



Missouri Project LAUNCH

Cohort 4, Funding Period 2012–2017

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Grantee Overview

Missouri Project LAUNCH promotes child wellness for children ages birth to eight through a collaborative effort between the Missouri Department of Mental Health and the Department of Health and Senior Services. It works to build an effective and sustainable early childhood system where programs and services are comprehensive, coordinated, accessible, and adequately funded. Missouri Project LAUNCH selected north St. Louis City, an area with high-risk indicators of child well-being, as its pilot community to develop initiatives that support the well-being of all children and their families. Through these efforts, Missouri Project LAUNCH plans to implement lessons learned in other areas in Missouri.

Project Milestones

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

- **Screening and Assessment:** Missouri Project LAUNCH's approach to screening and assessment focuses on three priorities: working with providers to screen children during child wellness visits, developing a communications protocol for screenings and referrals, and building trust and helping families understand the significance of screening for young children. To increase access to developmental and social-emotional screening for all children in north St. Louis City, Missouri Project LAUNCH hosted community screening events using the [Ages & Stages Questionnaire®, Third Edition \(ASQ-3™\)](#) and [Ages & Stages Questionnaire®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition \(ASQ:SE-2™\)](#) where more than 215 children were screened. Additionally, Hopewell, a community mental health center, received training on the use of [The Survey of Wellbeing of Young Children](#) and [Pediatric Symptoms Checklist](#) and began screening the children of parents in their [Chicago Parenting Program](#). Missouri Project LAUNCH also established a screening task force that developed a referral matrix for early childhood providers across delivery areas to provide guidance on how to refer children who are positively screened to appropriate services. Missouri Project LAUNCH ensures that there is a facilitated process that promotes efficient communication between the referral source and the receiving referral agency.
- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** In north St. Louis City, Missouri Project LAUNCH coordinated and hosted trainings for child care providers to improve their knowledge of early childhood mental health. Missouri Project LAUNCH sponsored the *Early Childhood Mental Health Training and Learning Collaborative* to support mental health providers in incorporating developmental and social-emotional screenings into their mental health practices. The purpose of the training was to expand mental health providers' capacity to serve young children and support young child wellness as well as to understand the significance of mental health consultation. Additionally, directors of child care programs, early child care teachers, and coaches received a series of training on

integrating the [Pyramid Model](#), which was developed by the Pyramid Model Consortium (formally known as the [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#)), into their programs and sites. Child care providers also participated in Trauma Responsiveness Training and increased their awareness related to trauma and early childhood. Since mental health consultation is not a formal state-level service in Missouri, Missouri Project LAUNCH worked to develop a shared definition of mental health consultation for all state departments to use with the early childhood population, building on existing services and resources.

- **Enhanced Home Visiting:** Missouri Project LAUNCH enhances the capacity of home visiting programs by providing trainings and supporting programs to identify and address health disparities. Missouri Project LAUNCH developed a home visitation work group comprised of home visiting agencies that serve north St. Louis City. The home visitation work group meets regularly to coordinate services, and discuss needs and gaps in home visiting programs. From these meetings, the workgroup identified the need for [motivational interviewing](#) training for home visitors. As a result, six home visiting organizations received 20 hours of motivational interviewing training as well as a follow-up consultation on implementation. [Nurses for Newborns](#) staff members were provided with individual consultation on meeting the [National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care](#) (CLAS Standards) to better meet the needs of diverse populations. Missouri Project LAUNCH continues to develop and enhance partnerships with home visiting agencies in north St. Louis City to support their home visitation work.
- **Integrating Behavioral Health into Primary Care:** Missouri Project LAUNCH assists primary care settings with incorporating mental health screenings into regular practices and implementing an efficient referral process. Missouri Project LAUNCH provides trainings on the ASQ-3™ and ASQ:SE-2™ to health care providers, educating them about social-emotional development and ways to identify mental health symptoms in children ages birth to eight. The Missouri Project LAUNCH health coordinator partnered with the local [Help Me Grow](#) liaison to meet with physicians and discuss the importance of screening, including how Missouri Project LAUNCH and Help Me Grow can support them in implementing screenings. In efforts to integrate behavioral health into primary care, Missouri Project LAUNCH planned a one-day conference in partnership with the Missouri Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. This conference enhanced the knowledge base of child care providers, pediatricians, and other health care professionals about early childhood mental health, toxic stress, and screening and assessment.
- **Family Strengthening:** Missouri Project LAUNCH utilizes the [Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework \(SFF\)](#) to guide its parent and family engagement work. In partnership with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Early Childhood Comprehensive System grant, Children’s Trust Fund, and University of Missouri Extension, Missouri Project LAUNCH created the [Strong Parents, Stable Children: Building Protective Factors to Strengthen Families](#) curriculum, a training program developed to increase individuals’ understanding of SFF. Missouri Project LAUNCH provided several trainings on how to use the curriculum across the state, where more than 900 people participated. Missouri Project LAUNCH also established Parent Cafés and Dads’ Cafés to engage and empower families to have a voice and to utilize SFF to build resiliency within their families and communities. Faith-based and parent-focused organizations continue to be strong partners in delivering these cafés to parents in north St. Louis City and in several locations across the state. In addition to these family strengthening efforts, Hopewell implemented the evidence-based Chicago Parenting Program to help build parents’ strengths and caregiving capacities.

Systems Integration

Project LAUNCH is intended to improve coordination and collaboration across systems that serve young children and their families. Beginning in April 2016 Missouri Project LAUNCH is convening Community Café sessions. The team brings together community members and various local agencies—such as transportation, law enforcement, and education—to identify and address key issues within the pilot community. This work at the local level (especially trainings, Parent Cafés, and support around the SFF) has grown to impact the state level, increasing state agencies’ knowledge and awareness of these topic areas and their significance in improving the state’s current early childhood infrastructure. Another key piece to Missouri Project LAUNCH’s systems integration work is its expansion of mental health consultation, including its efforts to seek Medicaid funding for mental health consultation.

Missouri Project LAUNCH is committed to developing an early childhood system that works for families, community members, and service providers. In partnership with Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri Project LAUNCH created a network analysis study to evaluate collaborations among various organizations that provide services in the Missouri Project LAUNCH pilot area, as well as parents’ and community members’ perspectives on how well various organizations serve families. Through this ongoing network analysis project, Missouri Project LAUNCH is now able to better support providers in coordinating service deliveries, sharing resources among community members, and connecting families to needed services. Missouri Project LAUNCH continues to evaluate the networks among organizations, service providers, and families in order to ensure that the local early childhood system works efficiently.

“Project LAUNCH has given me a better awareness of the resource network in my community. Before my connection with LAUNCH, I had many struggles and had engaged in a couple of violent activities. But now, I try to be a positive person and be a ‘community leader,’ as the LAUNCH team calls me.”

– Parent of Missouri Project LAUNCH

Grantee Events and Materials

Click on the following links to access information about grantee-developed resources.

- [Children’s Mental Health Week](#): Missouri Project LAUNCH cosponsored a Children’s Mental Health Day in north St. Louis City and developed public awareness materials to support children’s social and emotional health for Children’s Mental Health Week.
- [5 Minute Miracle Campaign](#): A public awareness campaign on children’s social and emotional health to emphasize the importance and impact of parents spending at least five minutes a day with their children. State-wide and local brochures and posters, bus ads, and a calendar were created to share messages and activities that families can do with their children to establish and maintain trusting and caring relationships.
- [Screening/Assessment & Referral Process Matrices](#): Matrices for universal screening, ASQ-3™ and ASQ:SE-2™, DECA (Devereux Early Childhood Assessment), and DIAL (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning™), each specific to health care providers and early childhood service providers.
- [Stop and Play Campaign](#): A state-wide public awareness campaign on social and emotional development in early childhood and the important role parents and caregivers play in fostering positive development.
- [Strong Parents, Stable Children Training Curriculum](#): A four-hour training curriculum created to provide an overview of SFF. The training materials, including videotaped sessions, are available on the [Children’s Trust Fund of Missouri](#) website.

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