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# Effective Strategies for Supporting Priority Populations

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It's amazing what they absorb before they're five.



## Who are priority populations?

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- Children of teen parents
- Children in homeless families
- Children in families in poverty or deep poverty
- Children/families with Department of Children and Family Services involvement
- Children with disabilities
- Children with disabilities not currently served
- Children in family, friend & neighbor (license-exempt) child care
- Linguistically isolated families and other families that experience significant barriers based on language
- Children of migrant or seasonal workers



## Impact of priority population recommendation

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- Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge—Innovation Zones
- Preschool Expansion Grant
- Early Learning Council committees

# What are the needs of the Priority Populations?

- ▶ Same as other families....
  - ▶ Desire the best for their children
  - ▶ Consistency & flexibility, patience, etc.
- ▶ Additionally they need...
  - ▶ Extreme flexibility, response to basic needs (food, shelter, clothing)
  - ▶ Increased awareness of trauma and its impact
  - ▶ Understanding of their increased distrust of systems
  - ▶ Awareness that they are survivors

# High needs, vulnerable populations

- ▶ Child welfare involvement (past or present)
- ▶ Young moms (18-25)
- ▶ Several children under the age of 5
- ▶ Maternal history of mental illness addressed or unaddressed
- ▶ Significant history of trauma (intergenerational, community, complex trauma)
- ▶ Housing instability (shelter stays, couch surfing)
- ▶ Limited educational opportunities

## What can be done with awareness?

Recognize the impact on the service delivery expectations

- ▶ *Be sensitive to triggers that will cause the families to flee*
- ▶ *Meet families where they are*

# What do all children need to thrive?

- ▶ Stable and loving family
- ▶ Safe & secure housing
- ▶ Learning opportunities (quality education)
- ▶ Access to healthcare and nutrition

# Complex Trauma Disorder exposure to multiple traumatic events\*

- ▶ Hyper vigilant
- ▶ Impaired cognitive and physical development
- ▶ Negative affects on physical and mental health
- ▶ Impacts ability to learn
- ▶ Particularly damaging in childhood

\*National Child Traumatic Stress Network



# Harm Reduction Values

- ▶ Building rapport & trust
- ▶ Seeing small changes as success
- ▶ Recognize ambivalence as success
- ▶ Being nonjudgmental is essential
- ▶ Avoid preconceived goals
- ▶ Provide choices
- ▶ Value the individual's information and input

# System Cultivation/Integration for the target population

- ▶ Value in helping to organize systems to:
  - ▶ Implement integrated services
  - ▶ Reduce barriers
  - ▶ Decrease/eliminate gaps

# Questions and discussion

# Contact information

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