



Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Priorities

Supporting Early Childhood Development

Early Childhood Interagency Collaboration: DMH Line Item #5042-5000

The Department of Mental Health and the Department of Early Education and Care are working collaboratively to better meet the behavioral health needs of young children. Resources are requested to support the inter-agency implementation of infant and early childhood mental health care and supports.

FY20 GAA	FY21 Ask	FY 21 Governor	FY21 House	FY21 Senate	Conference
\$125,000	\$125,000	No earmark			

Pilot Children’s Behavioral Health Centers of Excellence: DMH Line Item #5042-5000

Building on a platform of existing community based expertise in delivery of clinical care for infants and toddlers, Children’s Behavioral Health Centers of Excellence are envisioned to be based in 3 organizations across the Commonwealth, with technical assistance from the DMH Knowledge Center. With an initial focus of supporting the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) workforce, these programs will serve as community hubs for collaboration among local clinicians, pediatricians, early education and care providers, schools, family resource center staff, and other stakeholders, working with them to develop and implement regional strategies for improving quality and access to care for high need populations, such as infants and young children, LGBTQ youth, and transition aged youth.

FY20 GAA	FY21 Ask	FY 21 Governor	FY21 House	FY21 Senate	Conference
N/A	\$300,000	No earmark			

Meeting the needs of youth with behavioral health conditions

Return to School “Bridge” Programs: DPH Line Item #4590-0250

The focus of Bridge programs is to ensure that youth who have been out of school for psychiatric or other hospitalizations can successfully transition back to school. Many districts already have these innovative programs, which provide emotional and academic support to students who have missed 5 or more days of school due to a mental health crisis, hospitalization, or serious medical problem. 50% of US high school students with serious mental illness drop out of school. Bridge programs are changing that script for Massachusetts youth with a short-term intervention that reduces drop-out rates to 8%.

FY20 GAA	FY21 Ask	FY 21 Governor	FY21 House	FY21 Senate	Conference
\$350,000	\$350,000	No earmark			

Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids: DCF Line Item #4800-0200

FRCs were created to meet the needs of families with children who face significant challenges, and are at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system if there is no intervention. FRCs can connect these families to services that will lead to success. At the heart of Chapter 240 is a commitment to provide assistance to families with children who are at an elevated risk of truancy and/or have significant unmet mental health needs. Because behavioral health is a major driver of educational success, resources in the FRC line should be allocated to build capacity for educational advocacy for students whose unmet behavioral health needs have negatively impacted their school attendance.

MHAP for Kids is a highly sought after service initially piloted in the Lowell and Lynn Family Resource Centers (FRCs) that is meeting that need. MHAP for Kids improves the mental health of youth who have been diverted from juvenile court or are already court-involved and have unmet mental health needs by providing these children with a legal advocate trained in removing barriers to treatment. MHAP for Kids attorneys aim to divert children from possible or further court involvement, help children thrive in school, reduce family conflict, and minimize costly emergency room treatment. The program is support through a combination of public and private funds, and it is designed to be replicable in other FRCs. MHAP for Kids currently provides a specially trained staff attorney in 7 Family Resource Centers (FRCs) serving Suffolk, Hampden, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Worcester and Bristol counties and up to 545 children annually.

FY21 funding will support expansion to five additional counties, extending the reach of the program to the most underserved areas of the state: Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket, Plymouth, and Berkshire counties. This will bring the total caseload to 800 children per year.

FY20 GAA	FY21 Ask	FY 21 Governor	FY21 House	FY21 Senate	Conference
\$16.5M total; \$500,000 MHAP	Total TBD; \$875,000 MHAP	No earmark			

Sustaining funding for foundational programs

The Children’s Mental Health Campaign (CMHC) has advocated for these priorities for several years. We appreciate the legislature’s ongoing, consistent funding of these important programs, and urge you to support ongoing sustainability.

- Early Ed and Care Mental Health Consultation (3000-6075) level funding at \$2.5M
- School-based substance use verbal screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (4590-0250) level funding at \$750,000
- Mass Child Psychiatry Access Project (5042-5000) level funding at \$3.6M
- Protect funding for child & adolescent behavioral health services and programs under DMH (5042-5000) reject \$2.5M cut