

## Hub State Spotlight: DC

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The PN-3 Hub's Coalition Spotlights feature the work happening in our states and communities and fosters connections among grantees. Read this Spotlight to learn more about the Early Childhood Innovation Network Prenatal to 5 Capacity Building Collaborative in Washington, DC.

### Collaborative Goals

The goal of the collaborative is to increase DC's investments and supportive policies in prenatal-to-three programming with a focus on initiatives that support the health and mental health of pregnant women and individuals, infants, toddlers, and their families. The Collaborative's leaders believe that by increasing availability and access to services, more DC families will thrive.

ECIN P5CBC includes five program strands:

- **CenteringPregnancy:** Increase the number of low-income women and families served by CenteringPregnancy and comparable group prenatal care models.
- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** Increase the number of children who receive Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) in early care and education programs that partner with early childhood mental health consultants. This evidence-based model supports the positive social-emotional development of children in child care centers and is an upstream, promotion/prevention/early intervention model for child/family mental health.
- **HealthySteps** Increase the number of children served by HealthySteps in DC. HealthySteps provides comprehensive, multigenerational care and support in pediatric primary care to families with children 0-3 to ensure strong developmental, mental health and family well-being through utilization of a mental health professional and care coordinator.
- **Parent Cafes:** Increase the number of parents/caregivers attending Parent Cafes. These community meetings engage caregivers as leaders, and allow space to listen and share on a variety of early childhood topics.
- **Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs) Screening:** Increase the number of pregnant and postpartum women and individuals screened for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs) in the first year postpartum.

The collective prioritizes enhancing caregiver and family leadership and advancing systemic equity. Building capacity means creating strategies, advancing policy, and fostering sustainability until all DC children get what they need in their first three years.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Dr. Damali Wilson, formerly Program Lead for Early Childhood Innovation Network Prenatal to Five Capacity Building Collaborative is no longer working with P5CBC.

## Challenges to Achieving Our Goals

Currently, DC has many prenatal-to-three services and programs. The collaborative is committed to continually assessing and identifying gaps in the current service landscape. Challenges include ensuring all families who can benefit from the services are aware of what is available and how to access them, as well as identifying sustainable financing strategies. Not only do families need high-quality, evidence-based programs, but these programs need sustainable funding streams. Despite these obstacles, through public and private leadership, the District continues to advance and support prenatal-to-three efforts.

## Partners

The coalition's greatest strength is its engaged network of partners. The coalition is composed of senior leadership from key sectors, including local government, health care education, early childhood education, nonprofits, policy, advocacy, and, most importantly, caregivers and families.

## Equity

Meaningful, consistent community engagement is a key part of fostering equity. The collective has created spaces for its stakeholders to speak their minds, to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.

These opportunities and resources, listed below, are available to program staff, providers, and caregivers to ensure that, no matter a person's role in early childhood, there is a safe space to share their experience.

- Parent Cafes, bimonthly small group conversations led by caregiver leaders, build community and use peer-to-peer relationships to strengthen family protective factors.
- Family Leadership Academies and Community meetings help build trust and allow caregivers to reclaim their power and advocate for what they, their family, and the community need to thrive.
- Simultaneous Spanish Interpretation and Translation of all coalition materials and forums ensure that everyone can participate and access resources in their native language.
- A [series of videos](#) shares details on the programs that are available and how to access them.

By collaborating closely with direct service providers, the coalition makes it easier to navigate these resources, breaks down barriers to access, and fosters equity among the prenatal-to-three community in DC.