



Early
Childhood
Mental
Health
Program

THE DYAD

*Quarterly Newsletter
Spring/Summer 2026*



"Our task, regarding creativity, is to help children climb their own mountains, as high as possible."

— Loris Malaguzzi

THE IMPACT

Throughout this quarter, ECMHP continued to expand its reach, strengthen services, and invest in the spaces and programs that support healthy child development and family well-being. We are excited to share the progress, milestones, and stories that reflect our continued commitment to building stronger communities.



Published: June 2026

A Message for You...

Dear Friends,

As we move into the second half of 2026, I am filled with gratitude and pride for what the ECMHP community has accomplished together. This edition of our newsletter highlights many of the milestones that reflect the strength, growth, and impact of our agency. You will meet new members of our team, learn about staff accomplishments, and read about the continued expansion of our programs throughout Contra Costa and Solano Counties.

Over the past several years, ECMHP has experienced remarkable growth. Today, we are serving more children and families than at any point in our history. We are supporting young children and caregivers facing an increasingly wide range of social, emotional, developmental, and mental health challenges. Our services now reach communities across a broader geographic area, and we are proud to employ the largest clinical workforce in our organization's history.

As we celebrate these accomplishments, we are also looking toward the future. With growth comes the responsibility to maintain and strengthen the foundation that makes our work possible. Like many organizations with aging facilities, ECMHP is facing significant capital needs, including a much-needed roof replacement and HVAC system upgrades. These investments are essential to ensuring that our building remains a safe, welcoming, and functional space for the children, families, and staff who depend on it every day.

ECMHP has been a place where children heal, families grow stronger, and communities find support. While our county contracts and public funding provide the resources necessary to deliver critical mental health and early childhood services, they do not fund major facility improvements or long-term capital investments. Roofs, heating and cooling systems, classrooms, and therapeutic spaces must be maintained through the generosity of donors, foundations, community partners, and friends who believe in our mission.

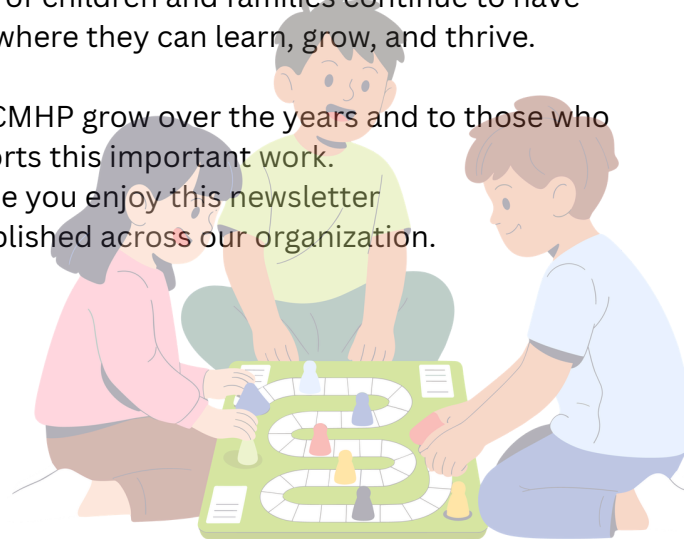
That reality has inspired our upcoming ***Investing in Our Foundation Capital Campaign***. This initiative is about keeping our physical foundation as strong as the services we provide. By investing in our facilities, we can ensure that future generations of children and families continue to have access to safe, welcoming, and healing environments where they can learn, grow, and thrive.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has helped ECMHP grow over the years and to those who will join us in strengthening the foundation that supports this important work. Thank you for being part of the ECMHP family. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and take pride in the extraordinary work being accomplished across our organization.

With gratitude,



Jeffrey Sloan, MA, MBA, AMFT
Executive Director



Agency & Staff Highlights....

Welcoming our new team members...



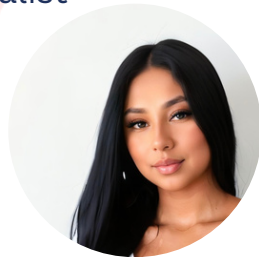
Karla Lara
Senior Accounting Specialist



Lauren Greis, LCSW
Wellness Liaison



Oak Hallet
Therapeutic Teacher



Jenny Estrada
Child & Family Intern



Kiara Vuppala, AMFT, APCC
Child & Family Therapist

Staff Accomplishments & Milestones

Lex Figueroa and Sarah Murphy, CFB Child & Family Therapists, recently passed their licensing exams and are now Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (**LMFT**).

Kacy Barton, ECC Consultant, successfully passed her licensing exam and can now add **LMFT** after her name. Congratulations, Kacy, on reaching this significant professional milestone!

Ilse Ontiveros, CTP Therapeutic Teacher, celebrated the completion of her Bachelor's Degree from California State University, East Bay by participating in commencement ceremonies this May. Ilse has already begun the next chapter of her educational journey and is currently enrolled in a Master's program in Special Education.

Christin Locke, GRIP Therapeutic Teacher, also celebrated earning her Bachelor's Degree from California State University, Long Beach by walking across the stage this spring.

Kyler Stanion, CTP Therapeutic Teacher, has been accepted into the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program at San José State University and will begin his graduate studies this August.

Join us in congratulating these team members for their dedication to lifelong learning, professional growth, and accomplishments that strengthen our organization and reflect our commitment to enhancing the fields of Early Childhood Mental Health and Education.

PROGRAM & ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Partnerships That Nurture Strong Starts



Throughout this spring and early summer, in collaboration with the San Pablo First5 and Monument First5 Centers, our Perinatal Circle of Care (PCOC) team has been providing perinatal education and Attachment Vitamins groups to families across Contra Costa County. This partnership is a testament to our shared dedication of supporting the health, development, and well-being of young children and their families. The groups are made possible by generous funding provided by the Environmental and Community Investment Agreement (ECIA), Contra Costa Health Community Defined Practice (CDP), and Contra Costa Health Measure X funding.

Building Connection and Support for Neurodivergent Families



On June 3rd a collective of clinicians across our Child & Family Therapy, Comprehensive Therapeutic Preschool, and Early Childhood Consultation programs completed the **Brainbow Group, Grupo Brillantemente**. This group was formally known as the Support Group for Parents of Kiddos on the Autism Spectrum. The group was a support space for parents to voice questions, challenges, and celebrations of caring for neurodivergent kids. This cycle added a Spanish-speaking parent group as well as additional programming and structure for the children's group. 59 participants engaged in this 8-week offering. This group was made possible by generous funding from the Witkin Foundation and Contra Costa Health Measure X.

A New Chapter at 194 Broadway

This year, we expanded our Richmond campus to include 194 Broadway, providing additional space for our growing Early Childhood Consultation (ECC) team and creating room for future organizational growth. This expansion is more than additional office space—it is an investment in the professionals who support children, families, educators, and childcare providers every day. By creating dedicated work and collaboration areas, we are strengthening our capacity to deliver high-quality services and respond to the increasing needs of our community.



CLINICAL SPOTLIGHT



Suzanne Harkless, CFB Program Manager, **Emily Peck and Claudia Benitez**, CFB Clinical Supervisors, recently completed the **Reflective Facilitators in Training Program** at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. This training was an intensive learning community designed for professionals working with young children and families (ages 0-5).

Housed within the hospital's Early Intervention Services (EIS) and the Irving B. Harris program, the curriculum supports a culturally diverse cohort of service providers to increase their capacity for leadership and clinical practice. Suzanne, Emily, and Claudia engaged in monthly consultation seminars designed to promote their critical thinking, manage practice dilemmas, and learn how to effectively facilitate reflective supervision for their team.

By investing in reflective training for our staff, we empower staff to process complex emotions, mitigate burnout, and strengthen multidisciplinary teamwork which in turn significantly improves the quality of care delivered to the children and families we serve.



The **Perinatal Circle of Care (PCOC) team** will be welcoming two new Perinatal Mental Health Therapists in July, **Ja'Naie Sinclair and Tracy Frost**. Growing this team allows us to serve the growing demand for perinatal services in Contra Costa County, as well as expand this program into Solano County in the 26/27 fiscal year. This month, the PCOC team will also begin an 18-month Perinatal Child Parent Psychotherapy training. While the PCOC program has been utilizing the P-CPP framework since its inception in 2021, the Child Trauma Research Program at the University of California, San Francisco has invited our perinatal team to participate in their first P-CPP national cohort.

By having PCOC mental health clinicians trained and rostered in P-CPP fidelity, it strengthens our team's clinical practices, enhances the quality of services, and supports sustainable development by ensuring our perinatal program can deliver long-term, equitable results.

Protecting the Place Where Healing Happens

Building for the Future: Expanding Our Impact

Since, 2016, our Richmond headquarters has served as a hub for connection, support, learning, and healing. It is where staff collaborate, families receive services, community partners gather, and innovative programs take shape.

Today, that home requires a significant investment. We are preparing for a critical roof replacement project that will protect our facilities and ensure the long-term sustainability of our mission. While roofs are rarely the most visible part of a nonprofit's work, they are essential to preserving the safe, welcoming spaces where services are delivered every day.

In the coming months, we will launch our **Investing in Our Foundation Capital Campaign**, an effort to raise the funds necessary to complete this project and safeguard our facilities for the children and families who depend on them.

Join us in ensuring that ECMHP can continue to provide safe, stable, and supportive spaces where children thrive, families find support, and communities grow stronger.



GOAL
\$400,000

THIS CAMPAIGN INCLUDES:

- Roof Replacement**
A new roof to protect our building and the people inside.
- HVAC Improvements**
Upgraded systems to keep our spaces safe and comfortable.
- Facility Preservation**
Protecting our investment and extending the life of our building.
- Safe Therapeutic Spaces**
Creating healthy, welcoming environments for children, families, and staff.

CAMPAIGN LAUNCH:
FALL 2026



Events & Outreach

🎒 SAVE THE DATE! 🎒

Back to School Block Party

Sponsored by:



KAISER
PERMANENTE®

Friday, August 14,
2026

3:00 PM – 6:00 PM



Join us as we celebrate the start of a new school year with an afternoon of fun, community, and family connection!

Guests can look forward to:

- 🎒 Backpack & School Supply Giveaways
- 🎁 Raffle Prizes & Giveaways
- 👥 Community Resource Vendors
- 🎨 Family-Friendly Activities
- 🎵 Music & Entertainment
- 🍽️ Food & Refreshments
- 📚 School Readiness Resources



Bring the whole family and help us kick off the school year together! We look forward to celebrating with our community and ensuring children head back to school equipped, supported, and ready to thrive.

Liam's Story

At just 4 years old, "Liam" struggled with severe separation anxiety and aggressive behaviors that made daily routines, preschool attendance, and social interactions difficult for both him and his family.

After being referred to ECMHP's Child & Family Therapy Program, Liam and his parents began working with a clinician who used play-based therapy to understand his emotional needs and identify the triggers behind his behaviors. By providing dyadic play therapy and parent support, Liam's family learned strategies to support emotional regulation, strengthen attachment, and build predictable routines that helped him feel safe and secure.

Over time, Liam achieved significant milestones. He became more comfortable separating from his caregivers, reduced aggressive outbursts, developed age-appropriate coping skills, and began expressing his feelings with words rather than behavior. His confidence grew, and he was able to participate more successfully in preschool and connect with peers.

Today, Liam enters the classroom with greater independence and resilience, while his parents feel empowered to support his social-emotional development.

Liam's story is one of many made possible through the support of our generous donors, funding partners, volunteers, and community champions. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who invests in ECMHP's mission.



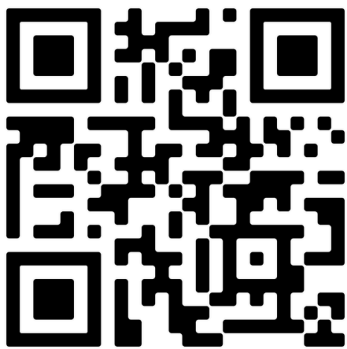
Mindful Minute

As you reach the end of this newsletter, we invite you to pause and reflect on the power of early relationships. Every child deserves to feel safe, valued, and supported. Every family deserves access to resources, connection, and community. And every act of care—whether through service, partnership, advocacy, or generosity—helps create the conditions for children to thrive.

The impact we make is not measured solely by programs delivered, or numbers served, but by the lives strengthened, the resilience nurtured, and the hope created along the way. Thank you for being part of our journey and for helping us build brighter futures for children and families throughout our community.

*"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."
— Nelson Mandela*






Donate Today!



Early Childhood Mental Health Program

CONTACT US



-  510-412-9200
-  OfficeAdmin@ecmhp.org
-  **200 24th St.**
Richmond, CA 94804
-  **194 Broadway**
Richmond, CA 94804
-  **1726 Sonoma Blvd**
Vallejo, CA 94590

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