



# STRATEGIES FOR ADVANCING DYADIC CARE MODELS

## WHAT IS DYADIC CARE?

Dyadic care in mental health is an approach that treats both the child and their caregiver together, focusing on strengthening the relationship between a child and their caregiver(s). By supporting healthy interactions, dyadic care helps strengthen emotional bonds and promotes positive mental health outcomes for young children. Dyadic care can also address care coordination, child social-emotional health and safety, and maternal mental health. Evidence-based models of dyadic care include HealthySteps, Child-Parent Psychotherapy, and Parent Child Interaction Therapy. Dyadic services can be delivered in day cares and early learning settings, pediatric practices, or through home visiting programs.

## PENNSYLVANIA'S FAMILIES NEED ACCESS TO DYADIC CARE NOW

- Pennsylvania's Medicaid plan only covers dyadic care if a child is diagnosed with a mental illness, limiting access for young children showing early signs of emotional distress from getting the care they need to prevent a more severe mental health diagnosis or crisis.
- Pennsylvania's Medicaid plan includes dyadic care as a benefit during well-child exams, but pediatric offices lack the time and resources to add that crucial support for caregivers.
- Pennsylvania has Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation but the referral process between the systems is a barrier to access. There are also too few resources for early childhood mental health professionals.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Babies don't go to the doctor alone...

- The show-rate to pediatric well visits is 90% among the Medicaid population.

If the goal is to provide access to effective mental health services, we must make services available where children spend their time.

Services that support children and their caregivers together work...

- 43% reduction in challenging behaviors among children.
- 40% reduction in caregiver stress, leading to more supportive and positive parenting.

## ACTIONS NEEDED

- Ensure that Pennsylvania's young children are not excluded from preventative care because they need a mental health diagnosis for dyadic care services to be paid by behavioral health Medicaid.
- Broaden the types of providers who are certified and eligible to deliver services to increase the number of diverse and culturally competent mental health professionals.
- Streamline collaboration between early childhood programs including Early Head Start or other Evidenced Based Home-visiting programs.