

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Needs Assessment

Scope of Work

Early childhood is a critical period for brain development and experiences during early childhood can shape a child's mental, emotional, and social development throughout their lifetime. By promoting positive mental health outcomes in early childhood, we can prevent mental health problems later in life. Research has shown that early interventions and support for young children and their families can improve outcomes for children, reduce the risk of later mental health problems, and promote healthy development. By developing strong, integrated infant/early childhood mental health supports into existing systems, we can reduce the need for future healthcare and social service interventions.

Smart Start of Mecklenburg County seeks to address the needs, gaps and opportunities in the system providing infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) supports and services. One of the first steps is to conduct a needs assessment of the current landscape of IECMH services and capacity. To this end, Smart Start seeks to contract with a consultant trained in public health to conduct a countywide needs assessment of the current landscape of IECMH services and capacity. This needs assessment should address the following:

1. Identify the need for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Services (IECMH)
2. Map the system of care for IECMH – what do families experience?
3. Understand IECMH workforce capacity and supply
4. Identify higher education opportunities and professional certifications for potential IECMH practitioners.

Project timeframe – February/March, 2024 – July 1, 2024 (with option to extend ending date)

Please submit a proposal and budget by **February 23, 2024** to [Jennifer Stamp](#), Strategic Initiatives Director.