

“This work has made clear the connection between early educators’ mental health and their ability to provide quality care and education to children, which includes **being able to meet children’s mental health needs.**”

- Daria Hall, Milwaukee Succeeds ECE Director

SUCCESS STORY

Mental Health Regulation TRAININGS



Provider Trainings

In 2020, providers in Milwaukee’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) Coalition reported that, due to the high rates of trauma and disruption from COVID, **both children and educators were experiencing profound mental health challenges.**

In response, the ECE Coalition and its partners raised funding from Milwaukee County, the MKE Responds Fund and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation to support regulation trainings for early educators in Black and Brown communities. Wellpoint, a well-established leader in trauma informed care, adapted a program for regulation training, including virtual trainings and in-person events where providers received resources to help apply what they learned. These trainings, conducted from 2020-2022, served more than 400 educators.

Parent Trainings

Building on the success of the provider trainings, funding from the MKE Responds Fund was used to adapt them for families of young children.

This pilot program served over 200 families. Based on positive feedback, the Milwaukee Coalition for Children’s Mental Health/Mental Health America of Wisconsin re-structured their existing grant funding from the Medical College of Wisconsin’s Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment to serve an additional 300 families in the summer of 2022.

For this project, Wellpoint conducted trainings over four face-to-face sessions in 2022. The training included resources, materials, and activity books for parents.

Survey Results

Feedback from both educators and families was overwhelmingly positive. 100% of providers agreed or strongly agreed that the resources and trainings could enhance their classroom or program. Additionally, at least 99% of parents agreed that the trainings had increased their understanding, capacity, strategies, and resources to support their child's mental health and emotional well-being.



What Worked

01

Continuous improvement

The initial virtual trainings were later modified to include an in-person session with hands-on training and take-home kits for providers and families. Provider trainings used a “train-the-trainer” model to increase positive impact for children.

02

A Mix of Trainings

Having virtual and in person trainings allowed scheduling flexibility. Parent trainings were condensed and integrated into existing family spaces and events, such as HIPPIY family nights at COA Youth & Family Centers.

03

Collaboration

Wellpoint adapted and implemented the training for providers, and 4C For Children helped educators receive continuing education credit, facilitated communication outreach, and provided translation during the virtual trainings.



What Could Be Improved



Translation

Trainings were translated; however, it needs to be a priority from the beginning, with the trainings and resources created in multiple languages with cultural relevance in mind.



Logistics

Participants suggested better audio and larger slides for virtual sessions, and spreading out tables and choosing quieter settings in person. When in person, the atmosphere should be relaxed and accessible to ensure that participants can engage in and absorb the trainings.



Consistent Offerings

Funding determines what training is offered, where and to whom. It is important that the trainings be presented and integrated regularly in the ECE system so that providers and parents know about and can participate in them.

Quotes

“I think we gave parents and children **a moment of fun and connection**. The trainings were really in the spirit of ‘let’s learn something together’ and you always walk away from them feeling great.” – Sara Daniel, Wellpoint Care Network

“I loved the actual activities. It wasn’t just talk and theory but **hands on, tangible things we can do.**” – Child Care Provider

“Thank you for this! **So important**, and I hope you can do this in schools and other events!” – Parent/Family Member

“Thank you for providing us with fantastic tools to help us **regulate our emotions!**” – Parent/Family Member