



# Community of Practice-8/21/24

**Julie Fisher**, LICSW, IMH-E®  
CHERISH Program Director

**Tracy Kaplan**, MS, CCC-SLP, CLC,  
*IMH-E®*  
CHERISH Lead Trainer



# What is CHERISH? (Children Encouraged by Relationships in Secure Homes)



**CHERISH** is a multidisciplinary Infant Mental Health best practice model for providing Early Support (ESIT) services to child-welfare systems-involved children and their families.

**CHERISH** is delivered through Early Support home/community visits by someone who has had specialized CHERISH training.

Nurturing Relationships for Children to Thrive  
[CHERISH \(kinder.org\)](http://kinder.org)

# CHERISH Vision & Purposes:

**Vision:** Children (0-5 ) and their families involved in the child welfare system get their social-emotional needs met in safe, secure, and nurturing relationships.

## **Purposes:**

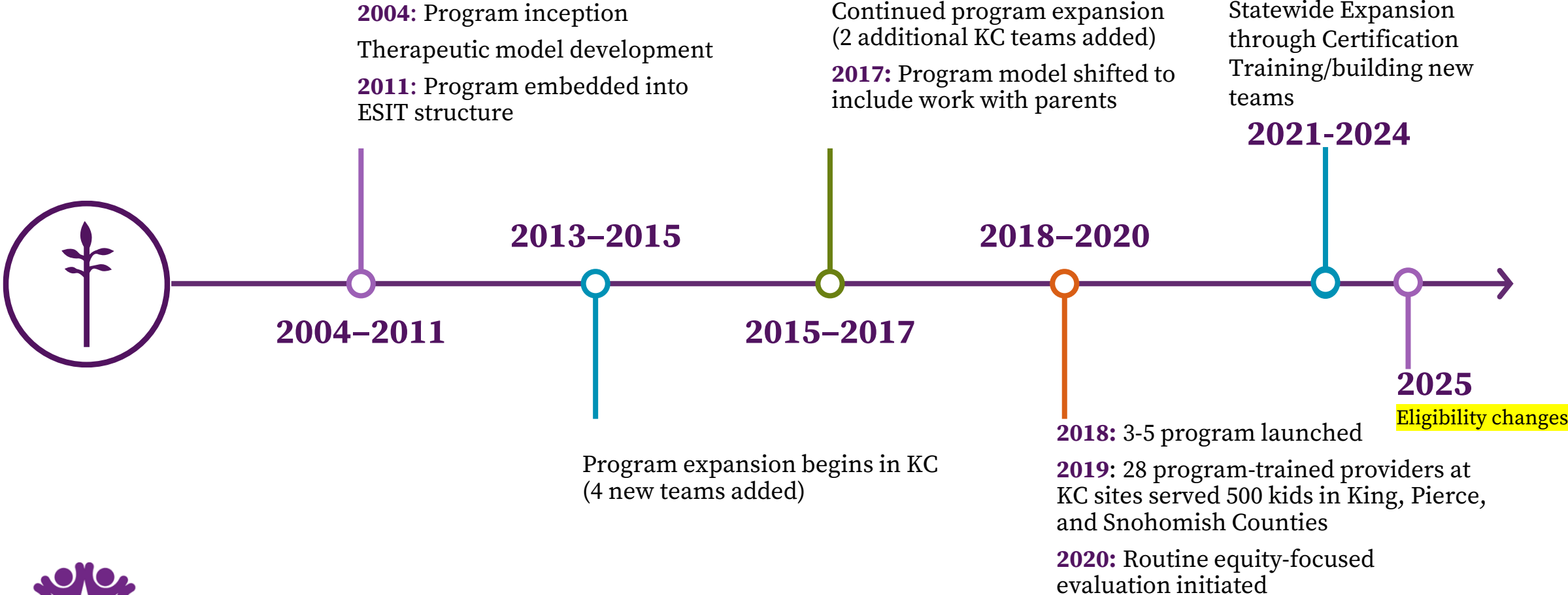
To promote healing through safety and security in children's relationships.

To facilitate connections amongst the adults in a child's life.

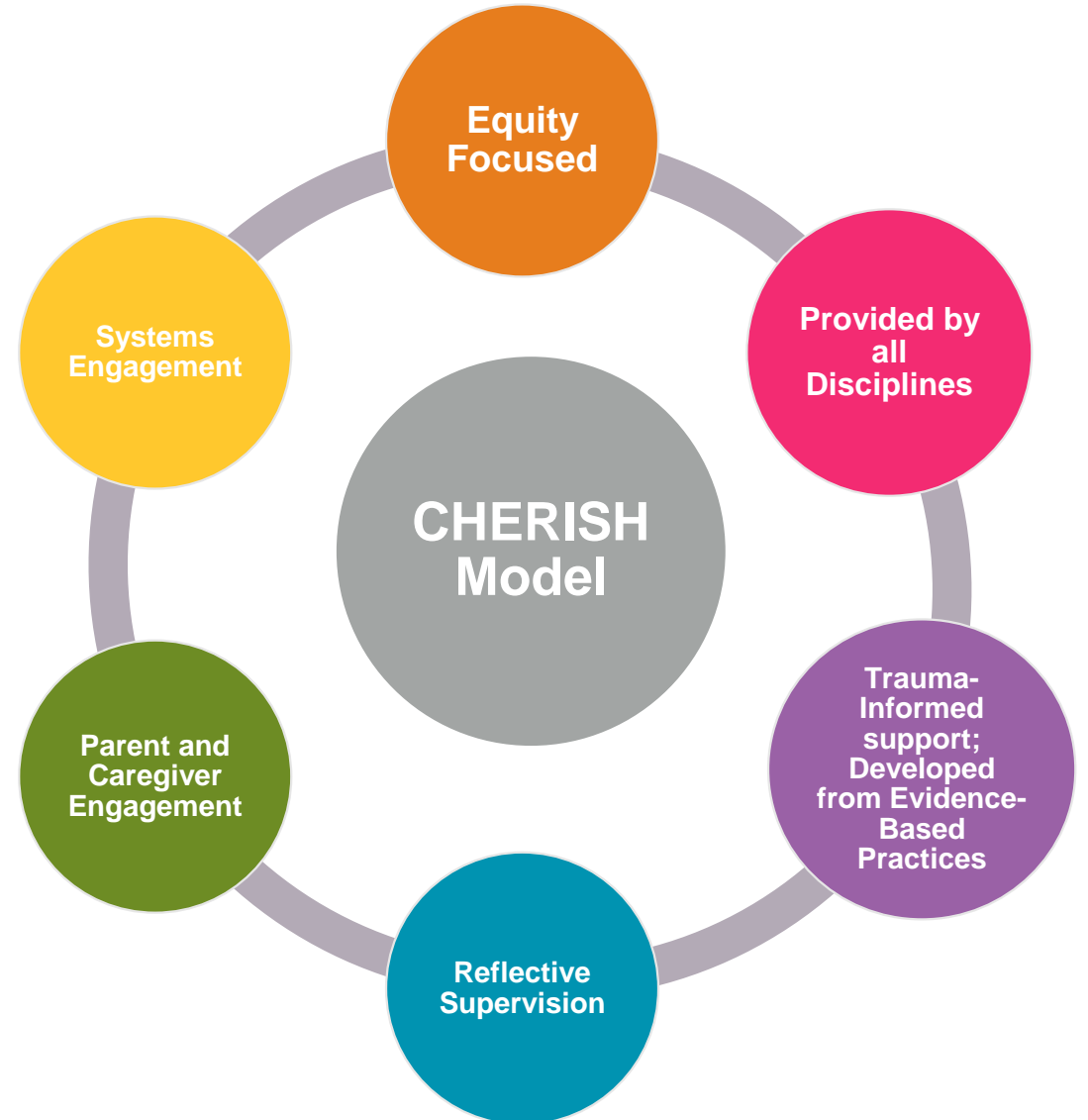
To support children and families in ways that minimize additional trauma while they are involved with the CW and ESIT systems.



# CHERISH History & Growth



# CHERISH Model: Active Ingredients



# CHERISH Outcomes

Increased Parent Involvement in Services

Improved Child-Parent and Child-Caregiver Relationships

Developmental Milestones Met/Increased Child Wellbeing

Placement Stabilization

Parent and Caregiver Satisfaction

Systems Engagement for Better Outcomes

Equity-Focused Outcomes Analysis

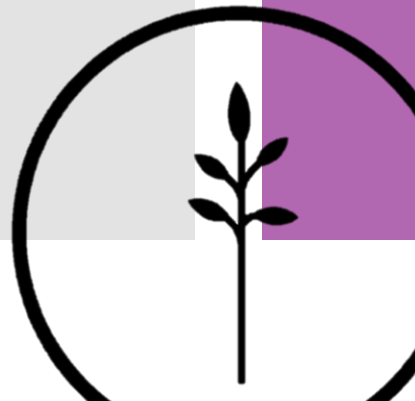


# Equity Focused

- Support keeping families together
- Provider trainings centered in racial equity practices
- Data analysis for race/ethnicity disparities
- Take program guidance from parents and caregivers with lived experience
- Solicit organic feedback
- Discuss culture openly and address racism & historical trauma
- Hire staff with lived experience in child welfare system



# Attachment & Transitions





# Attachment & Transitions: Dynamic Maturation Model of Attachment & Adaptation

When faced with perceived danger

- will seek safety

When faced with distressed feelings

- will seek comfort

When faced with perceived isolation

- will seek proximity to their attachment figure

When faced with perceived chaos

- will seek predictability (or what is familiar)



# Attachment & Transitions: Types of Transitions

Family Time Visits (FTV)



Placements



# Attachment & Transitions: Family Time Visits (FTV)



- Maintain predictability & continuity
- Establish and/or uphold existing routines
- Utilize comfort items
- Create connections among all adults between FTV
- Offer opportunities for info sharing among all adults
- Promote understanding of the child's developmental needs among all adults
- Incorporate the parent's voice regularly into a child's world

# Attachment & Transitions: Dysregulation and FTV

## Why might this happen?

- Grief and loss
- Sensory responses
- Disruptions to routine

## What else can we do?

- Predict/normalize
- Prepare child before/after
- Create and maintain connections



# Attachment & Transitions: Placements

- The first placement transition and its impact on all other transitions
- Planful and gradual moves
- Transferring the relationship is key
- Post-placement contact supports grief and loss

Transition Tool Kit : Overview - 1

## Transition Tool Kit *for infants and toddlers*



**KEY COMPONENTS OF A TRANSITION:**

For infants and toddlers in out-of-home placement, extra time and care must be employed by the team of adults who work with them to facilitate moves that keep the child's best interest in mind.

Any move between primary caregivers, including a reunification with parents, a new foster or relative/kinship caregiver, or placement with an adoptive family, should be done with attention to the child's experience. The main components of a transition plan are presented in this Tool Kit.

Listen to parents and caregivers – they are the experts on the child.

Transition plans are not an all or nothing endeavor. If parts of these best practice guidelines are not possible given the specific case situation, identify the aspects you can control and take action.

**Before:**

- Center relationships and contacts around shared goals of helping child well-being.
- Develop a written transition plan document developed at Shared Planning Meetings (e.g. FTDMs) where all team members are invited to formulate this plan.
- Ensure that roles, timeframes, services, and plans for follow-up are clear and agreed upon.
- Consider referral to Infant

**During:**

- Multiple contacts between current and receiving caregivers prior to the move to a new placement (a minimum of 7-10 contacts).
- Over the course of a minimum of 2 weeks.
- 1-2 overnight stays with the receiving caregiver prior to the move.
- A direct hand-off from the current caregiver to the receiving caregiver at time of the move.

**After:**

- Planned contacts between the current/previous and receiving caregivers following the move (minimum of 2-3 in person and/or virtual—such as Skype or FaceTime). No “waiting period” after the move for this contact.
- Pictures and books of the previous family available to the child.
- Follow routines and patterns from previous home for 2-3 weeks to offer familiarity of

# Promoting Connections



# Promoting Connections between Parents and Caregivers

---

## **Why:**

Decreases grief and loss for child; supports healing after removal; Important way to minimize conflicts/misunderstandings

## **How:**

As soon as possible...in a supported way... at the pace people are ready for...

## **Resources:**

- FCP-Family Connections Program [Family Connections Program - Amara \(amarafamily.org\)](http://amarafamily.org)
- support for parents from parent allies
- support for caregivers regarding how to connect and why to connect (from mentor caregivers who have done it before; from CHERISH clinicians)
- Brochure for foster parents and social workers on CHERISH website: [connection-brochure\\_full-pg.pdf \(kinderling.org\)](http://connection-brochure_full-pg.pdf)

# What Can Judges Do?





# What Can Judges Do: Connections

## **Set expectations for CONNECTIONS...**

### Ask:

- What is the connection between the parent and caregiver?
- What has been done to build a connection?
- What referrals to community supports for connection and best practice transitions have been made?
- How are connections supporting Family Time?



# What Can Judges Do: Placement Transitions



- **Set expectations for best-practice TRANSITIONS...**
- Ask:
- Is there a written transition plan?
- What is the nature of the connections between involved adults?
- Will there be post-placement contact for the child?
- When will the child be told and by whom?

How to stay in touch with us... <https://cherish.kindering.org>



[Julie.Fisher@kinding.org](mailto:Julie.Fisher@kinding.org) or 425-653-4314

[Tracy.Kaplan@kinding.org](mailto:Tracy.Kaplan@kinding.org) or 425-528-2818