It Takes a Village:

The importance of community partnering to support the complex needs of children experiencing homelessness

*Presented by Kate Barrand and Jayne Singer, PhD*
Growth of Family Homelessness

NYC
114,000 students are homeless

Number of school-aged children who live in shelter or doubled up has increased 70% in the last 10 years

Massachusetts
18,000 children are homeless

Homelessness among people in families with children increased all around the US, Massachusetts had the second largest increase between 2017 and 2018.
Impact of Homelessness and Poverty

- Loss of sense of agency
- Isolation
- Mental Health impacts
- Lack of mental bandwidth for complex problem solving
- Trauma from chronic stress
- Challenges with self regulation
- Delayed gross motor and cognitive development
- Physical health impacts
- Trauma from chronic stress
Horizons’ Programs

- Playspace Program
- Family Partnerships Program
- Early Education Centers

Children & Families
Leveraging Partnerships to Serve Families

EMPath
Jewish Family & Children Services
Head Start
Early Intervention
Home for Little Wanderers
EMPath
Young Audiences

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**Strength Based Approach to Building Skills**

FAMILY STABILITY

**Housing**
Spending less than 30% of gross pay on housing.

**Family**
Children and family needs are being met and do not prevent participant from engaging in schooling or work.

**Physical & Mental Health**
Fully engaged in work and family, and no physical or mental health issues prevent participant from pursuing schooling or employment.

**Networks**
Part of a strong social network, serving as an advocate, organizer, and support to others.

WELL-BEING

**Education**
Has achieved a level of post-secondary education and/or training that has prepared participant for a job paying enough to support their family.

**Debt**
Has good credit and is managing debts in balance with income.

**Savings**
Has savings equal to three months’ worth of living expenses.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**Empower’s Theory of Change Bridge to Self-Sufficiency**

**Employment**
Earnings from participant’s job are greater than the real costs of basic living expenses for their family, as determined by MIT’s Living Wage Calculator.
What is Touchpoints?

• A developmental phenomenon
• A way of understanding and being with families *and each other*
• A reflective practice model for professionals
• An evidence-based approach to working with families
• An approach to changing systems of care to support professional development and change in practice
• A national site network and a Boston-based professional development center
Development is not Linear

Functional and Developmental Status vs. Time

Smooth

Spurts

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Developmental Framework

Development is characterized by regressions, bursts, and pauses.
Disorganization in One System Can Disorganize Others

Child’s Functional and Developmental Status

Motor

Language

Cognitive

Emotional

Time

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Disorganization in One System Can Disorganize Behavior
**Touchpoints** are the predictable regressions and disorganization that come before a spurt in a particular line of development. And, they are often accompanied by parental anxiety, frustration and self-doubt.
The Ideal Baby - Pregnancy
The Real Baby - Newborn
The Energy Sink - 3 weeks
The Rewarding Baby - 6-8 weeks
Looking Outward - 4 months
Up at Night - 7 months
The Pointer - 9 months
The Walker - 12 months
The Clinger - 15 months
Rebel With a Cause - 18 months
Getting to “No!” - 2 years
“Why?” - 3 years
What I Do Matters - 4 years
Who I Am Matters - 5 years
Entering the Real World – 6 years

All children at their own pace
Anticipatory Guidance Can Help Parents Think About Their Response

Practitioner’s Anticipatory Guidance

Developmental Status

Disorganization and Mismatch (Positive Stress)

PARENT

Healthy Relational Development

Derailment (ACE; Toxic Stress)

CHILD

TIME

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Touchpoints Relational Strategies

Family Assumptions = Strengths-Based Attitudes

Guiding Principles = Relationship-based Practices
Family Partnerships

From:
Staff discussing challenges in working with families

To:
Staff receiving training and coaching to develop strategies for recognizing family strengths and supporting each other

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Paradigm Shift to a Positive Model: Touchpoints Selected Parent Assumptions

All parents have strengths.

All parents have something critical to share.
Select Guiding Principles

Use the child’s behavior as your language:

Just say what you see!
Select Guiding Principles

Value Passion where you find it.
The Touchpoints Approach:

Promotes shared caregiving partnerships among mutually engaged families and providers that provide skills to enhance children’s emotional competence by supporting parent-child relationships through coaching for providers.

www.brazeltontouchpoints.org
Thank you!

horizonschildren.org

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