



Florida

Project HOPE works to ensure equitable access to health services and healthy development opportunities for children under five and their families by partnering with states and local organizations on policies and programs that result in systems change.

Background

Since 2018, Nemours has been working with a diverse group of stakeholders to implement Project HOPE in Florida. The goals of Project HOPE in Florida are to promote social-emotional health as well as improve the social emotional supports for children. Led by the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, state and local partners are collaborating to focus on increasing developmental screening and the promotion of social-emotional development in young children. In response to community and family feedback, partners are increasing social-emotional screening in early care and education settings and increasing access to services to address the social-emotional needs of young children.

To ensure community voice informs this work, FAHSC has partnered with the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County (ELCOC) in the Parramore Heritage Neighborhood working with the Parramore Kidz Zone, a place-based initiative in Orlando that focuses primarily on African-American children living in poverty. Through partnerships with the ELCOC, Community Coordinated Care for Children, Inc., Orange County Head Start, the University of Central Florida, and child care providers, Parramore Kidz Zone aims to “move the needle” on the percentage of Parramore children who are deemed to be “ready for Kindergarten” by the time they start school.

Cross Sector State Stakeholder Group (CSSSG)

The Florida Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Impact Project Advisory Group serves as the CSSSG for Florida. This group is led by the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC), and includes representatives from:

- Early Learning Coalition of Orange County
- Florida Association of Infant Mental Health
- Florida Office of Early Learning
- Help Me Grow Florida
- The Children's Movement of Florida
- University of South Florida College of Public Health, Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies

Community of Focus

Parramore Heritage / Parramore Kidz Zone in Orlando

<http://www.cityoforlando.net/parramorekidzzone/programs/>

To support state efforts, Nemours provides support in the following Infrastructure Areas:

- Communication
- Data
- Finance
- Governance
- Leadership

Complementary Initiatives

In addition to Project HOPE, state partners are engaged in several other initiatives focused on improving the health and wellbeing of young children.

- Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (ECCS ColIN)
 - The ECCS ColIN aims to identify ways to improve early childhood systems, resources and coordination across sectors so that all children can achieve optimal and equitable early childhood developmental health outcomes.
- Florida Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
 - Florida MIECHV partners with local agencies to offer home visiting to expectant and new families in high need communities and work with parents to build their skills for and knowledge about raising healthy, safe and successful children.
- Florida Preschool Development Grant (PDG)
 - The Florida PDG allows the implementation of measures that build on existing frameworks and infrastructures to increase the quality, alignment and efficiency of Florida's early childhood care and education mixed-delivery system of programs and services.
- Florida Act Early
 - The Florida Act Early program, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a statewide outreach campaign that aims to promote early screening and identification of potential developmental delays.

Community Engagement Activities

Since 2019, Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC) led several activities to increase the capacity of parents and stakeholders to establish feedback loops and incorporate community voice in local/state initiatives.

Parent Leadership Training

Since 2019, FAHSC has offered several trainings to parents, including Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) and Circle of Security, which led to the creation of a network of parent leaders able to provide input on policy at the state-and community-levels and serve as a two-way conduit for information between the state and community.

Community Action Lab

Community stakeholders, including parents and child care providers, were convened in a Community Action Lab by Boston Medical Center's Vital Village Network and FAHSC to determine the priority areas that children and families in Parramore need for Kindergarten readiness, including:

- Equitable access to essential needs and services
- Technical Assistance for community leaders

Equity and Diversity Training

Led by the Institute for Public Health Innovation, state stakeholders, parents and community residents participated in equity workshops to increase their capacity to improve policies and reduce inequities in early childhood.

Achievements

- Expansion of parent advocate leadership statewide
- Successful convening of Building Healthy & Equitable Communities - which increased awareness around the need for more support for children with developmental issues and assistance to parents in understanding development
- Completion of the Community Action Lab helped convene key partners/stakeholders and determine priority issues to address
- Development of a core group of Community Partners that have engaged in work within the Parramore Community, to increase sharing of information and resources

Action Plan Strategies

FAHSC has begun implementing a comprehensive action plan to address several policies and health inequities. To increase developmental screening and promote social-emotional development in young children, partners in Florida are implementing strategies, including:

Infrastructure Areas: Leadership, Communication, Governance

Action Step: Conduct a pilot in the Parramore Heritage community that uses strategies from COFI to equitably engage and organize parents of young children and build their leadership capacity and ability to advocate for the health and developmental needs of their children. If successful, the strategies and lessons learned can be shared with early learning coalitions (ELCs) and home visiting programs throughout the state.

Action Step: Highlight parent partnership in an equitable manner and continue supporting the development of parent leadership.

Support for this State Profile was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.