)
- May 4, ASQ:SE-2 3-5:00 pm [Register  
by April 18!](#)
- [Professional learning resources](#)

## Monthly Open Office Hours

- April 18, 12-1:00pm: Successful  
Learner Equation; Two way referrals  
with Refugee, Immigrant Services;  
Early Learning Scholarships. [Register.](#)
- May 23, 12-1:00pm Community of  
Practice: Screeners and  
Homelessness liaisons. [Register](#)

## MARSS PS submissions and Ed-Fi Transition

- MARSS coordinators are syncing MARSS PS with MDE via Ed-Fi. Goal is for all districts to do this by end of 2024-2025 school year. [MDE professional learning](#) has video.

## Annual Report

- Early Childhood Outcomes tentatively opens 5/1/23.
- Due by 7/31/23, but the earlier the better!
- More information closer to the date.
- Historical webinar on how to access/complete report on [MDE professional learning](#)

# Parent / Family engagement- reflection

1. What is one thing you heard today that changed your thinking on parent / family engagement.
2. Besides money or time, what do you need to make a leap forward in your work with families.

Questions?

[Lucy.Arias@state.mn.us](mailto:Lucy.Arias@state.mn.us) and [Margaret.Chresand@state.mn.us](mailto:Margaret.Chresand@state.mn.us)

# Thank you!

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Margo Chresand, [Margaret.Chresand@state.mn.us](mailto:Margaret.Chresand@state.mn.us)