

THE VILLAGE

TIKES Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

A quarterly newsletter providing insight and support for the village of caregivers in Louisiana.



TIKES News

- In June our T-MHCs and TIKES teams proudly advocated for early childhood mental health at Children's Day at the Capitol.



- We are thrilled to welcome Nicole de la Fuente, LCSW, Latreca Harrell, LMSW, and Jody Mann, LMSW to our consultation team!
- **What's next?** Catch our TIKES consultants, Ginger Hisaw and Kirsten Long, at the CCAL Fall Education Conference in September as they share how to build a strong foundation for school readiness—starting in the infant room and beyond!

TIKES TIPS

Advocacy isn't just about big events at the Capitol—it happens every day in our early childhood programs. Here are simple ways you can advocate:

- When working with families receiving early intervention services, share your insight and experience. Giving families the right language and tools helps them navigate systems long after they leave your care.
- If Early Steps or another provider visits your classroom, let them know they're welcome to work inside the classroom. This supports the child's access to services in their natural environment and helps teachers build skills too.
- When a parent isn't ready to pursue services you've recommended, stay patient and connected. A trusting relationship, where families feel seen and validated, can be the key to helping them take the next step—when they're ready.

Advocacy can be quiet but powerful. Every conversation and collaboration matters!

How did TIKES services
get started?



Answer on page 3



It takes a village to raise a child,
We're here to support the village.

Stories from the Village



Jacqie Johnson, LCSW
New Orleans, TIKES Mental Health
Consultant

Advocating for families can take many forms. For example, an early learning center that had previously completed a round of mental health consultation with Jacqie Johnson reached out to her for a follow-up visit after a family voiced concerns about their child's behavior at home. Although the center's teachers had no concerns about the child's development or behavior in the classroom, they still contacted Jacqie to support the family—demonstrating thoughtful and proactive advocacy.

Jacqie connected with the child's caregiver and learned, through a heartfelt conversation, that the family had recently experienced a significant and unexpected loss. She created a safe space for the caregiver to express their grief and validated the emotional toll it was taking. Through their conversation, the caregiver gained insight into how the family's stress might be impacting their young child. By recognizing the caregiver's perspective, Jacqie helped strengthen their capacity to advocate for their family. Feeling heard boosted the caregiver's confidence in seeking help, especially from mental health professionals. Jacqie ensured all voices were heard and successfully connected the family to counseling services for both children and adults. Thanks to her clinical expertise and the center's thoughtful, proactive advocacy, the family received the support they needed.

This story highlights how powerful it can be when the adults not only advocate for children, but also recognize and respond to the needs of families by reaching out to trusted community resources..

The Origin of TIKES

“ Advocates for early childhood education had been working with state leaders in the early 2000s to expand access to quality early care and education; however, it was after Hurricane Katrina, 20 years ago this month, that as part of rebuilding southern Louisiana there was renewed vigor in creating a system of early care and education (ECE) that benefited all children. Early childhood stakeholders from across the state including ECE owners, directors, and teachers, parents, policymakers, and mental health professionals came together and created the first state rating system that had early childhood mental health consultation as a primary support. What is now the TIKES program, was piloted in New Orleans in 2006 and expanded statewide in 2007. Along with our support partners at Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Louisiana Children and Family Services, Louisiana Department of Education, and Early Childhood Networks, we are so proud of the ECE system that has been nurtured and developed here in the Pelican State. We look forward to continuing to work with ECE professionals and families to develop our next generation of Louisiana citizens. ”



TIKES directors, Allison Trigg and Angela Keyes, at Children's Day at the Capital in 2017

Allison Trigg, PhD
Executive Director

More to Explore

Want to learn more about how to advocate for children and families in Louisiana? Here are a few trusted resources supporting early childhood and families.

- **LPIC** – Learn how the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children advocates for state funding and policies that support early childhood care and education. policyinstitute.la.org
- **EarlySteps** – Louisiana's early intervention system offers free support for children birth to 3 with developmental delays. ldh.la.gov
- **Families Helping Families** – A statewide network providing advocacy, training, and support for families of children with disabilities. fhfla.org
- **Louisiana Partnership for Children & Families** – Focuses on policy and systems advocacy for child well-being across the state. They host webinars, events, and legislative updates. lapartnership.org

The Cozy Corner

Advocating for children begins with honoring your own needs. When we speak up for ourselves with kindness and clarity, we model healthy boundaries, emotional regulation, and self-worth.

Try this simple practice: "I Need + Why It Matters" Statement. Use this formula to check in with yourself or communicate with others:



"I need a moment to regroup so I can show up with calm."



"I need help managing this transition so I can stay grounded."



"I need clarity on this expectation so I can do my best work."

Whether you're naming a need to a colleague, a friend, a family member, or just reminding yourself, this quiet act of self-advocacy protects your energy and helps you keep showing up with care.

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