



DEVELOPMENTAL UNDERSTANDING AND LEQUAL COLLABORATION FOR EVERYONE



DULCE
An initiative
of CSSP

September 8, 2022



**Center for the
Study of
Social Policy**
Ideas into Action



Agenda

- What is DULCE?
 - How it Works
 - The 3 Sectors
 - Implementation
 - Evidence & Impact

- Questions & Discussion



What is DULCE?





DULCE

- Developmental Understanding- Supporting the relational health of infants and their families – in collaboration with the Brazelton Touchpoints Center.
- Legal Collaboration- Helping families access the concrete supports they want and are legally entitled to.
- For Everyone- reaching families where they already bring their babies – universal access in primary care clinics.



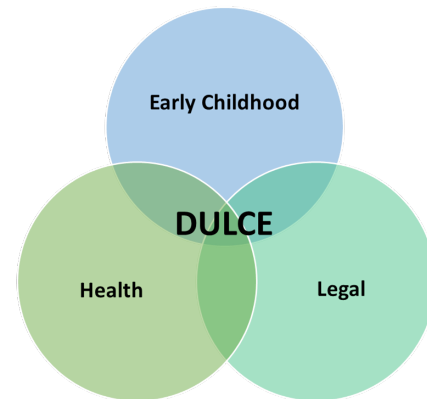
About DULCE

DULCE Mission Statement

Through the collaborative efforts of early childhood, health, and legal systems, **DULCE transforms the way that families with infants experience the delivery of support and services.** To do this, we employ a cross-sector, team-based model that proactively supports the health of families with infants in communities that are under-resourced and have been marginalized by racist systems.

DULCE Vision Statement

When DULCE is fully implemented nationwide, all **families with infants will experience holistic, connected care and receive the support they need** to provide newborns with a healthy start in life.





Why the three sectors?

- **Accountable** for building a local system for young children and their families
- **Immersed** in the community's supports to address SDOH
- Able to drive **evidence-informed** practices and programs
- **Organized** to influence policy and practice

**Early
Childhood**



- **Universal reach**
- **Longitudinal relationships** with families
- Well-versed in the use of standard protocols to improve **quality of care**

Health



- Well-versed in **family rights and system responsibilities**
- Professional orientation toward **problem-solving and advocacy**
- **Policy lens and expertise**

Legal





DULCE on the Ground





The Intervention

- **First 4 well-child visits:** screening for maternal depression and barriers to concrete supports, touchpoints-informed focus on the baby's developing temperament, personality, anticipatory guidance and related parent coaching.
- **6-month visit:** wrap-up to the intervention, transition plan implementation to assure ongoing support within the family-centered medical home.
- **Weekly interdisciplinary case review:** assures all positive screens are addressed on ongoing basis.
- **Leveraging of legal partnerships throughout:** to help families overcome barriers to concrete supports (including rapid response consultation).
- **Continuous Quality Improvement:** to monitor implementation and allow data-based adaptation to local environments.



Perspectives from a DULCE Champion



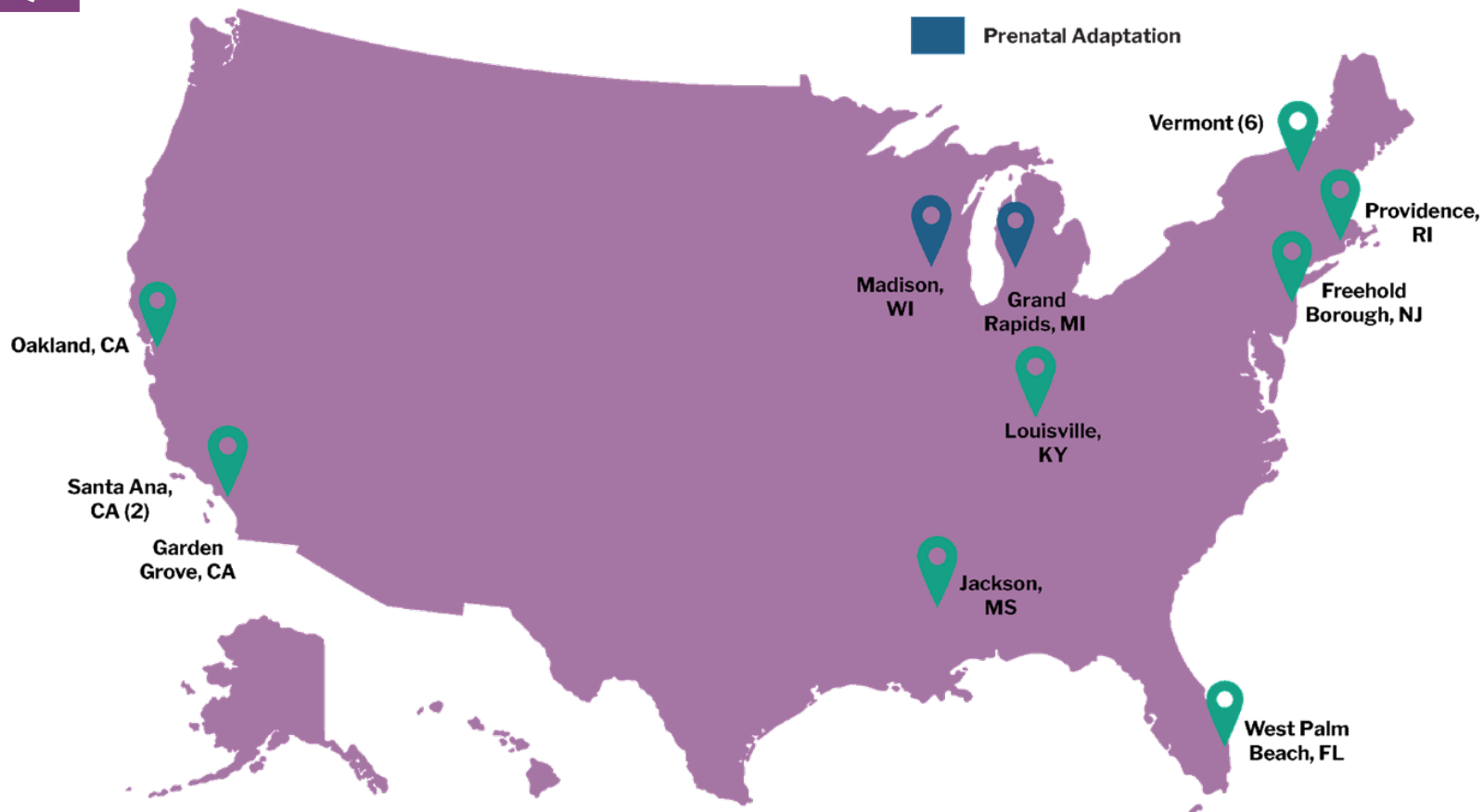
Breena Holmes, MD
DULCE National Consultant/Physician
Champion

DULCE Implementation





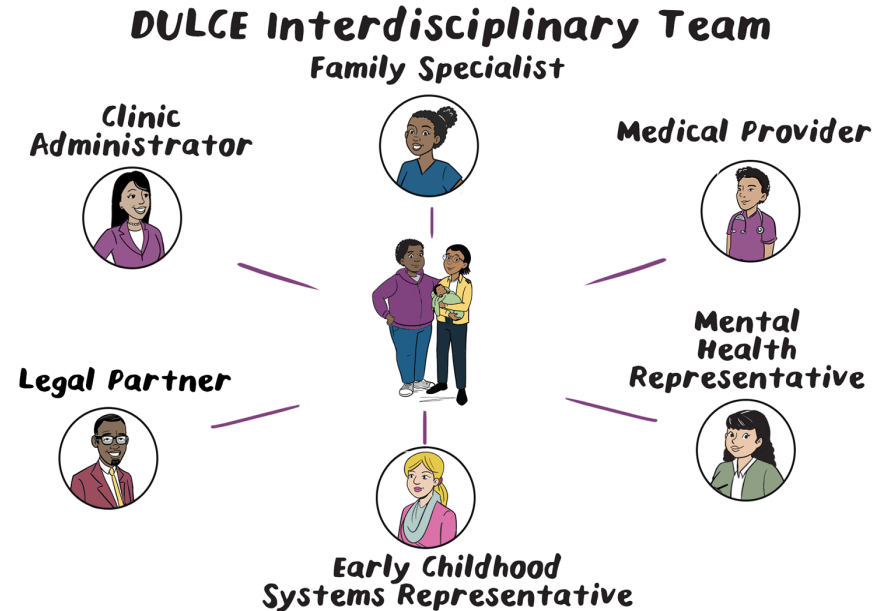
Our Growing Footprint





DULCE Brings New Primary Care Resources For Families

- Existing primary care team
 - Medical provider
 - Medical assistant and/or nurse
 - Clinic administrative and support staff
- Core DULCE team for first 6 months of life
 - Early Childhood Systems Representative
 - Family Specialist
 - Legal Partner
 - Mental Health Representative





DULCE's Secret Ingredient: The Interdisciplinary Team



Family Needs and Policy Challenges



Strategies to Address the Root Causes of Health Inequities

- **Families at the Center**
- Building Trust Through Family Specialists
- Access to Justice
- Cross-sector Collaboration
- Reducing Stigma through Targeted Universalism
- Upstream Approach to Creating Healthy Outcomes





DULCE Data & CQI Infrastructure



Local DULCE CQI team

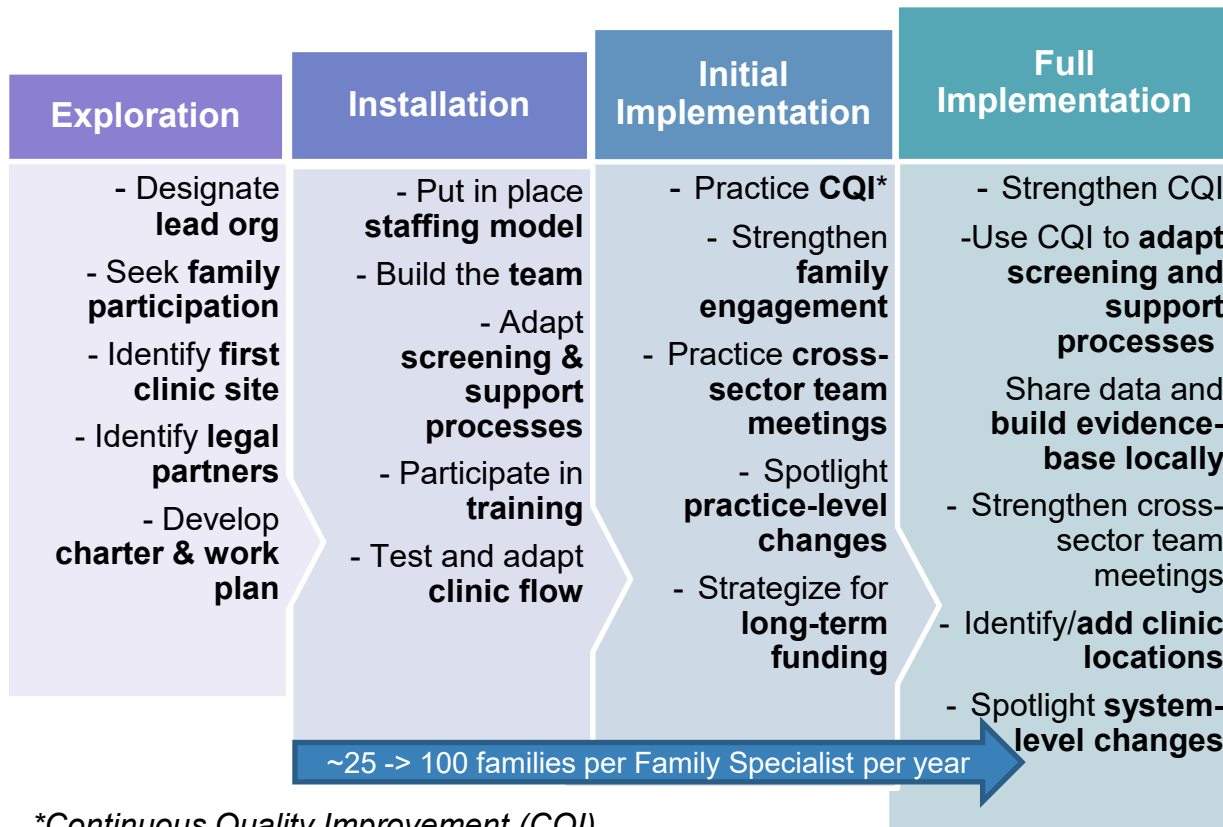
Weekly case reviews

Monthly CQI meetings

- Learn about implementation and adaptations through data
- Uplift parent voice, cross-sector input
- Encourage questions



DULCE Community Trajectory



Impact & Evidence





The DULCE Impact

- To date, nearly **6500** families served.
- **95%** of families choose to enroll.
- **92%** of families complete DULCE.
- **76%** of families receive all well-child visits on time.
- More than **95%** of families receive screening for all seven HRSN.
- **95%** of DULCE families with concrete support needs received resource referrals at time of positive screening results.
- Successful implementation of the Bright Futures guidelines and the Bright Futures health-related social needs requirements.
- DULCE clinics report having lower “no show” rates than non-DULCE clinics.
- Physicians and staff credit DULCE with improving the work environment and reducing burn-out.

Findings include those cited in Arbour, et al. (2021).



Voices from the Field: *Families & Family Specialists*



“DULCE offers **the emotional and human support** that families need.”

Early Childhood Representative

“This program has **made us feel safe, heard and supported in every way** possible... [Our family] now has the opportunity to thrive in the face of the chaos that is our life at present.”

Family

“I’m on the ground and I hear the stories, not just giving a phone number to a person. Other programs give a phone number to a family and that’s it. **DULCE is a back-and-forth relationship. I want to empower that family** to speak up.”

Family Specialist

“This is **why I became a pediatrician: to address the things that really matter for families** and children. Through DULCE, I can.”

Medical Provider

“DULCE is **more integrated and collaborative [than other medical-legal partnerships]. You’re directly working with the Interdisciplinary Team**, figuring out solutions to families’ problems. I get to hear not only legal but other solutions.”

Legal Partner

Questions and Discussion

