



## **Relational Health Program Overview – 2022**

First3Years' [Early Relational Health Program](#) aims to enhance the internal capacity of partner organizations to offer families the support that they need to establish or help strengthen their relationship with their infant or toddler. To accomplish this, First3Years has partnered with the [Zero to Thrive Clinic at the University of Michigan](#) to train and coach professionals on how to leverage the Early Relational Health Screen (ERHS) to promote early relational health (ERH) among the families they serve. First3Years is seeking to expand access to its trainings and services by fostering partnerships with clinics and community organizations serving children 0-3 in the Houston area and beyond. As a grantee of Episcopal Health Foundation, First3Years can provide a partner stipend of \$4,000 to support staff training time and also \$50 gift cards to participating families.

### ***The Early Relational Health Screen***

The ERHS (see Appendix I) is a strengths-based standardized relational screening tool that uses video review to promote ERH. The observation process includes a brief videotaped unstructured play session between child and caregiver with a set of toys (provided by First3Years but can be other developmentally appropriate toys as well). This is coupled by a video-feedback review of the “movie” with the caregiver, which provides an opportunity to point out caregiver strengths and promote positive interactions.

If you would like to see what elements of the parent-child interactions are being observed with the tool, please watch the following webinar presented by one of the developers of the tool, Dr. David Willis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LaraiadOQQ&t=107s> (minute 34:00-minute 39:00). If you are interested in learning about how to integrate this tool in a clinical setting, please watch this video developed by the Zero To Thrive Clinic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCrZ70vr2tE>. In addition to the video, please see Appendix II to review the Zero To Thrive Clinic informational flyer for parents.

### ***Training***

First3Years will provide training on early brain development and relational health, and training on the use of the ERHS. The foundational training is a total of 3 hours, and the Early Relational Health Screen training is a total of 6 hours which can be split over the course of 3 days (See Appendix III to review training outline). We also provide individual technical assistance on implementing the ERHS throughout the course of the project which includes the following:

- Weekly communication with First3Years Program Manager
- Support for addressing needs of the family (e.g., strength-based feedback, referral to additional services, etc.)



### ***Program Benefits***

Our aim is to increase providers' understanding of relational health, and their ability to measure and address the relational health needs of families. By increasing individual and organizational capacity of providers, we hope that in turn this will result in improved emotional connection and relational health among families served.

Participating agencies will benefit from:

- Developing a program implementation plan that is flexible to the program setting and the families they serve and enhance existing agency goals.
- relationship-based professional development that seeks to enhance their staff's understanding of the critical role early relationships play in the healthy development of infants, toddlers, and their families
- training and support in the implementation of ERHS
- customized reports of ERHs results from data collected (see Appendix IV) and analyzed by the University of Michigan Zero to Thrive Lab

For Reach Out & Read sites, it is exciting to see how Reach Out & Read is integrating ERH into its strategic planning. To learn more about how it aligns with the Early Relational Health Screen we train on please read the following documents: (1) <https://reachoutandread.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Final-Forum-Follow-Up-3.23.20.pdf> (2) Blog post from Dr. David Wills: <https://cssp.org/2019/12/reflection-early-relational-health-and-reach-out-and-read/>)





Appendix II: Zero To Thrive Clinic Informational Flyer for Parents

## Let's Make a Movie of You and Your Baby!



***You are the most important person in your baby's life.***

Your relationship with your baby lays the foundation for her social, emotional, and cognitive health and well-being.

***You are also the expert on your baby.***

You know more about your baby than anyone else. We want to learn from you about your baby and your relationship with him.



***Lights, camera, action!***

Starting at the 6 month well-child visit, we will make a short video of you and your baby playing together. After the video is complete, we will watch the video together. We will look for moments of enjoyment, and we will wonder together about any confusing moments. If you want additional support in developing your relationship with your baby, we will help connect you to programs.



**Questions?**

Please contact Natalie Burns, LMSW — [Neburns@med.umich.edu](mailto:Neburns@med.umich.edu)



Appendix III: Training Outline

<b>Infant Mental Health and Early Relational Health Training</b> <b>(Open to all staff)</b> <b>Duration: 3 hours</b>	<b>ERHS Training</b> <b>(Open to staff only implementing ERHS)</b> <b>Duration: 6 hours (2hr/day)</b>
Purpose	Purpose
This training aims to introduce and increase knowledge about Infant Mental Health foundational principles and practices.	Train parent-facing professionals to reliably use the ERHS to recognize and address the relational health between parents and their very young children (0-3 years).
Content	Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant Mental Health and Early Relational Health</li> <li>• Relational Health</li> <li>• Cultural Sensitivity &amp; Reflective Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to ERH</li> <li>• Live coding session (Video Sets with Conferencing)</li> </ul>
Learning Objectives	Learning Objectives
<p><b>Infant Mental Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of Infant Mental Health, early brain development and the impact of trauma on very young children</li> <li>• Learn how to recognize and support the emotional well-being of infants and young children</li> <li>• Identify stress reactions and acute trauma in infants and young children</li> </ul> <p><b>Relational Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain an understanding of Relational health and explore how co-regulation supports self-regulation</li> <li>• Examine early child physiological development and how co-regulation supports infant functioning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cultural Sensitivity &amp; Reflective Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the three elements of culture and the pathways to cultural sensitivity</li> <li>• Discuss how culture influences parenting</li> <li>• Discuss strategies for providing culturally sensitive services to families</li> </ul>	<p><b>ERHS Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction ERH and theoretical development/research applications of ERHS</li> <li>• Evaluate critical elements of parent-child interactions outlined on the ERHS Scale for each age group</li> <li>• Learn how to effectively use the ERHS to examine parent-child interactions</li> </ul> <p><b>Live-Coding Session &amp; ERH Video Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rate child and caregiver interactions using the ERHS to confirm reliable use of the tool.</li> <li>• Explore and apply F3Y Tip-Sheet strategies that can be integrated into existing services to strengthen parent and child relational health.</li> <li>• Learn how to provide strength-based video feedback</li> </ul> <p><b>Role-play/Simulation Video &amp; Equipment Set-Up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase self-efficacy and confidence in using the tool through observation and discussion</li> </ul>



*Appendix IV: Data Collection*

**ERH PROGRAM OUTCOMES FOR PROVIDERS:**

**1)Increased understanding of infant mental health, relational health, and the ERHS** (Data Collected from Provider Survey)

**2)Achieve reliability on the ERHS** (OPTIONAL: Data Collected from Videos that will be coded by the University of Michigan Zero to Thrive Research Lab to check for inter-rater reliability)

**3)Increased self-efficacy to support relational health of families served** (Data Collected from Provider Survey)

**ERH PROGRAM OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES (EHF INDICATORS):**

**1)# of parents/caregivers of children 0-3 that increased emotional expressiveness during interactions with child** (Data Collected from Pre/Post Early Relational Health Screen Scores)

**2)# of parents/caregivers of children 0-3 that reported improved emotional connection with child following program completion** (Data Collected from Parent Survey)

**3)# of parents/caregivers of children 0-3 that increased understanding of the impact of primary caregiver-child interactions on early childhood brain development** (Data Collected from Parent Survey)