



## North Colorado Health Alliance—Weld Systems Navigation Project

(Cohort 3, Funding Period 2010–2015)

<http://www.northcoloradohealthalliance.org/project-launch/>

### *Grantee Overview*

Weld Systems Navigation Project is located in Weld County, Colorado, which is one of the fastest-growing counties in the country due in part to a recent increase in refugees who have settled in the area. The goals of the project are aligned with the Colorado Early Childhood Framework and include: (1) access and availability of evidence-based resources to families with young children across systems; (2) quality or workforce development to enhance the provision of services to families with young children; (3) equity so that families with young children have equal opportunities for available resources; and (4) systems development, an integrated “open access” (i.e., no wrong door) system of care and family support for children ages birth to 8 and their families. North Colorado Health Alliance, the recipient of the Project LAUNCH funding for Weld County, along with North Range Behavioral Health and other partners, strives to promote an integrated community health and education approach to young children's mental health and well-being. The project's Young Child Wellness Coordinator created and initiated a *Blue Print* Plan with each major partner for joint planning, workforce development, identification of family risks and needs, responses to those needs, technical assistance, and sustainability planning. The Weld Systems Navigation Project partnered with the Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health (COAIMH), who has endorsed professionals in Colorado, to bring the Michigan Infant Mental Health Endorsement to the state of Colorado as the Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health (IMH-E<sup>®</sup>).

### *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 Weld County Project LAUNCH, these five strategies are implemented through the following activities:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Project LAUNCH works to integrate developmental screening into existing services and systems to promote early identification, consultation, and referral for services. The Weld Systems Navigation Project and its partners have completed more than 12,000 screenings with children and parents. The use of electronic tablets with patient tools for child and parent screenings has promoted screening efficiency. The number of electronic young child screenings that are included in pediatric well-child visits soared at primary care sites. Young child and parent screenings are also implemented by Project LAUNCH staff, with the Weld County Department of Human Services (DHS), and by Family CONNECTS, including [Parents As Teachers](#) and the [Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters \(HIPPY\)](#) programs, and at community events. High screening satisfaction is reported by both parents and clinical staff.

- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC):** The Weld Systems Navigation Project has provided more than 1,300 mental health consultations to parents or guardians and more than 300 consults to providers that serve children and families. Providers indicate that they have changed their practices related to children’s socioemotional and behavioral health and development as a result of these early childhood mental health consultations. Most report that they had *some* or *substantial* increases in: (1) knowledge of children’s socioemotional and behavioral health and development and (2) knowledge of the available options for follow-up services for children with mental or behavioral health issues.
- **Enhanced Home Visiting:** Families receiving services via the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program have reported high confidence in parenting practices and have high home visitation attendance. Staff reminder calls help to enhance program attendance. In the Maternal Mental Health Home Visiting Program, screened participating mothers have shown significant decreases in depression as evidenced by results from the [Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale \(EPDS\)](#). PAT educators and maternal mental health consultants have self-reported positive changes in their practice, such as increased family engagement or greater focus on the parent–child relationship due to staff training and reflective supervision.
- **Integrating Behavioral Health Into Primary Care:** The Weld Systems Navigation Project supports the existing integration of behavioral health services into primary care pediatric practices by promoting early childhood screening assessments, providing early childhood mental health consultation, and identifying early childhood resources for providers and the families they serve in a private pediatric clinic and federally qualified health center. The project is working to develop a comprehensive process that primary care settings can implement, including selection of appropriate screening tools, front office staff and provider training, mental health consultation, “response-to-need,” effective and efficient office flow, and screening reimbursement. Primary care providers and staff have reported larger system changes including increased (1) use of evidence-based screening/assessments for mental/behavioral health, (2) understanding of developmental milestones in socioemotional health, and (3) understanding of referral options for children with mental or behavioral health concerns.
- **Family Strengthening:** Evidence-based and promising family strengthening practices that were implemented or enhanced with Project LAUNCH support include: [Child-Parent Psychotherapy \(CPP\)](#), the [Incredible Years Small Children’s Therapy Group](#), [Parent-Child Interaction Therapy \(PCIT\)](#), Positive Solution Groups, and [Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy \(TF-CBT\)](#). Most training participants reported *some* or *substantial* changes in their: (1) knowledge of children’s socioemotional and behavioral health and development, (2) knowledge of the available options for follow-up services for children with mental or behavioral health issues, (3)

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*“The well-child visit is a perfect place to provide developmental screens and mental health consultation, as it takes advantage of a ‘window of opportunity’ in which parents show interest in the development and health of their young children. Since well-child visits occur on a regular schedule, early identification and intervention contributes to the overall health and wellness of young children and their families.”*

–Noelle Hause, EdD, LPC, IMH-E® (IV)-C,  
Young Child Wellness Coordinator,  
Weld Systems Navigation Project

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use of early childhood mental health consultation, and (4) use of screening and/or assessment of children in the work setting. Clinicians self-reported greater confidence regarding their work with families. This encompassed supports for families with children experiencing behavioral challenges and positive family changes such as improved parent–child relationships, decreased parental stress, and “happier children.” Program results for PCIT showed significant increases in parental praise, greater attachment of the caregiver to the child, improved parenting skills, reduced child behavioral problems, and reduced parental stress.

### **Systems Integration**

Project LAUNCH is intended to improve coordination and collaboration across systems that serve young children and their families. The project’s Young Child Wellness Coordinator engages local partners in LAUNCH-related activities. These partners include Family CONNECTS, a local home visitation organization; the Weld County Department of Human Services (DHS); The Children’s Health Place (TCHP), a private

pediatric medical home; Nurse Family Partnership (NFP); North Range Behavioral Health (NRBH); ENVISION (Part C); Sunrise Community Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center; and United Way of Weld County. Annual results from the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory completed by Young Child Wellness Council members indicate a shared vision, a unique purpose, a history of community cooperation, a favorable political and social climate, skilled leadership, flexibility, self-interest in collaboration, and established relationships and communication links among partners. The Weld Systems Navigation Project provided staff trainings on early childhood development topics, screening tools, or evidence-based practices; weekly staff assistance for

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*“Having the maternal child health consultant come into our homes to work with our clients has been the most helpful and amazing thing for my Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) team. The maternal mental health consultant can address mental health concerns that would otherwise interfere with a nurse’s ability to implement the NFP program. It’s a nice fit that took so much pressure and worry off of the nurses’ shoulders.”*

—Barbara Francisco, RN, Former Coordinator,  
Nurse Family Partnership, Weld County  
Department of Public Health and Environment

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developmental electronic screenings on tablets; early childhood mental health consultation and/or reflective supervision for selected organizations; and sustainability planning. Private funders have developed an early childhood mental health initiative to replicate Project LAUNCH in other communities in Colorado.

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