



The Federation of Families  
for Children's Mental Health

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Colorado Chapter

**Project Bloom = Building Leveraged Opportunities and Ongoing Mechanisms  
for Children's Mental Health**

*“The first five years of life are, arguably, the richest ones for learning – a short but spectacular window of time when experiences such as a whisper, a hug and a bedtime lullaby literally change the architecture of the developing brain.”*

*-- Rocky Mountain News, May 26, 2003*

**Project Bloom's Vision and Mission:**

**The vision of Project Bloom is to ensure the mental health and social/emotional well being of Colorado's young children.**

**Project Bloom will weave family-centered, culturally competent and community based mental health supports and services into a seamless early childhood system of care that promotes healthy social-emotional development, identifies risk factors, intervenes early, and provides high quality services.**

**Focus Areas: El Paso, Fremont, Mesa, and the City of Aurora**

The project focuses primarily on young children from birth through five years old with serious emotional disturbances (SED) in El Paso, Fremont, and Mesa counties and the city of Aurora. The project will provide enhanced training, integrated delivery of supports and services, statewide working groups focusing on system improvements, and ultimately, sustainable statewide resources for addressing children's mental health. Although the population of children who will receive services under Project Bloom are those who have SED, the project will have a broader impact by ensuring that there is a true system of care for all children to address prevention, intervention and treatment needs.

Project Bloom will build on the seeds for improving mental health in the four communities, including working with each county's Consolidated Child Care Pilot program to further improve the quality of early childhood care and education (ECE). Project BLOOM will work with diverse partners, including early childhood leaders and educators, mental health centers, departments of human services, employment and training programs and others.

**Project Bloom's endeavors will focus on—**

- reducing expulsions from early childhood care and education programs by providing timely, high-quality treatment services

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- increasing family access to resources, developing model family-involvement practices that include culturally competent services
- expanding capacity of providers to address mental and behavioral health needs by increasing the depth and breadth of training
- maximizing limited resources for behavioral care of young children by implementing sound decision-making processes, enlarging the number of health providers and building community support for mental health services
- addressing fragmented current health care systems
- implementing an assessment process to better understand mental health services for young children
- establishing formal screening procedures to help providers identify young children with serious emotional disturbances

## **Partners**

Project Bloom is funded from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), through a partnership of the Colorado Department of Human Services and JFK Partners at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

Partners include the Colorado Children’s Campaign, leading Project Bloom’s public awareness and outreach efforts; the Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health – Colorado Chapter, leading efforts to involve families and youth in a meaningful way in the project, Aurora Mental Health, Pikes Peak Mental Health, West Central Mental Health and Colorado West Mental Health Centers.

## **Contacts**

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***“If we reach children early enough, we may be able to delay or even prevent the development of mental illness and substance abuse. What makes this situation even more critical is the fact that two-thirds of young people in this country who already suffer from diagnosable mental illness are not receiving the care they need.”***  
***--Nelba Chavez, Ph.D., former Administrator, Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration***