BACKGROUND

• Approximately 1 in every 4 children is at risk for developmental delays (CDC, 2011)
• Yet in Delaware (DE), only 30.8% of children ages 0-5 years receive developmental screening (DECC, 2013)
• Developmental risk is heightened among the 40% of DE children from low-income households (Zuckerman, et al., 2017)
• Children who live in poverty are less likely to live in communities that foster language development, pre-literacy skills, social-emotional wellness, school readiness, and grade-level academic achievement (Greenwood, et al., 2017; Zill & Resnick, 2006)
• Children who are identified early and receive early intervention see more positive outcomes than children detected at school-age (Glascce, 2000)

COMMUNITY MODEL

• Several states have integrated education on child development into Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs with demonstrated success
• The Delaware WIC Program is a conduit to 17,000 children and families living in poverty per month, and targeted educational programming in which WIC staff are trained as change agents has shown great success
• Missouri’s WIC Developmental Milestones Program integrated developmental checklists and educational graphics to increase parent awareness of milestones and referrals to primary care doctors for developmental concerns in a manner that was reportedly feasible and sustainable (Farmer, 2017)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of an educational intervention featuring both developmental monitoring and language enrichment supports in the Delaware WIC Program statewide.

GOALS

Study Focus


Phase I

2. Increase referrals for developmental screening.
3. Increase parent involvement in monitoring children’s development.

Phase II

4. Increase parent use of language enrichment materials.

METHODS

• Identify partners: DPH, WIC, 2-1-1, Help Me Grow, Sussex County Health Coalition, ECCS CoIIN team, DE Libraries
• Customize materials and MOU for WIC
• Develop workflow with WIC supervisors & staff
• Statewide training on LTSAE, developmental milestones, language (3 trainings total)
• Site visits to each full-time clinic for observations & feedback
• Program check-in’s and reminders via email
• LTSAE electronic record integration – checklists & referrals
• WIC staff surveys & family surveys & interviews (Fall 2019)

RESULTS

Develomental Checklists

• Integrated LTSAE developmental checklists into all 11 DE WIC clinics, peak of 38% of visits in Month 3
• Almost 4,000 checklists completed from Feb – June

Developmental Concerns

• Over 750 documented developmental concerns
• Referral cards for 2-1-1/Help Me Grow screenings given to families of children with concerns

Staff Feedback

• 70% reported the checklist program takes less than 5 minutes
• 89.3% agree or strongly agree that Developmental Milestones Checklists are easy to use
• 85.7% agree or strongly agree that the Checklists easily fit into workflow
• 92.5% agree or strongly agree that the Checklist Program promotes children’s healthy development

DISCUSSION

• WIC Staff have engaged in the program, understand the importance of educating parents on developmental surveillance, and value the added resources for discussion with and support for families
• There were several challenges with implementation that project staff addressed as the program rolled out; these included:
  • Language barriers
  • Literacy barriers
  • Change in workflow
• Additional, unexpected circumstances arose, including an increased workload for WIC staff to educate parents about a new “WIC Smart” initiative

*This can be seen in the May-June decrease in checklist administration

CURRENT PROGRAM

• The program timeline has been extended for revisions to the program
• Efforts toward a more sustainable model, which include a decrease in the frequency of checklists and promotion of the Milestones Tracker app to decrease staff workload
• In September through November, WIC is dedicating education efforts to disseminating resources around early reading and language development
  • 10,000 free books for families
  • 10,000 free library cards for families
• Variety of community resources and educational materials disseminated

NEXT STEPS

• Evaluation of revised program components
• Family interviews to assess impact
• Continued partnership with WIC staff & leadership to maintain education about development for children birth to 5 across the statewide WIC Program

References


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