



# **RIGHT START**

— FOR COLORADO —

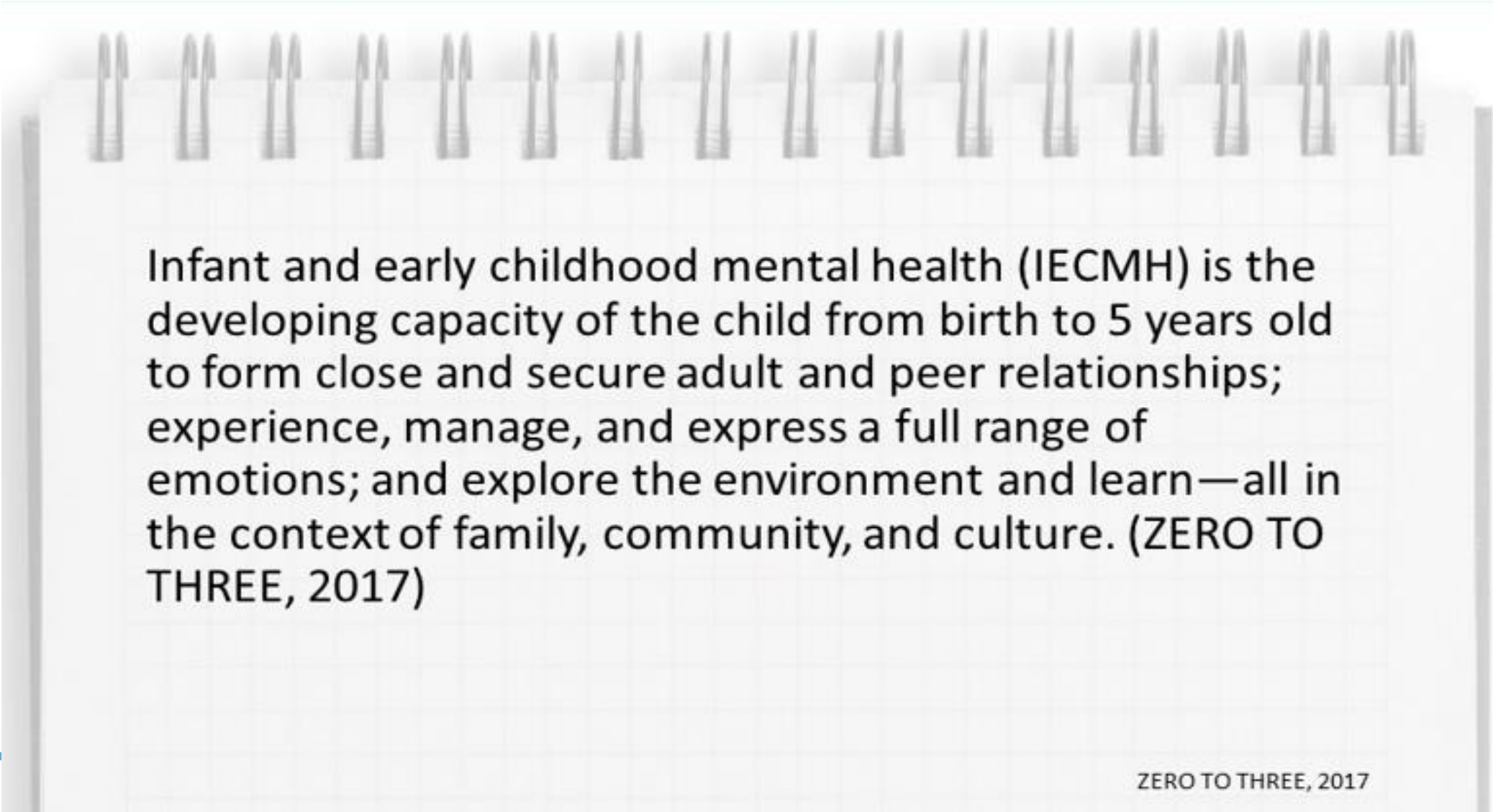
## Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health in Colorado

Presented by: Shannon Bekman, PhD, IECMH-E  
September 8, 2021

 | Mental Health Center of Denver

[mhcd.org/right-start-colorado](https://mhcd.org/right-start-colorado) |   

# Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health



Infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) is the developing capacity of the child from birth to 5 years old to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions; and explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture. (ZERO TO THREE, 2017)



# Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health



- Promotion of healthy social and emotional development;
- Prevention of mental health problems; and
- Treatment of the mental health problems of very young children in the context of their families
- A core premise is young children develop within the context of their caregiving relationships

---

**RIGHT START**  
— FOR COLORADO —

# The Continuum of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Supports and Services





## Investments and supports are needed across the IECMH continuum

---

- There will always be the need for mental health treatment services.
- It is not a failure of the promotion and prevention system for mental health treatment needs to exist.

---

**RIGHT START**  
— FOR COLORADO —

# Early Childhood Mental Health Needs during COVID

- *Over the last 15 months, young children, families, early childhood providers and communities have experienced trauma, fear, anxiety, and disruptions in their lives due to COVID-19 with communities of color disproportionately impacted and experiencing much higher cases and deaths.*
- *In a Yale Zigler Center national study of over 57,000 child care providers during the pandemic, elevated stress was reported in 19-20% of early educators and 36-42% reported clinical depression, compared to 7% and 10% rates pre-pandemic.*
- *Furthermore, **56% reported increased rates of externalizing behaviors in the children in the care, and 55% reported increased rates of internalizing behaviors, with many reporting seeing these increases in half or more of the children in their care.***

- Gilliam et al (2021) COVID-19 Transmission in US Child care Programs. *Pediatrics*

---

**RIGHT START**  
— FOR COLORADO —



# Recommended Next Steps for Legislation

1. Increase funding specifically tied/ designated to IECMH (i.e., children ages 0-5 years) treatment needs.
  - Fund IECMH workforce development and services, including training clinicians in evidence based, dyadic treatment models specifically designed for the 0-5 population.
2. Require HCPF to meaningful engage IECMH clinical community in problem solving barriers to the delivery of dyadic IECMH treatment services.

# Contact Information:

Shannon Bekman, PhD, IECMH-E®

Director, Right Start for Colorado

ZERO TO THREE Fellow

Email: [shannon.bekman@mhcd.org](mailto:shannon.bekman@mhcd.org)

Phone: 303.300.6191

[mhcd.org/right-start-colorado](https://mhcd.org/right-start-colorado)

**RIGHT START**  
— FOR COLORADO —





# Questions?

[mhcd.org/right-start-colorado](https://mhcd.org/right-start-colorado)

**RIGHT START**

---

— FOR COLORADO —