SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

Resilient Early Childhood Systems Self-Assessment (RECSSA)

October 2023

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DEVELOPING THE RECSSA TOOL

One key desired outcome of Promising Minds (PM) is that early educators, practitioners, service providers, and families and children are supported by a coherent system. But what would a cohesive, resilient early learning system look like? And how will we know when we see it?

To explore this, we started by conducting conversations and interviews with 14 leaders across Hawai'i. These leaders represented early education, public health, mental health, social services, and non-profits, including perspectives on these issues through a Hawaiian culture lens.

Next, based on themes that emerged from the interviews, along with learnings from other components of the PM evaluation, a systems tool was developed, the **Resilient Early Childhood Systems Self-Assessment (RECSSA) tool**. The RECSSA is a self-assessment to be completed by organizations with 12 items to rate across four system domain areas.

Why a Systems Tool?

Systems change is complex! Becoming a coherent system of resilience is an ongoing journey for a collective of organizations that is not linear. One of the challenges with systems change is identifying meaningful indicators of interim progress towards long-term change. The RECSSA was designed to break down the process and identify key indicators to help guide organizations and communities towards deeper changes needed to be trauma-informed. A participatory self-assessment tool can identify areas to strengthen systems to support resilience among families, caregivers, service providers and community leaders. Organizations were encouraged to complete the tool as a team.

DOMAIN SCORES (OVERALL)

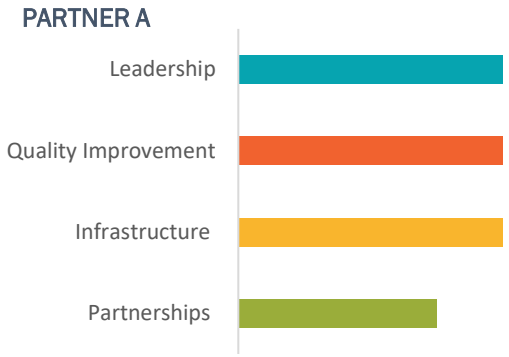
Eleven organizations and agencies in Hawai'i completed the RECSSA in 2023. Together, they assessed the status of addressing trauma and resilience in the areas of Leadership (leaders), Quality Improvement (programs), Infrastructure (organization) and Partnerships and Alignment (community) using the following rating scale:

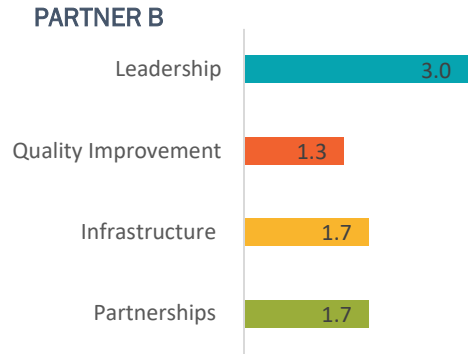
- **Awareness:** Organizations have become aware of how prevalent trauma is and have begun to consider that it might impact their clientele and their staff.
- **Building:** Organizations have begun to 1) explore principles of trauma-informed care (safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, and empowerment) within their environment and daily work; 2) build consensus around the principles; 3) consider the implications of adopting the principles within the organization; and 4) prepare for change.
- **Emerging:** Organizations have begun to change their organizational culture to highlight the role of trauma. At all levels of the organization, staff begin re-thinking the routines and infrastructure of the organization.
- **Developed:** Organizations have made trauma-responsive practices the organizational norm. The trauma model has become so accepted and thoroughly embedded that it no longer depends on a few leaders. The organization works with other partners to strengthen collaboration around being trauma informed.

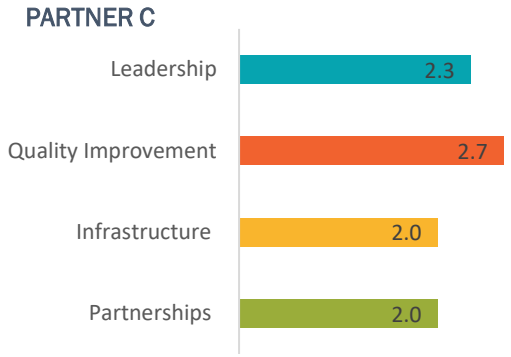
Overall, across the eleven organizations, quality improvement was the strongest domain area, followed closely by leadership. There were more opportunities to strengthen infrastructure and partnerships.

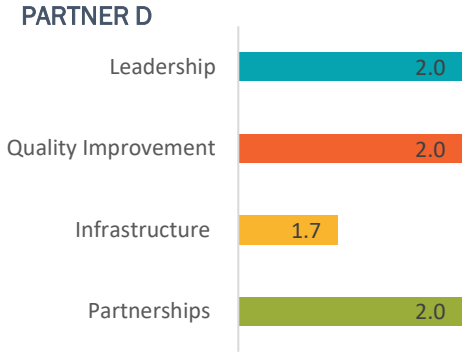
DOMAIN SCORES (BY PARTNER)

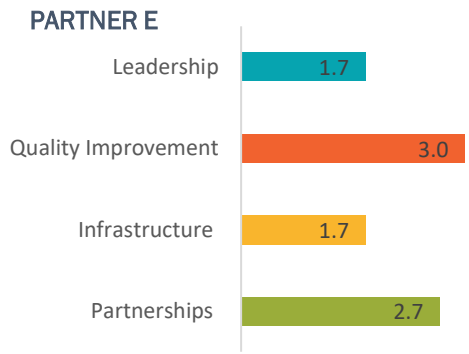
Domain scores for Partners A-F are presented below:

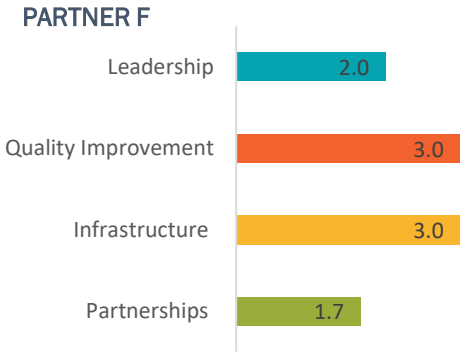






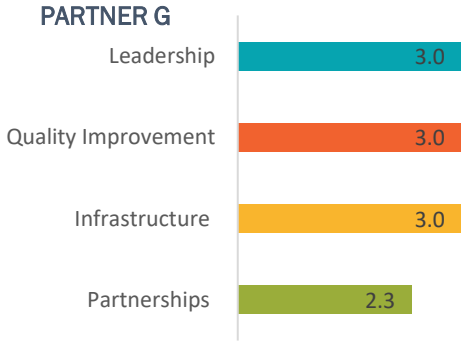


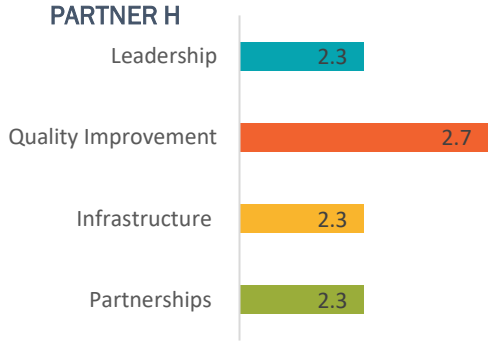


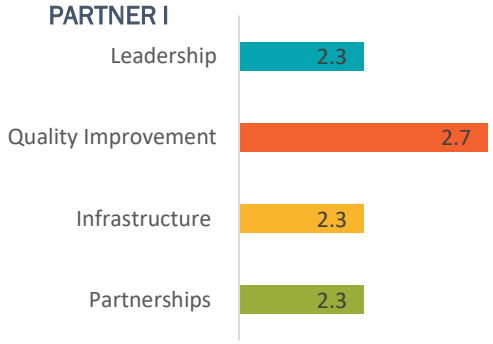


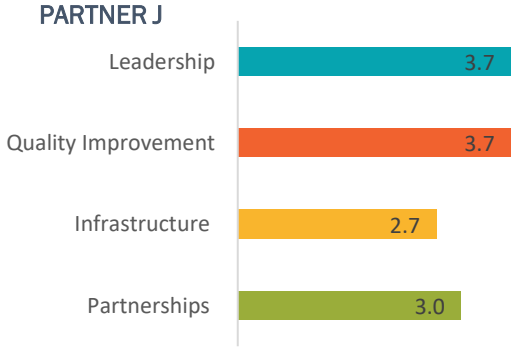
DOMAIN SCORES (BY PARTNER)

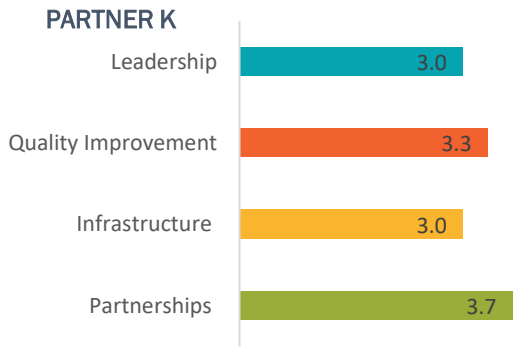
Domain scores for Partners G-K are presented below:





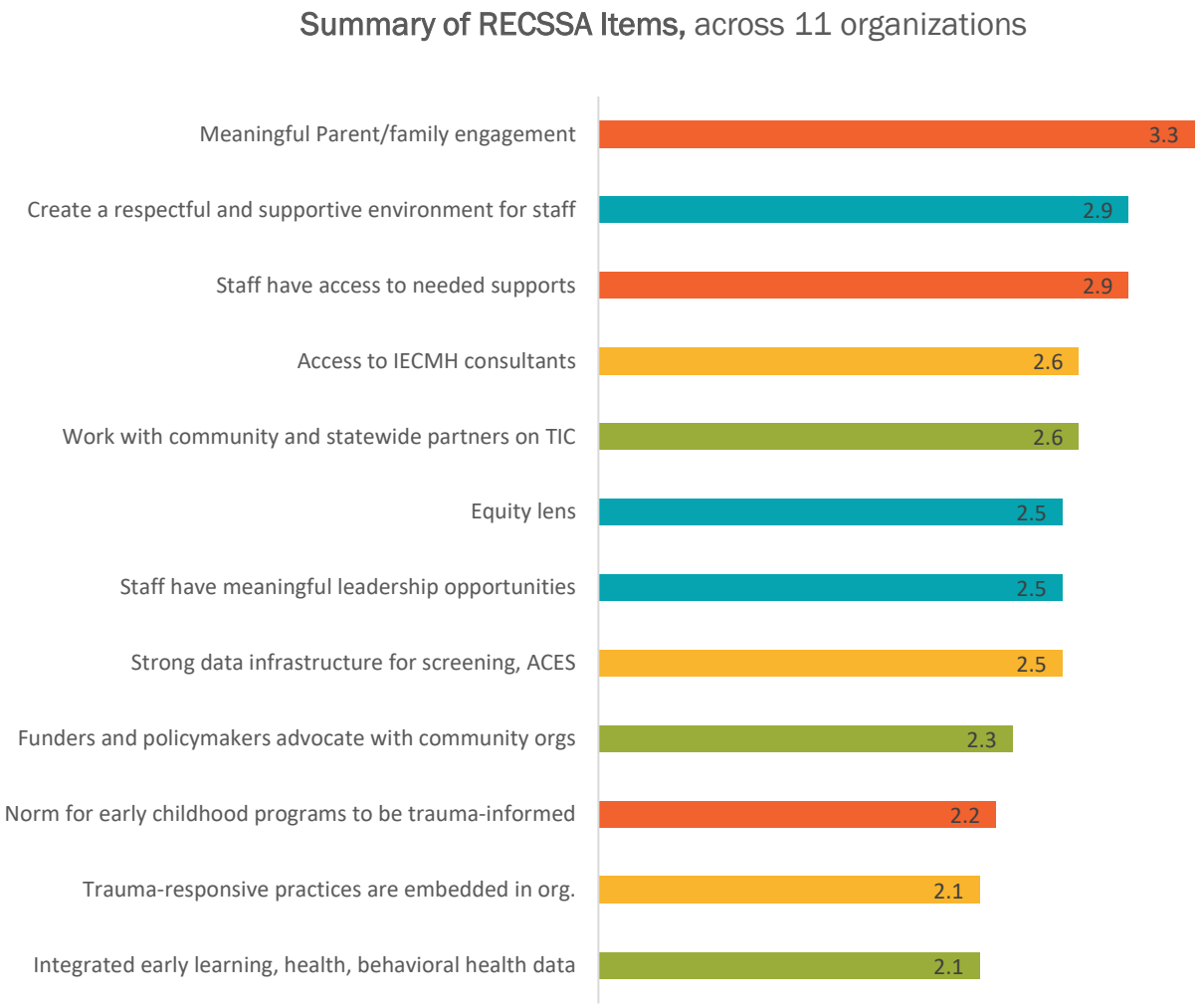






ITEM SCORES (OVERALL)

This final chart shows RECSSA item scores for the 11 partner organizations. The item with the highest score was on "*meaningful family engagement*" (quality improvement domain).



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Partners received their own tailored RECSSA data summary sheet that included both the aggregate scores and their organization-specific scores. They were encouraged to review the data together as a team to talk about where they've been, understand the current state of their system, and make informed strategic decisions moving forward. We provided the following reflection questions to help guide the conversation:

- **What does the data tell you about your organization's systems development over time?** Where are you seeing success/growth? Where is there still room for improvement?
- **What are strengths that can be leveraged?** Are there existing opportunities to incorporate these data (e.g., strategic planning, board meeting, community meeting, etc.)
- **Within each domain, what indicators stand out to you when interpreting the data?**
- **What contextual considerations/factors are important to keep in mind when looking at the data?** What has happened in your organization and/or community that have contributed to these findings?