**UNM CDD Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program:**

**Second Judicial District Infant Team**

**Supports infants and toddlers** after substantiated allegations of abuse and/or neglect **using evidence-based assessment tools and intervention models** to inform permanency planning decisions for our youngest children in state’s custody in direct collaboration with local child welfare workers, Part C programs, and judges making planning and custody decisions.

**Infants and toddlers in the child welfare system often show specific challenges, including:** Problems with relationships, behavior issues, unmet emotional needs, developmental delays, and cognitive difficulties (e.g., impulse control, self-regulation, focus).

The goal of the **Infant Team** is to provide children birth-to-three in state’s custody a **coordinated** process for **assessment and treatment** in order to promote permanency planning, emotional health and positive developmental outcomes.

**Our Infant Team Program**

* Serves children **3 and** **under** in Bernalillo County (Albuquerque, NM) in Child welfare/State protective custody
* Provide comprehensive assessment and treatment by interdisciplinary team, including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and experienced counselors with Infant Mental Health specialized training
* Facilitate collaborations between systems 🡪 Infant Mental Health, Child welfare, Part C (Early Intervention) Programs, Judges, Attorneys, and Community providers

**Population Characteristics:**

Some of the common issues that our families struggle with include long-standing history of substance use/abuse, domestic violence, homelessness, unemployment, lack of proper access to healthcare, poverty, history of exposure to adversity across multiple generations.

**Substantiated reasons for children coming into care:**

Physical Neglect, Emotional Neglect, Medical Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Abandonment

**Services provided:**

* Developmental & trauma-informed, relationship-based (IMH) assessment and therapy with parents and children
* Therapeutic coaching/assist with visits
* Support services to foster parents
* Risk assessment and assessment of child’s best interests
* Regular progress reports to CYFD and Courts/attorneys
* Present information/testify in court whenever possible

**Assessment and Treatment Length:**

* Assessment Process typically last between 4 – 7 sessions
* Length of treatment is typically 12 months or until permanency is established for the child by the court. In some situations, families continue working with the Infant Team post-reunification to help with the changes/transitions.

**Infant Team Objectives:**

* Address the impact of trauma on infants and young children in foster care
* Educate systems around the unique developmental needs of infants and young children, and the impact of trauma on developmental trajectories
* Change outcomes for babies in protective custody

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