

# Utah Early Childhood Mental Health Working Group

## **Goal:**

To gain a better understanding of gaps identified in the “Early Childhood Mental Health in Utah” study and create a roadmap to guide future programs and policies to strengthen Utah’s systems and outcomes.

# Utah Early Childhood Mental Health Working Group

Organization	Organization
Cambia Health Foundation	University of Utah
Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health	Utah Community Builders Foundation
Governor's Office	Utah Department of Health
Huntsman Mental Health Institute	Utah Department of Human Services
Intermountain Healthcare	Utah Hospital Association
Intermountain Medical Group	Utah House of Representatives
Jerry Seiner Dealerships	Utah Parent Center
Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute	Utah State Board of Education
Office of Child Care, Department of Workforce Services	Voices for Utah Children
Primary Children's Center for Safe and Healthy Families	Wasatch Behavioral Health
Primary Children's Hospital	Wasatch Pediatrics Behavioral Health
The Children's Center Utah	

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## Process:

January  
to  
August

- Heard from cross-sector leaders in the Early Childhood Mental Health field who provided information and facilitated group discussions.

July  
to  
October

- Began developing recommendations to help strengthen Utah's Early Childhood Mental Health systems and outcomes.
- Began discussing ways to measure success and improvement.

November  
to  
December

- Continue to refine vision & mission statements, guiding principles, strategies, and tactics.
- Begin to select data points to use or develop to measure success and improvement over time.

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## **Vision:**

As the youngest state in the nation, Utah will be recognized as a leader in Early Childhood Mental Health by protecting and investing in the emotional well-being of its children, and is committed to eliminating disparities in health and well-being for all population groups.

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## Mission:

Develop a robust Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) system that works collaboratively to improve the emotional health of every child in Utah by:

Addressing a full range of ECMH needs, from pregnant and postpartum women to children up to age eight, using a dyadic, multi-generational, and all-caregiver perspective to help every child develop a solid foundation of physical and emotional health from which they can overcome any adversity encountered later in life.

Ensuring access to appropriate services across the ECMH continuum, including increasing awareness of early child development and ECMH services, as well as support for evidence-based, trauma-informed, universal and targeted prevention, comprehensive early intervention, and intensive treatment.

Improving coordination and collaboration both within the ECMH system and from the ECMH system out to additional partners and stakeholders.

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## Guiding Principles:

- Recommendations should positively impact the entire family and all caregivers.
- Recommendations should build the emotional strength of each child through approaches that promote positive experiences and relationships.
- Recommendations should be culturally responsive and reflective of families' choices, different communities' mental health needs, and health disparities in economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color.
- Recommendations should be considered in the broader context of Utah's full mental health system.
- Recommendations should be considered in the broader context of Utah's child-serving systems.
- Recommendations should be framed as "investments in our future."
- Recommendations should involve a wide-range of stakeholder/partners who have a shared interest in healthy physical and emotional foundations for children.

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## Challenges

- Gaps in communication
- Lags in early childhood mental health training and treatment options
- Parent engagement
- Continued engagement in the working group process due to competing demands

## Opportunities

- Maintaining momentum created by the 2020 study and COVID-19
- Increased awareness of the importance of early childhood mental health
- Increased interest in and plans for regular early childhood mental health screening
- Improved collaboration and progress created through the working group process