



## Tennessee Project LAUNCH

Cohort 5, Funding Period 2013–2018

### *Grantee Overview*

Tennessee Project LAUNCH provides primary prevention and promotion services in Memphis, Tennessee, with intensive services in three targeted ZIP codes (38106, 38109, and 38126) to promote the health of infants and children ages birth to 8 years. Memphis, which in 2010 had the highest poverty level (26.5%) of any large city in the United States, is home to 84,754 children in this age group, and the three targeted ZIP codes are home to an estimated 9,500 children under age 8. Families with children ages birth to 8 years in Memphis and the targeted ZIP code areas are excessively burdened by issues associated with poor child health, including a high percentage of infants born at low birth weight, late entry of pregnant women into prenatal care, high rates of poverty and unemployment, lack of education, high crime rates, high percentage of children living in single parent households, and high teen pregnancy rates. Guided by learning from its local demonstration pilot in Memphis serving a high-need population, Project LAUNCH Tennessee strives to establish a state-wide system of strength-based, family-centered, and culturally and linguistically competent services in order to promote holistic young child wellness.

### *Project Milestones*

All [Project LAUNCH](#) grantees implement five promotion and prevention strategies intended to increase access to high-quality prevention and promotion services for children and families. The promotion and prevention strategies are implemented in partnership with the [Early Success Coalition \(ESC\)](#), which serves as the Local Young Child Wellness Council. The ESC was established as a group working within Memphis to improve the health and well-being of young children and their families. Rather than create another group with similar focus and representatives, ESC assumed the role of the local council. In Tennessee Project LAUNCH, these five strategies are implemented through the following activities:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Early developmental screening of children in Memphis is conducted in home visitation programs, in some pediatrician's offices, and in some child care centers. Tennessee LAUNCH works with groups in the community, including LeBonheur Early Intervention and Development (LEAD) and the Memphis Association for the Education of Young Children, to promote the use of developmental screenings and increase the number of children being screened in child care centers and pediatric primary care settings using the [Ages & Stages Questionnaire,® Third Edition \(ASQ-3™\)](#) and [Ages & Stages Questionnaire®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition \(ASQ:SE-2™\)](#). Through collaboration with LEAD, select childcare centers have created and implemented standard processes and protocols to integrate ASQ screenings into their practice and to use a shared data system, CoactionNet, for data collection and reporting. With support from the ESC staff and Project LAUNCH, LEAD continues to provide training and support to child care centers in the community that are currently using ASQ screenings.

- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** The goal of ESC is to promote social-emotional wellness through effective classroom practices and increase access to mental health consultation in early care and education settings that serve children ages birth to 8 years. The mental health consultation team has provided program, classroom, and child-centered consultation to Ernestine Rivers Child Care Center since April 2015. They have also collaborated with the ECS team to develop protocols for providing mental health consultation to child care centers.
- Enhanced Home Visiting:** Tennessee Project LAUNCH supports four evidence-based early home visitation programs, Parents as Teachers ([PAT](#)); Nurse Family Partnership ([NFP](#)); Healthy Families America ([HFA](#)); and Early Head Start ([EHS](#)) in Shelby County that provide services for families during pregnancy and for families with children ages birth to 5 years. The Early Success Coalition Network (ESCN) is a network of primary home visitation programs as well as ancillary family service partners—social services such as mental health, housing, education, and so on—that has been in operation since 2009. Referrals to programs in the ESCN increased by 162% as a result of revising a referral toolkit, providing training on use of the toolkit, improving coordinated services between ESCN and community agencies, and adding new referral sources. The ESCN provides a platform for disseminating information and training for home visitation programs. In 2015, more than 75 home visitors participated in a summer series that included three trainings focusing on infant and early childhood mental health. Additionally, the professional development committee developed a 10-month infant and early childhood mental health training series for home visitors. There are more than 25 participants in this training who represent home visitation programs, Department of Children’s Services, and early intervention agencies. All participants attend monthly 3-hour trainings, each which maps onto the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health®. Supervisors attend monthly reflective supervision coaching during which they discuss implementation of principles learned during the training and enhance their use of reflective supervision.
 

*“The concept of ‘infant mental health’ is new for many home visitors; when introduced to the concept, most home visitors understand its relevance and importance.”*

-Grantee staff
- Integrating Behavioral Health into Primary Care:** In efforts to increase knowledge and awareness of services and behavioral health issues and decrease the stigma related to accessing mental health services, Tennessee Project LAUNCH is working to embed behavioral health services into primary care settings where families routinely go for medical care. In this familiar environment and with a trusted medical provider, the ESC believes that families with children ages birth to 8 years will be willing to meet and work with behavioral health consultants. Two local pediatricians are members of the ESC core leadership group, and one will support this mission to integrate behavioral health into primary care by championing the effort with local pediatricians. Currently, ESC is utilizing the [Reach Out and Read](#) program as a mechanism to connect with pediatric practices, partnering with the [Governor’s Books From Birth Foundation](#) and a pediatrician who has successfully implemented the program in his office, and offering technical assistance to other pediatricians who would like to replicate this model.

- **Family Strengthening:** Tennessee Project LAUNCH uses the [Nurturing Parenting](#) curriculum to support parents and families. Staff who work with families, including pre-K and child care center classroom teachers and family support workers, have been trained in Nurturing Parenting. The program is providing parent education at five locations. The ESC also contracts with two agencies, Signal Centers and The Works, to implement the Strengthening Families framework in Shelby County. Signal Centers provide a Strengthening Families liaison for Shelby County, and The Works, a well-established nonprofit agency, provides a liaison for the ESC neighborhood (ZIP codes 38106, 38126, and 38109).

### ***Systems Integration***

Project LAUNCH is intended to improve coordination and collaboration across systems that serve young children and their families. Tennessee Project LAUNCH is playing a crucial role in the Association of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee (AIMHiTN), which was formed in April 2016. An initial goal of AIMHiTN is to purchase the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health's [Competency Guidelines®](#) and the Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health®, which will be for providers across disciplines and for systems working with young children. This will have a positive impact on Tennessee's workforce in a number of sectors, with an initial emphasis on home visitors.

LAUNCH has also partnered with state and community efforts on addressing toxic stress and adversity in young children's lives. One such partner is the Adverse Childhood Experiences Center Task Force of Shelby County, which was created in 2014 and comprises a team of 40 local leaders who work to change the way medical systems and policies promote health and behavioral outcomes for all citizens.

### ***Grantee Events and Materials***

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

[Collaborative Toolkit for Home Visitors](#): This program selection toolkit outlines the services offered by ESC and provides a brief description of each service as well as contact information. The purpose of the toolkit is to encourage referrals of pregnant women and families who may benefit from center-based or home visiting services as a source of additional support through pregnancy and the early years of a child's life.

---

***This grantee profile is a product of the National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, under funding provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Cooperative Agreement 5U79SM061516-02. The views, opinions, and content of this grantee profile do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), SAMHSA, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention is operated by American Institutes for Research (AIR) in collaboration with the Center for School Mental Health, ZERO TO THREE, Community Science, FHI 360, National Indian Child Welfare Association, National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association, National Latino Behavioral Health Association, National Leadership Council on African American Behavioral Health, and the Council of State Governments.***

---