

**Early Childhood Development and Infant Mental Health
Component #11
Quality Indicators**

Guiding Principle:

The children of parenting teens are safe, nurtured and supported in their physical and social- emotional development through a “whole child” approach to child health and well-being. Children and their parents receive support and are provided opportunities to develop safe, healthy, nurturing and secure relationships.

Rationale:

A focus on early childhood is critical in creating a solid foundation for success in school, work and life. (Markers that Matter, 2013). An early nurturing environment is important in achieving healthy outcomes for children. Children who have secure attachments exhibit increased empathy, greater self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, enhanced school readiness, and an increased capacity to handle emotions more effectively when compared with children who are not secure (Circle of Security). Early childhood intervention programs have been shown to yield benefits in academic achievement, behavior, educational progression and attainment, delinquency and crime, and labor market success, among other domains (Rand Corporation).

Key Elements:

- The health, development, and well-being of children are addressed in a holistic way and are the shared responsibility of parents, families, GRADS, schools and communities.
- The physical, social emotional and cognitive development of children will be promoted through all GRADS components, including classroom intervention, case management, GRADS Child Care Centers and home visits.
- Children of GRADS students receive developmental screenings at regular developmental intervals, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, to identify the need for early intervention services.
- Children of GRADS students will have access to early childhood intervention services and resources.
- GRADS staff will receive training in the *Circle of Security Program (COS-P)*, a relationship-based intervention designed to enhance attachment and security between parents and their children. The COS-P provides parents with healthy options in care giving and guidance on how to connect with their infants and toddlers.

- GRADS students and their children will be trained by GRADS licensed *Circle of Security* Parent Educators in-class, through case management services and in the GRADS Child Care Centers.
- Children of GRADS students will be better prepared for pre-k programs.

Quality Indicators:

- Assist GRADS students in applying for medical insurance or accessing low/no cost medical care for their children.
- Support the identification of a medical and dental home for children of GRADS students to receive coordinated care.
- Ensure that all children of GRADS students have up-to-date immunization records.
- Create a resource folder for GRADS students to keep important information for their children, including health information such as immunization records, health/developmental screenings, educational records and family records such as birth certificate, social security card, insurance card.
- Provide opportunities for GRADS students to learn about effective parenting and nurturing skills, prenatal health and childbirth, child development, well-child care, co-parenting strategies and relationship skills.
- Provide GRADS students with education, support and opportunities to enhance their child's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development.
- Support and promote opportunities for children of GRADS students to receive consistent developmental screening, such as the parent completed Ages and Stages Questionnaire, to monitor development in communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving, personal/social and overall development overtime and detect any potential developmental delays.
- Develop a formalized partnership with an early childhood home visiting program (e.g., Families First, Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, First Born, Healthy Start, etc) through an MOU to provide teen families with voluntary services such as care coordination/resource linkage, home visiting, health education and support related to parent/child relationship.
- Develop a formalized partnership with an early childhood intervention program (e.g., Family, Infant, Toddler programs) that utilizes a multi-disciplinary team to work with children to provide early intervention services, including diagnosis and treatment.
- Document the number of children receiving early child intervention services and resources on the GRADS Agency Linkage form and GRADS Enrollment Form.
- Develop a partnership with agency that can provide mental health consultation and counseling services to teen families, if available.

- Facilitate the *Circle of Security* Program (COS-P) with all GRADS students during each school year.
- Implement a father-specific COS-P course when implementing the young father component.
- Implement COS-P practices with all GRADS students and their children in GRADS child care centers.
- Provide in COS-P training opportunities for GRADS teachers, case managers and child care staff.
- Participate in opportunities for networking and sharing ideas on COS-P and instruction through GRADS social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Word Press blog and GRADS website.