



Louisiana LAUNCH

Cohort 5, Funding Period 2013–2018

www.louisianalaunch.org

Grantee Overview

Coordinated by the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Public Health and Office of Behavioral Health, Louisiana LAUNCH promotes and supports the resilience and healthy development of young children ages birth to 8 years and their families. The southwest region of Louisiana—15 judicial districts, including Lafayette and the surrounding parishes of Acadia and Vermilion—is Louisiana LAUNCH’s pilot area for improving families’ access to a system of coordinated and effective services. Children in this pilot area have a high risk for poor developmental and well-being outcomes based on rates of infant mortality, births to single mothers, births to teenagers, births to non-high school graduates, children living in poverty, and children needing intensive intervention at kindergarten entry. Louisiana LAUNCH is committed to ensuring that behavioral health disparities, particularly by race and ethnicity, are reduced in the Lafayette, Acadia, and Vermilion parishes.

Project Milestones

All [Project LAUNCH](#) grantees implement five core promotion and prevention strategies intended to increase access to high-quality prevention and wellness promotion services for children and their families. In Louisiana LAUNCH, these five strategies are implemented through the following activities:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Louisiana LAUNCH implements screening in primary care, child care, and home visiting settings, all through Louisiana LAUNCH’s early childhood mental health consultation program. This work includes identifying children with observable symptoms that may interfere with their development and those who may be at risk from exposure to adverse home and community experiences. Louisiana LAUNCH also focuses on screening mothers for depression, anxiety, and substance abuse and supports screening and treatment of pregnant women in obstetricians’ offices. In addition, children are assessed using a validated symptom-focused measure and an environmental measure. Primary care providers receive formal mini-training on screening tools available to them and are supported in implementing universal mental health screening using a general screener for children and families. In the child care setting, Louisiana LAUNCH offers valuable clinical information to parents and caregivers through screenings and direct consultations. In partnership with early Intervention home visiting, Louisiana LAUNCH works with local leadership to systematically increase identification of early childhood mental health concerns. Their work includes: 1) determining the population that will benefit from additional universal screening; 2) deciding which screening tool to use, and 3) aligning this work within the existing eligibility determination processes.
- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** Louisiana LAUNCH provides infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) in early care and education settings, [Part C](#) of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#), and primary care.

- Early care and education consultation follows Tulane University’s model where a mental health professional is teamed with early childhood professionals to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral health of infants and young children. Through Louisiana LAUNCH, a child care mental health consultant (CCMHC) works with early care and education sites for 6 months and then provides follow-up visits if requested after the 6-month consultation. The CCMHC recruited a full case load of child care centers and family child care homes and completed consultation with this first group of sites. The CCMHC also provides trainings that focus on supporting children to develop positive behavior, social–emotional growth, and self-regulation. Louisiana LAUNCH supports the CCMHC by providing group reflective supervision and continuing training and professional development.
- **Enhanced Home Visiting:** Louisiana LAUNCH developed a model of consultation for home visiting programs in efforts to address the needs and opportunities of [EarlySteps](#) (early intervention) providers. The model structure was influenced by multiple agencies and states’ requests for increased integration of infant mental health into care provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A full-time LAUNCH mental health consultant works with EarlySteps to increase providers’ awareness and knowledge of early social, emotional, and behavioral health and development of young children and their families. The mental health consultant also helped EarlySteps administrators identify an additional screener to determine social–emotional needs in specific populations of children. This effort resulted in a pilot program and protocol to screen children who did not qualify for follow-up services from the original screening process. Following the additional screening, if children still do not qualify for support, the mental health consultant works with EarlySteps to develop a plan for a special instructor to meet with families and provide strategies on how the families can access resources. Through Louisiana LAUNCH, the mental health consultant continues to work with providers to enhance their skills in recognizing family strengths and needs to make appropriate referrals and support parent-child.
- **Integrating Behavioral Health Into Primary Care:** To enhance providers’ skills in caring for children with mental health concerns and achieve integration of behavioral health into primary care settings, Louisiana LAUNCH provides onsite and off-site consultation to primary care providers serving young children and their parents. The off-site consultation includes email and phone consultation with a Mental Health Consultant and a Pediatric Psychiatrist. This model was based on successful child psychiatry access programs such as the [Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program](#), Washington’s [Partnership Access Line](#), and other co-located models in Louisiana. Louisiana LAUNCH provides consultation services to primary care providers, including pediatricians, family physicians, and obstetricians through didactic “Lunch and Learn” presentations; phone or email consultations with a mental health consultant, child psychiatrist, or perinatal psychiatrist; and off-site mental health evaluations. In this model, the mental health consultant is co-located in primary care practices and continues to provide curbside consultation about diagnosis or treatment, support the provider in giving brief behavioral management strategies to families, and assist with identifying resources. In addition, LAUNCH supports obstetricians to become champions for pregnant women with mental health concerns. Louisiana LAUNCH organizes a lecture series for residency students and didactic presentations for residency training programs.

- **Family Strengthening:** Louisiana LAUNCH’s family strengthening work is focused on increasing parent, extended family, and community awareness and practice of key elements integral for early childhood mental health. Louisiana LAUNCH is a pilot site for the [Vroom](#) initiative, providing ongoing presentations and training materials to local communities to build skills and promote VROOM and information about social–emotional development. This effort has led Louisiana LAUNCH to become the lead in providing support to other organizations throughout the state on using VROOM materials as well as spreading awareness of Project LAUNCH through informational packets.

Systems Integration

Project LAUNCH is intended to improve coordination and collaboration across systems that serve young children and their families. Louisiana LAUNCH focuses its efforts to improve the early childhood infrastructure through workforce development opportunities. Louisiana LAUNCH provided multiple trainings to expand communities’ knowledge and skills in addressing the mental health needs of young children including “Developing the Whole Child: Helping Children Soar” in June 2015 to provide an overview of infant mental health. More than 100 community providers from the three parish regions participated. In collaboration with EarlySteps, Louisiana LAUNCH sponsored a training for early intervention providers on the [Parents Interacting with Infants](#) model from the [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#). Through this train-the-trainer model, participants learned to help parents attend to the needs of their young children; participants also committed to provide two trainings to other EarlySteps providers. Louisiana LAUNCH collaborated with Acadiana [Woman’s Foundation, Inc.](#), to offer Pediatric Grand Rounds to community pediatricians, focusing on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and early identification of autism. Louisiana LAUNCH sponsored [Parent Child Interaction Therapy](#) (PCIT) training for community clinicians and mental health consultants serving young children within the Project LAUNCH grant.

Louisiana LAUNCH continues involvement at both the state and local levels to promote and inform communities about young child wellness. Louisiana LAUNCH is a part of the state’s adverse childhood experience (ACE) coalition. The state coalition supported the development of the Louisiana ACE Educator Program, where more than 35 professionals were trained to become ACE educators and taught about the impact of childhood trauma throughout their communities. Louisiana LAUNCH provided mini-grants to six nonprofit organizations in the Lafayette, Acadia, and Vermilion parishes to develop projects that promote the resilience and healthy development of young children.

Grantee Events and Materials

Click on the following links to access information about grantee-developed resources:

- [Louisiana ACE Educator Program Handout](#): This handout provides an overview of the Louisiana ACE Educator Program.
- [ACE Fact Sheet](#): This resource provides data from the Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study on adverse childhood experiences and the relationship to reduced health and well-being later in life.
- [Project LAUNCH Handout](#): This document describes the Project LAUNCH federal initiative and Louisiana’s goals and strategies for implementing the grant.
- [VROOM Baby Card](#): Louisiana LAUNCH worked with VROOM to develop an additional insert, which shares information on young child wellness, to be distributed with all birth certificates throughout the state.

“For UHC Pediatric Clinic, Project LAUNCH provides immediate access to appropriately credentialed, highly experienced experts in the field of infant/young child mental health and child psychiatry for evaluation, recommendations, and support for very young children with complex behavioral and emotional needs. Project LAUNCH enhanced our capacity to provide appropriate pediatric mental health and medical services in a timely manner.”

– Clinical Care Coordinator

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