



We Treat Kids Better



USC University of  
Southern California

**First Connections:  
Developing Replicable Models to Reach Underserved  
Communities for Autism Screening in Young Children**

**Marian Williams, PhD (presenting)**

**Irina Zamora, PsyD, Marie Kanne Poulsen, PhD, Barbara Y Wheeler, PhD**

USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and  
California Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (CA-LEND)

## *First Connections*



*Champions For Our Children*

- 3-year project, began January 2014
- Funded by First 5 Los Angeles
- Partnership:
  - USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (Training and Technical Assistance Lead)
  - Three Federally Qualified Health Centers:
    - AltaMed
    - Eisner Pediatric
    - Northeast Valley Medical Center
  - Two family service agencies:
    - Foothill Family Service
    - Westside Children's Center
  - Family Resource Center:
    - South Central Los Angeles Regional Center FRC



# Methods

- Train staff at six community agencies to conduct developmental screening with children ages birth to 5 years using ASQ-3, ASQ: SE, and M-CHAT-R
- Develop work flows and algorithms to ensure universal screening and linkage for underserved and ethnic minority children living in poverty
- Provide parent education, using CDC Learn the Signs Act Early materials
- Develop relationships between medical and family service providers and family-run resource agencies and ethnic minority parent organizations
- Develop strategies to link young children with early intervention and reduce access barriers
- Train CA-LEND interdisciplinary trainees to provide TA and conduct community research

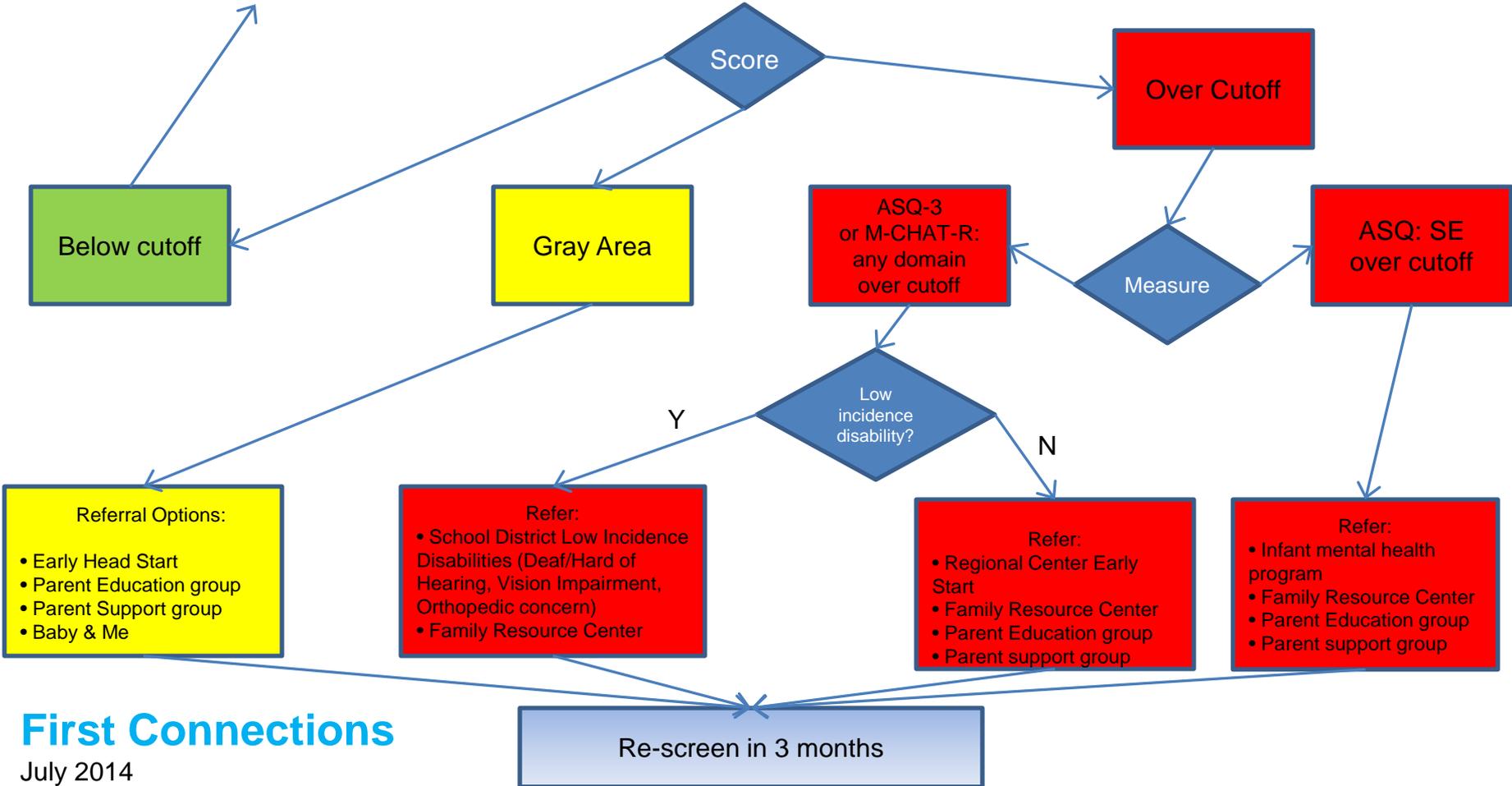


# Screening Algorithm: Birth through 2 Years

ASQ-3 &  
ASQ:SE

Optional:  
M-CHAT-R at  
15 to 30 months

All: review screening results and CDC Developmental Milestones booklet with parent



**UCEDD Resources**

**Los Angeles County Line**

**LA County**

**Disability Specific Resources**

All items (9)

**Family Resource Centers**

All items (10)

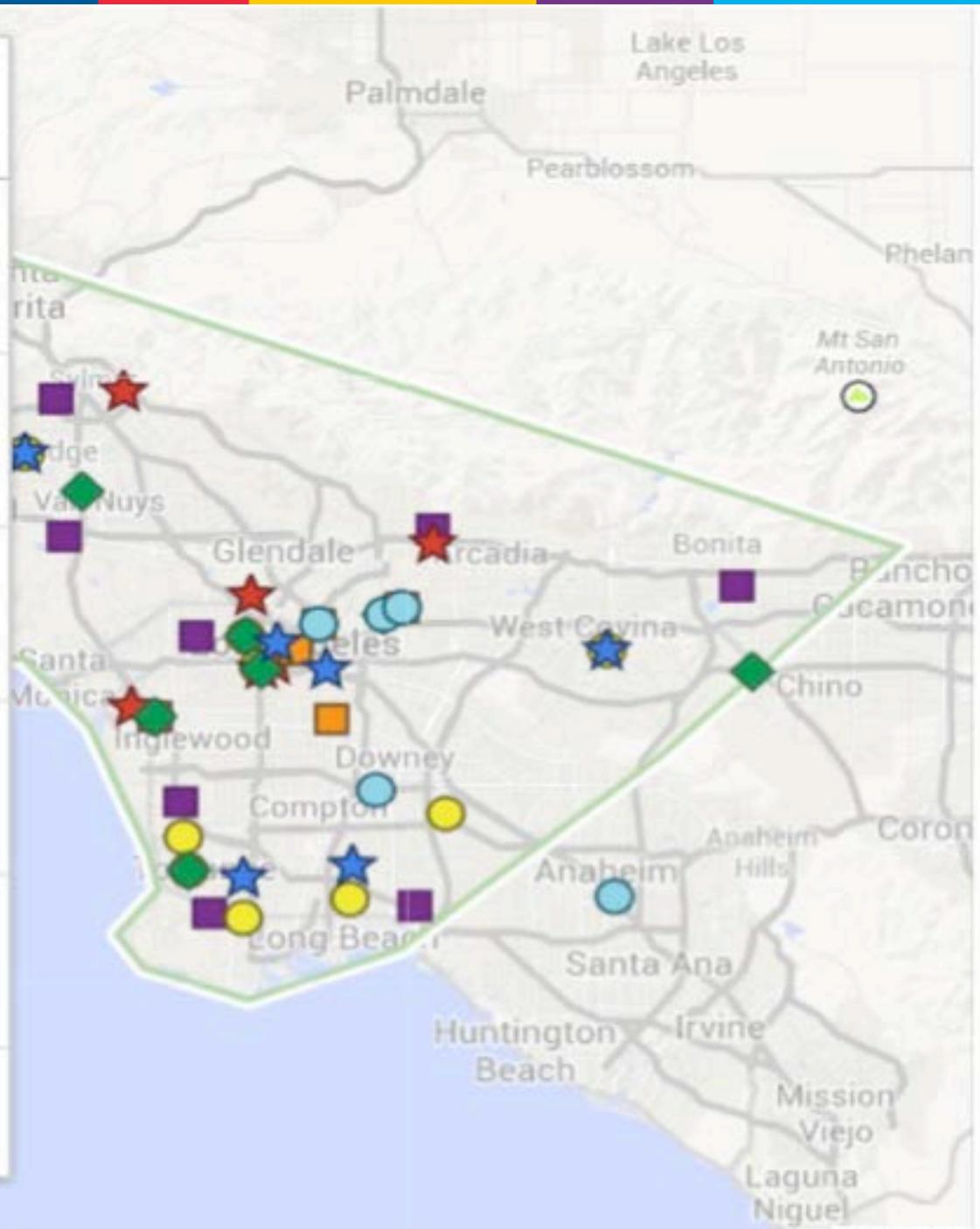
**First 5 ASD Pilot Site**

All items (6)

**Regional Center**

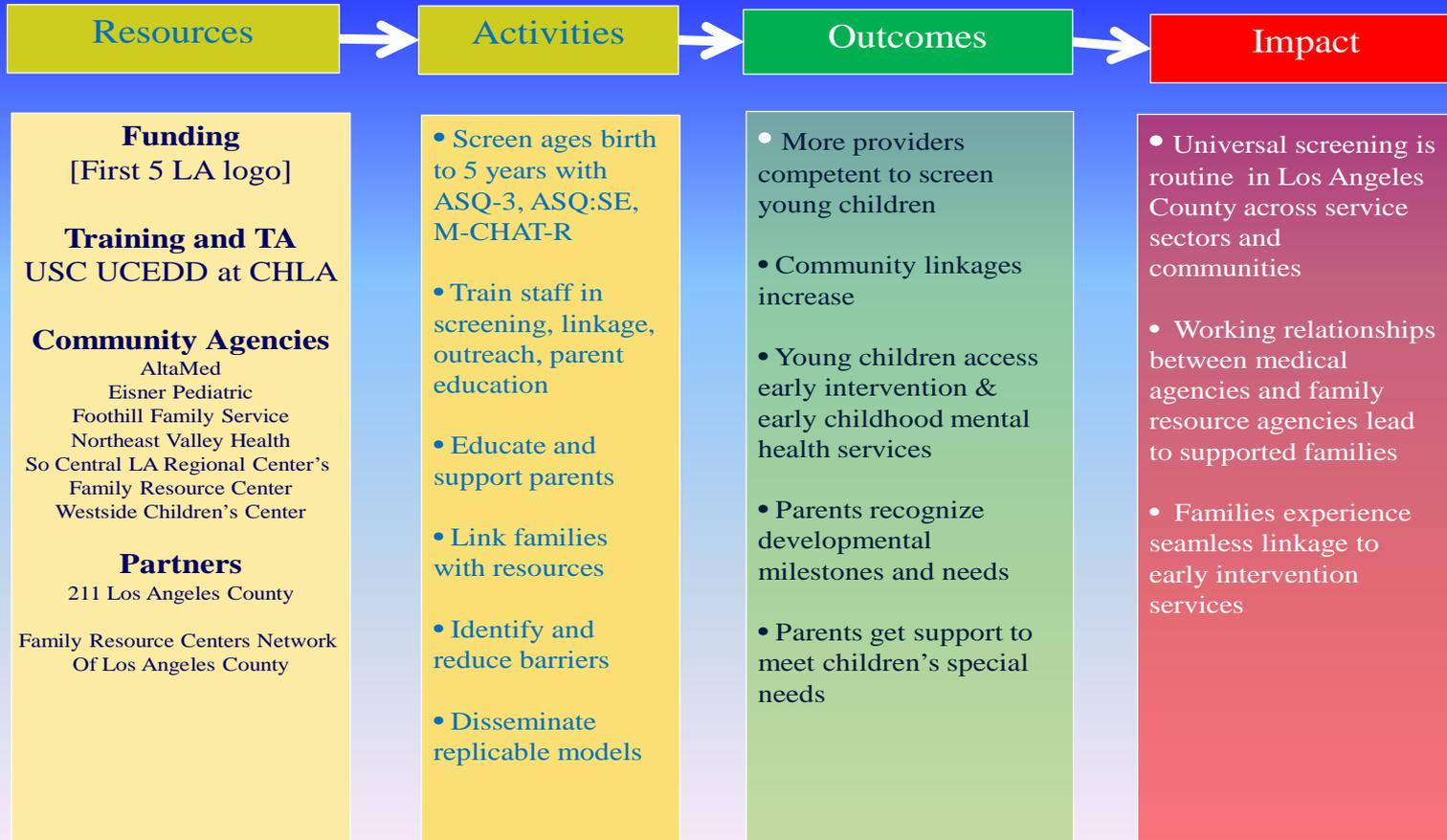
All items (7)

**Ethnic Focus Education and Support...**



## First Connections:

Early Identification of Autism and other Developmental Disabilities in Underserved Communities



Project just began, but early outcomes include:

- Development of model for universal developmental and autism screening by medical providers through integration with electronic medical record
- Development of model for developmental and autism screening within diverse family service agencies reaching young children in ethnic minority, monolingual, and low income communities
- Outreach and linkage model including Family Resource Centers, ethnic-focus parent partner organizations, disability-specific organizations, parent peer support, and clients rights advocates
- Creation of opportunities for CA-LEND interdisciplinary trainees to learn to provide TA, conduct community-based research, and develop policy briefs related to early screening and intervention for autism and other developmental disabilities

# Conclusions

- Partnerships with diverse types of provider agencies leads to synergy/different perspectives on
  - Work flows for different settings and types of providers
  - Ways to use technology to enhance follow-through and sustain change
  - How to reach and engage ethnic minority families from different communities
- CA-LEND interdisciplinary trainees conduct meaningful leadership projects when linked with existing community and training grants; consider ways that trainees can:
  - Join with a faculty member to conduct training and TA activities
  - Write policy briefs using input from grant partners
  - Collect data to evaluate community-based projects



# Discussion

- Ways to build in sustainability from beginning of grant-funded project
- Ways to integrate LEND trainees in grant-funded projects so they learn all aspects of grant administration, development, and implementation
- Ideas for dissemination of project findings to constituents in legislature that make funding decisions

For more information contact:

Marian Williams at [mwilliams@chla.usc.edu](mailto:mwilliams@chla.usc.edu)

