



El Paso—Aliviane, Inc.

Cohort 3, Funding Period 2010–2015

<http://www.aliviane.org/launch/>

Grantee Overview

El Paso Project LAUNCH serves children and families living in the El Paso, Texas, neighborhoods of South Central and Chihuahuita, which are located directly on the United States–Mexico border. The neighborhoods are considered to be medically underserved and are designated as mental health shortage areas. As with most United States–Mexico border communities, the area is faced with challenges not present in other U.S. communities, including higher rates of poverty, lower educational attainment, higher rates of migration, higher uninsured rates, a lower ratio of health workers per capita, and an influx of immigrants that have fled the cartel violence in neighboring Juarez, Mexico. This all adds up to a population of children and young adults who have significant unmet emotional and behavioral needs, many of whom have experienced violence and trauma that have not been adequately addressed by mental health professionals. El Paso Project LAUNCH promotes sustainable and replicable change within the early childhood wellness system and works to inspire change state-wide by building bridges between service delivery systems and families. This collaboration at the local and state levels can help to eliminate barriers and ensure the long-term health, wellness, and resiliency of families and their children. El Paso Project LAUNCH exists to establish a community-based, coordinated, and easy-to-access mental health prevention framework that empowers families, builds on individual and community strengths, and fosters healthy relationships to improve the social and emotional health of children.

“El Paso works from the premise that communities that collaborate get more done than those that work in silos. The project helps foster systems improvement to ensure the community can partner broadly and collaborate deeply.”

Project Milestones

All [Project LAUNCH](#) grantees implement five core promotion and prevention strategies intended to increase access to high-quality prevention and wellness promotion services for children and their families. In El Paso, these five strategies are implemented through the following activities:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Project LAUNCH trains local professionals—such as the Head Start Mental Health and Disabilities staff, pre-K and child care staff, medical residents in pediatrics, parent educators, home visitors, and substance abuse prevention and intervention professionals—on the importance of developmental milestones; the use of screening tools (including the [Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition \[ASQ:SE-2™\]](#) and the [Ages & Stages Questionnaire®, Third Edition \[ASQ-3™\]](#); the [Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers \[M-CHAT™\]](#); and the [Parents’ Evaluation of Developmental Status \[PEDS\]](#)), and how and where to refer children for services. In the first four years of the grant, El Paso Project

LAUNCH trained 506 professionals. The project's Young Child Wellness Council authored the article "Developmental Surveillance and Referral in a Traditionally Medically Underserved Border Community," which describes screening and referral in El Paso. The article will be published in *Maternal and Child Health Journal*.

- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** El Paso Project LAUNCH emphasizes programmatic early childhood mental health consultation¹ as a widespread approach to building community capacity to foster social-emotional health and conduct early identification and prevention efforts. Through work with El Paso County Mental Health Support Services, the Georgetown Model of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) and the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children from the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) are used to train local staff who are working in child care, kindergarten classes, and a substance abuse residential day care. Trainings are provided to build capacity in conducting developmental screenings and assessments and using the results to plan activities that create environments that support the social and emotional development of young children. Teachers are trained to use strategies that promote children's positive behavior and to identify children and families that need additional resources and/or support and refer them appropriately. As a part of programmatic consultations, providers also work with individual families that need additional support and parent training. Survey results indicate that both teachers and parents receiving child/family consultation saw decreases in the frequency and intensity of problem behaviors in their children following the consultation period. By working closely with teachers, the program provided more than 300 professionals with infant mental health and resiliency education to better support the social and emotional needs of children and families across the community.
- **Enhanced Home Visiting:** Due to a lack of culturally responsive home visiting programs in the community, El Paso Project LAUNCH developed and piloted a home visiting program using a community health worker, also known as a *promotora*. The program provides services to families with children in the Project LAUNCH target service area ages birth to three years. Approximately 38% of parents in the program enrolled in school, GED, and/or vocational training during the course of receiving home visitation services. Over the course of the grant, Project LAUNCH has continually highlighted the need for home visiting in the community. It successfully advocated for a home visiting collaborative project funded under the Texas State Department of Family and Protective Services and helped coordinate and write a collaborative grant application for the Project HOPES (Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support) program, which was awarded to implement [Parents as Teachers® \(PAT\)](#) and expand [Incredible Years®](#). Project LAUNCH and HOPES have integrated councils, and Project LAUNCH is providing technical assistance and social and emotional/infant mental health training for all home visitors and supervisors.
- **Integrating Behavioral Health Into Primary Care:** Project LAUNCH trains second- and third-year medical residents in pediatrics on the importance of screening for optimal child development and the use of the ASQ:SE-2™ and ASQ-3™ questionnaires, including how to use the ASQ:SE-2™

¹ Programmatic early childhood mental health consultation includes observation, training, and coaching of early care and education staff to conduct developmental screenings, utilize strategies that promote children's positive behavioral changes, ensure a strength-based and trauma focused approach, and identify children and families that need additional resources and/or support and refer them appropriately.

to screen women with young children at a residential substance abuse treatment facility. Project LAUNCH created resources to support community integration of behavioral and physical health, such as a Child Wellness Resource Guide (available online and in hard copy), which is continuously updated for primary care providers to use when providing families with resources for local behavioral health services. The Early Childhood Mental Health Directory is now a free downloadable mobile app available to parents, early childhood providers, and medical providers.

- **Family Strengthening:** Four hundred and fifty-eight parents have participated in Incredible Years® (IY) classes supported by El Paso Project LAUNCH. Incredible Years® is an evidence-based, 14-week family strengthening program. Parents who completed the program reported increases in five family protective factors: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of child development. They also reported decreases in parental stress and increases in the amount of time they spent reading to their children at home. In addition to training parents, the Project LAUNCH Young Child Wellness Council initiated a community of practice for parent educators and family strengthening programs across the community with the goal of sharing best practices. As a result, this group has developed a community parent training directory for families and providers.

Systems Integration

Project LAUNCH is intended to improve coordination and collaboration across systems that serve young children and their families. El Paso Project LAUNCH engages in local infrastructure development through two primary activities: (1) increasing the community's capacity through workforce development on young child wellness and (2) sustaining a Local Child Wellness Council that facilitates collaboration across early childhood providers and early childhood systems, such as primary care, early care and education, behavioral health, social service agencies, substance abuse treatment programs, local foundations, managed care organizations, child protection service agencies, elementary schools, and home visiting programs. Numerous partnerships have been developed through Council workgroups, resulting in improved collaborative efforts. These collaborations have led to several tangible outcomes, such as funding of home visiting in El Paso and the identification, classification, and promotion of early childhood and family behavioral health and wellness services across the county (now converted into a free mobile app for parents and providers). Additionally, Council workgroups have improved coordination and collaboration through promoting and coordinating infant mental health and wellness trainings for providers and parents, creating and publishing local data in the *Maternal and Child Health Journal* related to screening in primary care, and developing a community of practice for early childhood education providers.

Grantee Events and Materials

Click on the following link to access information about a grantee-developed resource:

- [The Wellness Network: Resource Directory](#): Provided as a public service in both English and Spanish by the City of El Paso Department of Public Health, the Pan American Health Organization, Project LAUNCH, and 2-1-1 Texas. The purpose of the directory is to help El Paso residents and health professionals to locate mental health and wellness services for adults, children, and families.

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