



Building Resilient Children

Final Report

June 2020



Early childhood educators in lower-income communities have a unique opportunity to provide children who have experienced trauma – including racial inequity – with tools to grow their resilience.

This report outlines a pilot project that trained early childhood teachers in Massachusetts in techniques for recognizing trauma and racial inequity, coached them in behaviors and classroom structures that supported children, and empowered them to create change to build childhood resilience and advance racial equity. The pilot ran from November 2019 through February 2020.



The Building Resilient Children Model

Focus

This program concentrated on building and sustaining early childhood educators' competencies in the classroom by developing trusting relationships with the children and their families, creating a safe and nurturing environment, and practicing appropriate routines and learning activities.

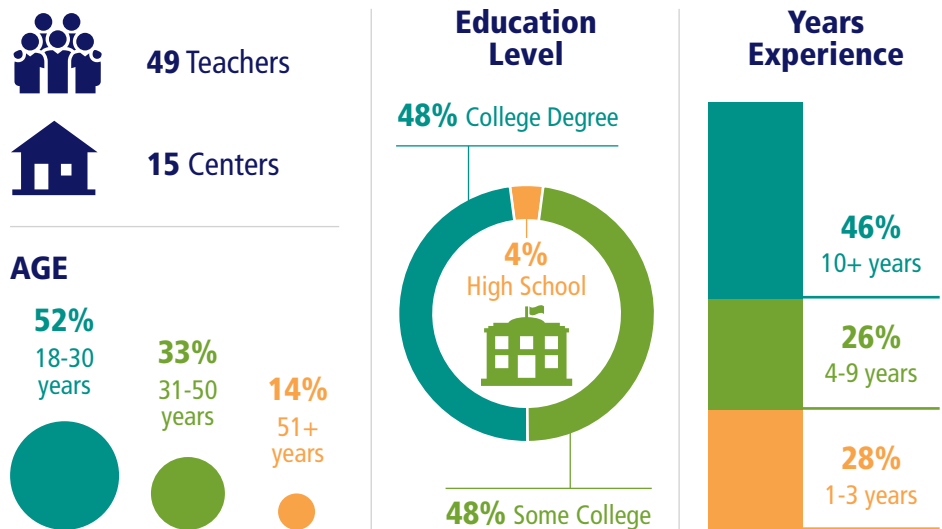
8 Focus Areas

- ✓ Building a Relationship
- ✓ Greetings
- ✓ Teacher Self-regulation
- ✓ Child Self-regulation
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Family Engagement
- ✓ Transitions
- ✓ Play-based Interactions

Racial Equity Lens

Trauma & Resiliency Trainings	Coaching	Professional Learning Communities
Audience: All childcare educators	Audience: Volunteer classroom educators	Audience: All educators in coaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core children and trauma content Classroom strategies Self-care Community resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom coaching On-site staff training Clinical consultation (as indicated) Community resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biweekly meetings Discuss progress toward goals Share successes and best practices
Racial Equity Lens		

Training Participant Demographics



Training Sessions

Knowledge and Confidence Levels Increased



Identifying an Adverse Childhood Experience



Identifying most important factor in helping a child heal



Confidence in understanding causes of childhood trauma



Confidence providing support in helping children have positive development

Training Participant Demographics



4 Coaches



13 Lead Teachers



9 Teachers

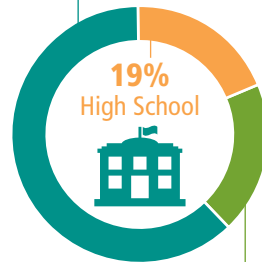
4 Teaching Assistants



7 Centers

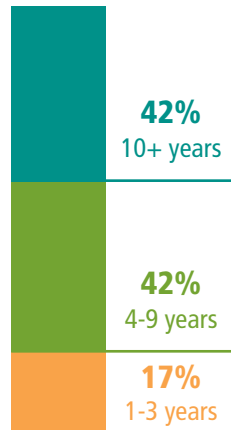
Education Level

62% Bachelor Degree



19% Certificate or Associate Degree

Years Experience



Recommendations

- ✓ Offer **intensive training** for early childhood educators
- ✓ Provide **coaching** to early childhood educators to develop goals and enact change
- ✓ Develop **professional learning communities** across programs
- ✓ Build **connections** between early childhood educators and families
- ✓ Train all early childhood educators on **racial equity**

Outcomes as a Result of Coaching

Reductions in:



- Children removed from classroom due to challenging behaviors



- Requests for additional staff due to challenging behaviors



- Parent contacts



- Behavior plans



- Incidents due to possible trauma-related behavior (e.g., hitting, biting)



- Child absences due to challenging behaviors



- Expulsions, suspensions, terminations due to behavior, including a reduction for children of color

COVID-19 Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic forced closures of child care centers, so the project shifted to continue supporting the teachers involved in coaching and the professional learning communities using other modalities.

After this extended period away from routines and the security of school for many children, projects such as this have become even more critical in building resilience and enhancing racial equity.

Professional Learning Communities

Objectives Met:



Facilitator providing an opportunity for reflection on current perceptions and work



Taking better care of myself to help me continue to support others



Building my commitment to support children to develop resilience and heal from trauma



About the Building Resilient Children Pilot Program

This pilot was sponsored by the Massachusetts legislature utilizing funding identified by Senator Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester) and the Worcester state legislative delegation. Jointly, the Massachusetts Office of the Child Advocate and Commonwealth Medicine developed a pilot intervention to support early childhood educators in promoting resilience in young children. After a series of discussions with Worcester-area stakeholders, Commonwealth Medicine partnered with Family Services of Central Massachusetts to implement the pilot. Commonwealth Medicine is the public service consulting and operations division of the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

This project targeted families, children, and early educators in Worcester, Massachusetts, serving a primarily low income, racially, and ethnically diverse urban community. The focus was on child care centers serving populations of at-risk children whose families rely on income-based government-subsidized child care and supportive child care for children receiving services through the Department of Children and Families due to child abuse or neglect. Families typically are working in low to moderate paying jobs or are in education or job training programs.

Feedback on the training from a teacher:

"It was useful because it involved strategies to help the wellness of a teacher and also, strategies to help with children who have suffered trauma."



For more information on the Building Resilient Children Program, please contact:

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