



THE DYAD

Winter 2026 Quarterly Newsletter



“Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn.”

~ O. Fred Donaldson

Published: February 2026

THE IMPACT

Check out the latest news, updates, & announcements happening across our agency! This season is filled with growth, connection, and meaningful moments that reflect the strength of our community. From new initiatives and milestones worth celebrating, there’s so much to look forward to.



A Message for You...

Dear ECMHP Family,

As we move into our 52nd year, one truth stands out: we are serving more children and families than at any point in our history. Across a broader geographic region and through an expanding range of services, our team is reaching families earlier, more comprehensively, and with deeper impact than ever before. This growth reflects both the increasing need in our communities and our unwavering commitment to meeting it.

This past fall, our Food Drive inspired the idea of an on-site Food Pantry, a resource we are actively building to ensure families have ongoing access to essential supports that strengthen stability and well-being. Shortly after, our Second Annual Holiday Fair brought joy, dignity, and connection to families across our counties.

We continue to deepen partnerships with All Home and GRIP (Greater Richmond Interfaith Program) to support homeless prevention and housing stability, while expanding collaboration with Head Start and First 5 to reach families even earlier in a child's development.

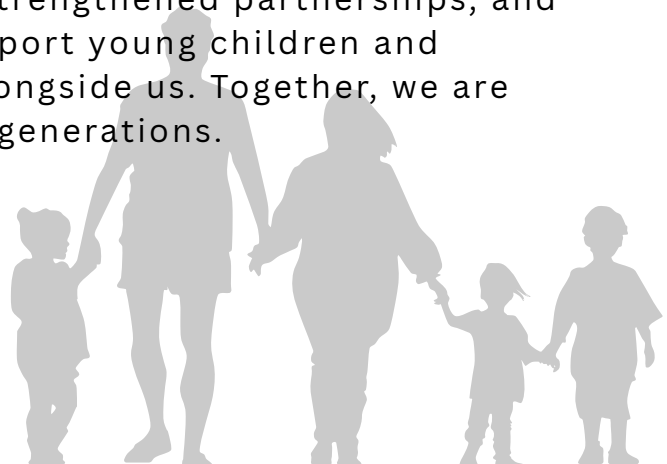
As our services expand, so too do the needs of the physical space that houses this work. Because most public funding is directed toward direct services, capital improvements, including a new roof and updated HVAC system, require separate philanthropic support. We continue to seek partners willing to invest in sustaining the infrastructure that makes this impact possible.

As we look toward spring, we are energized by the opportunities ahead, new families entering care, strengthened partnerships, and continued innovation in how we support young children and caregivers. Thank you for walking alongside us. Together, we are building resilience that will last for generations.

With gratitude,

Jeff Sloan

Jeff Sloan, MA, MBA, AMFT
Executive Director



Agency & Staff Highlights....

Welcoming our new team members...

We are proud to welcome several new team members to our growing organization! Each individual brings valuable experience, fresh energy, and a deep commitment to our mission. Their diverse talents and perspectives strengthen our team and enhance the services we provide to our community.



Carrie Dieringer Taffel, AMFT
Child & Family Therapist



Miranda Wiebe, AMFT
Child & Family Therapist



Clarissa Toro
Intake Coordinator



Rachel Accerto, MA
Early Childhood Education Specialist



Keila Moran
Billing & Quality Specialist



Anna Joseph, AMFT
Child & Family Therapist



ixkári Muñoz-estelle, MA
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant



Harumi Naito-Kwan
Therapeutic Teacher



Ruth Galvan
Parent Partner

Honoring Dedication & Growth



Maria Lopez
Medi-cal Billing Specialist

Maria has been a part of the ECMHP team for the past three and a half years. She has been a valued and dependable member of our agency, consistently demonstrating a strong commitment to excellence. Her dedication, innovation, and collaborative spirit continue to strengthen our organization, and we look forward to her continued success in this new role.



Angie Sanchez
Medi-cal Billing Specialist II

Over the past six years, Angie has been an integral part of our agency's growth, consistently strengthening operations, enhancing key processes, and providing steadfast support to both our administrative team and the organization as a whole. Angie's dedication, perseverance, and emerging leadership continue to make a meaningful impact, and we are excited to see her thrive in this next chapter.

CLINICAL SPOTLIGHT

With your support, ECMHP achieved key milestones by increasing engagement with early learning providers and childcare sites. Expanding training and consultation opportunities for educators and caregivers. We also strengthened internal systems to support quality improvement, accountability, and long-term sustainability. Each accomplishment reflects our dedication TO ADVANCE early childhood mental health across our community.

RECOGNIZING LEADERSHIP & ADVANCEMENT



Emily Peck, LCSW
Clinical Supervisor



Claudia Benitez, LCSW
Clinical Supervisor

Emily and Claudia have been dedicated members of the ECMHP family, Emily for the past five years and Claudia for four years. Throughout their time with us, they have demonstrated exceptional clinical expertise, sound judgment, and a deep commitment to the clients and communities we serve.

Their leadership reflects not only strong clinical insight but also compassion, integrity, and alignment with our mission. Each has played a vital role in strengthening our practice, mentoring team members, and ensuring the highest quality of care.

We are incredibly grateful for their continued dedication and are excited to see the impact they will make in their new roles. Please join us in congratulating Emily and Claudia on this well-deserved promotion!



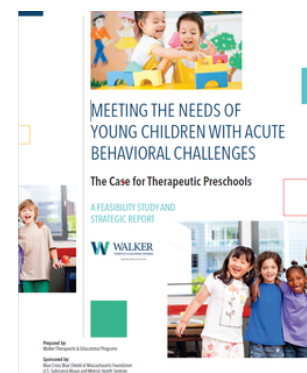
Reni Taylor, DMHW
CTP Program Manager

We are proud to share that **Reni Taylor**, Program Manager for CTP, recently participated in a national preschool therapeutic panel in partnership with Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs.

Reni's contribution to this important conversation highlights her deep expertise and unwavering commitment to advancing therapeutic practices in early childhood settings. Her passion for creating safe, nurturing, and developmentally responsive spaces for young children continues to elevate the work we do every day.

We are incredibly proud of Reni for representing our organization on a national platform and for her ongoing dedication to strengthening early childhood therapeutic environments.

Please join us in celebrating her impactful work and leadership!



CLINICAL TRAININGS

CHILD-PARENT PSYCHOTHERAPY

We're proud to share that several members of our team recently completed training in Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)—an evidence-based, trauma-informed model that supports children ages 0–5 and their caregivers following stressful or traumatic experiences. This specialized training strengthens our team's ability to deepen attachment, promote healing, and support healthy social-emotional development through relationship-based care. Investing in CPP reflects our continued commitment to delivering high-quality, culturally responsive early childhood mental health services to the families we serve.

Aaron Hume, ASW
Sophie Zimmerman, AMFT

RFIT HARRIS TRAINING

Members of our clinical leadership team participated in Reflective Supervision and Reflective Practice training. This training strengthens our ability to thoughtfully support both families and one another by creating intentional space for reflection, curiosity, and professional growth. Reflective practice enhances emotional awareness, deepens clinical insight, and supports resilience—ensuring that our staff remains grounded, responsive, and attuned in their work with young children and caregivers.

Emily Peck, LCSW
Claudia Benitez, LCSW

ATTACHMENT VITAMINS

Our team recently completed Attachment Vitamins® training, a relationship-based framework that strengthens our understanding of how everyday interactions support healthy child development. This approach highlights the essential “vitamins” children need—such as safety, connection, structure, and encouragement, to build secure attachment and emotional well-being. Through this training, our staff continue to deepen their skills in fostering nurturing, responsive environments that promote resilience and strong caregiver-child relationships.

Gabby Vargas, MA, IFECTMHP
Adrienne Jones, Grad Intern
Susan Basanjav, AMFT
Uriel Flores, AMFT
Imani Hiller Bateau, AMFT



PROGRAM & ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

We strengthened our commitment to family-centered care by facilitating meaningful support groups, community gatherings, and signature events that reflect our relational mission.



♥ Attachment Vitamins

A nurturing group for caregiver with children (0-5) focused focuses on strengthening the parent-child relationship by teaching strategies for emotional regulation, attunement, and understanding behavior to promote secure attachment, and early attachment. We facilitated 4 groups during the 2nd quarter with 25 families participating.



🎁 Holiday Faire 2025

One of the quarter's major highlights was the 2025 Holiday Faire, which demonstrated the strength of ECMHP's community relationships and staff engagement. More than 50 families participated, despite severe weather conditions. Over 100 toys and gifts were distributed to children and families. Multiple activity stations were made possible through the dedication of staff and volunteers.



👨👩👧 Family Enrichment Nights

Monthly family-centered evenings offering shared meals and activities that foster connection, joy, and community among ECMHP clients and community members. We had 24 NEW families attend our monthly events between October and December.



🧩 ASD Parent Support Group

Providing parents of neurodivergent children with psychoeducation, peer connection, and practical tools in a supportive and inclusive environment. We completed the 2nd ASD parent support group and had 9 caregivers participate.

Success Story

Through our **Early Childhood Consultation Program (ECC)** in partnership with Head Start & First 5, our provider team recently supported a four-year-old child who was experiencing challenges with emotional regulation and peer interactions in the preschool classroom. Teachers were noticing frequent frustration, difficulty transitioning between activities, and moments of withdrawal during group time.

Our mental health consultant partnered closely with teaching staff to observe classroom dynamics, provide reflective consultation, and introduce strategies that supported the child's sense of safety and connection. Together, the team implemented consistent routines, visual supports, and intentional one-on-one connection time to strengthen the child's ability to regulate and engage.

Within one month, the child began demonstrating increased confidence, improved peer interactions, and greater participation in classroom activities. Teachers reported feeling more equipped and supported in responding to the child's needs, creating a more positive learning environment for the entire class.

This collaboration demonstrates how relationship-based consultation strengthens educators and promotes resilience, emotional growth, and school readiness in young children.

Rooted in Resilience

Our 2025 year-end fundraising efforts were made possible by each one of our generous donors. We are proud to share that this year's contributions generated \$115,687.00 to impactful resources for families.

- Mental health consultation and early intervention services
- Professional development and training for early childhood providers
- Family-centered supports that promote resilience and emotional well-being

Every gift, large or small, helps us sustain services during a time of increased need. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and partnership over the years.



Thank you!



Mindful Minute

Dr. Dan Siegel reminds us, "You have to feel felt."

For young children, our calm is their calm.

Take one minute before transitioning into your classroom or next activity:

1. Pause & Breathe.

Inhale slowly for four counts.

Exhale slowly for six.

Repeat three times.

2. Check In With Yourself.

Ask: "What am I bringing into this space right now?"

Stress? Fatigue? Joy? Just notice — no judgment.

3. Choose Your Presence.

Gently set an intention:

"Today, I will respond, not react."

or

"I will be the calm my children can borrow."

In early childhood spaces, your regulated presence is powerful.

One mindful minute can shape the tone of an entire day.

Donate Today!



Early Childhood Mental Health Program

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