

## Overview of the Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways Initiative

### Transcript

**Rup:** [00:00:00] Hello and welcome to the Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways initiative! We are so glad that you're interested in learning more about how to leverage community strengths through the implementation of Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways into current systems!

**Chaya:** Hi, my name is Chaya Kulkarni, and I'm the Director of infant and early mental health promotion at the Hospital for Sick Children.

I am the co investigator for the initiative we'll be speaking about today. As the co investigator, my responsibilities include oversight of the development, management, and implementation of the work.

**Rup:** Hello, my name is Rup Patel, and as the project coordinator, I am the main point of contact for any and all questions.

I support with all logistics related to the management and implementation of this initiative, which includes organizing meetings, coordinating trainings, communicating with partners, and developing project materials. [00:01:00]

**Karys:** Hi, everyone. My name is Karys Peterson-Katz and I am the postdoctoral research fellow working on this initiative.

My responsibilities include developing and managing the evaluation component of this initiative, analyzing the results, and making any reports or communications to share this information with the greater community. As well, as the lead on the National Ages and Stages Questionnaire Database, the first Canadian database for early developmental screening data, I support organizations with entering the data in the database, analyzing the data, creating reports, and making sure it all gets circulated to each respective participating partner.

There are two big questions in Canada that we can't answer right now. First, we do not have any current national data on how children under the age of six in Canada are doing physically, emotionally, and mentally. Second, even when we do know how a child [00:02:00] is doing, We don't have a clear guide for getting that kid to the best supports in the quickest way.

Part of the solution to answering these questions is to develop a predictable and equitable roadmap to help families and practitioners navigate emotional well being supports and services for children aged 0 to 6. A pathway emphasizes inclusive collaboration between organizations. It brings together various stakeholders from different sectors, including healthcare, education, and social services, to provide a coordinated effort in delivering preventative and early intervention measures.

A pathway clearly maps out the entire process from identification of emotional health concerns to referral and ultimately to accessing the necessary support. This means it defines who is involved, what actions are taken, [00:03:00] and where these actions occur in a straightforward way. A pathway provides a simple visual to help you navigate the system you already work with on a daily basis.

In essence, a pathway ensures that young children receive the timely and appropriate support they need during these critical early years of development, setting a strong foundation for their future well- being.

**Rup:** This is an example of a pathway that has been developed. As you can see, the blue, orange, and yellow circles outline *who* has raised a concern.

The middle green circle shows *where* the family is directed once a concern has been identified. And the green triangle highlights *what* the follow up steps are after the screening has been done. Each community's pathway is tailored to their specific services and systems. Therefore, each community's pathway could look significantly different.

Developing these types of [00:04:00] pathways is important because we have heard from caregivers, families, and service providers that connecting to the right services for early mental health is not easy or straightforward. That's why the Pathways Initiative was developed to build accessible and easy to navigate roadmaps through local partnerships, allowing young children and families to access services in a timely and clear way.

Through this initiative. We aim to understand the impact of these pathways on children, families, practitioners, organizations, and communities. Understanding the impacts of the pathways can ultimately contribute valuable insights to inform future practices and policies in the critical area of early child development.

This initiative has 5 phases that are expected to be completed within about two years. Phase one is community engagement, which will take approximately

three to four months. [00:05:00] This phase is where community leaders will come together to learn about the project, review the Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference, and begin planning for next steps.

Phase 2 is service mapping, which includes bringing organizations together for in-person meetings to assess the current capacity, knowledge, and skills of community services. Phase 3, building the aspirational pathways, and Phase 4, Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Developmental Support Plan Training and Implementation occur at the same time.

While Phase 3 has community partners coming together to develop their systems of care pathways, Phase 4 will have practitioners and supervisors completing their ASQ and DSP training. through IEMHP and beginning to use their ASQs and DSPs with families. These two phases should take a total of 12 months [00:06:00] to complete.

Phase 5, the final phase, is implementing the Pathways, which will take about nine months.

**Karys:** In Phase 1, Local Pathways Implementation Teams are established within your community. These teams will serve as the driving force behind the initiative, bringing together individuals and organizations dedicated to improving infant and early childhood mental health in your community.

In the second phase, leaders across organizations in your community meet in-person to assess the current services in your region - this way they understand who was doing what, when, and how. The third and fourth phases, like we said before, happen at the same time. So while the implementation team is developing and finalizing the pathways... supervisors and practitioners will complete their ASQ and DSP training and provide feedback periodically through short surveys and focus [00:07:00] groups so we can begin to understand your experience using these tools in your practice.

The next and final phase of this initiative is sharing and using the pathways. Just like the previous phase, we'll be asking for your periodic feedback about your experience implementing the pathway in your practice.

We're all working towards the same goal, to work together to develop and use pathways so we can better provide equitable access to services for the social emotional health of children under the age of six!

**Rup:** If you have any questions about this initiative, please do not hesitate to contact me, Rup Patel at [rup.patel@sickkids.ca](mailto:rup.patel@sickkids.ca). If you have any questions about

data collection, the surveys, focus groups, or the National ASQ database, please email Karys Peterson-Katz at [00:08:00] [karys.peterson-katz@sickkids.ca](mailto:karys.peterson-katz@sickkids.ca).

Thank you so much for listening. We look forward to building better systems for young children in Canada together.