

CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Over the past 10 years, the federal government has made a substantial investment (i.e., \$12,350,00) in Kariñu through two separate grant initiatives, one of which ended in 2016 and the current grant which will end on September 30, 2019. As a result, Guam's young children and their families now have access to a comprehensive System of Care that promotes young child wellness, helps prevent delays in children's development, and provides interventions for children experiencing challenging behaviors and mental health problems. At the same time, ongoing systemic issues related to the Government of Guam personnel and procurement systems have had a negative impact on the program and its ability to make the most of federal dollars. These included extensive delays in hiring service delivery staff, the inability of qualified individuals to be interviewed for positions, obstacles to contracting with local community based organizations, and the timely procurement of equipment and materials to support service delivery.

Beginning in FY2016, some local funding has supported Kariñu's early childhood clinical services but not without additional challenges, including delays in renewing personnel actions for two highly trained early childhood mental health clinicians and challenges related to converting limited-term appointments into classified positions. Moving forward, it is critical to ensure highly trained staff are retained. Addressing these issues is an important aspect of sustainability planning and, most urgent is identifying funding streams to ensure Kariñu continues to operate after its current federal five-year grant ends September 30, 2019.

James Heckman, a Nobel laureate in economics, estimates that the return on investment in early childhood programs is between 6 – 10%. Early intervention promotes school success and completion, reduces crime, and promotes adult wellness; resulting in a healthier and more productive society. Research tells us that children exposed to poverty and trauma are at risk for poor outcomes across the life span and local data demonstrates that high numbers of Guam's young children are especially vulnerable. In a time when our island is facing so many social problems and economic challenges, we can pay now or pay more later.

Dr. Heckman's research is especially compelling. He says, ***“The real question is how to use available funds wisely. The best evidence supports the policy prescription: Invest in the very young.”*** Investing in sustaining Kariñu, is an investment in the future of our island community.

What is Early Childhood Mental Health?



- The social emotional and behavioral well-being of infants, toddlers, young children and their families
- The developing capacity to experience, regulate, and express emotions
- The ability to form close, secure relationships
- The capacity to explore the environment and learn

-From Zero to Three Organization

What Families Have Shared About Kariñu

“Being in Kariñu is such a blessing for our family. All the support they give, they are awesome. I’ve gained another family and felt in a right group of people.”

“The most helpful thing they did was explained different ways on how to help our child...how to understand and handle our child’s behavior.”

“Being part of the services has given me confidence as a parent and family/household”

Contact Kariñu at 478-5400

www.karinu.org



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Guam's Early Childhood System of Care



Community Report
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INTRODUCTION TO GUAM’S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM OF CARE



Kariñu is Guam’s Early Childhood System of Care and the only program on island that specifically addresses the social emotional development and mental health needs of young children ages birth – five years. A System of Care is a special way of meeting the behavioral health needs of children and families. It is based on the belief that services should be community-based, child-centered and family driven, and culturally and linguistically responsive. Kariñu was initially funded in 2009 by a six year federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and focused on addressing the mental health needs of young children with diagnosable behavioral health problems and those who were considered “at risk.” Under this grant, Kariñu provided mental health clinical and support services to over 300 young children and their families.

Evaluation data demonstrated that over time, these children displayed fewer challenging behaviors; caregivers learned new parenting skills; and nearly 1/3 of caregivers reported significantly less stress. Also, numerous systems change activities were conducted: 53 trainings for providers; three local social workers gained licensure as clinicians with special training in early childhood mental health; 49 interpreters gained skills related to cultural competence, and Kariñu established key partnerships with other programs to ensure children and families experienced coordinated care and smooth transitions.

In 2014, both as a sustainability strategy (i.e., Kariñu’s initial federal funding was due to end in 2016) and in recognition of the importance of prevention for young child wellness, Kariñu applied for and was awarded a second grant from SAMHSA (Project LAUNCH – Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children’s Health). This allowed Kariñu to expand its services to include prevention services for all children birth – five years of age and, with the addition of some local funding, continue to provide clinical interventions for children with more intensive behavioral health needs. At present, Kariñu provides the following services through the Southern and Northern Community Health Centers:

1. Developmental screening
2. Enhanced home visitation
3. Family strengthening and parenting skills education
4. Integration of behavioral health and primary care
5. Early childhood mental health consultation and clinical services

Kariñu has touched the lives of some of Guam’s most vulnerable children and families and yet its future is uncertain. Federal funding will end September 30, 2019, and the current level of local funding is not sufficient to sustain the program. There is an urgent need for the community to identify the resources to ensure Kariñu continues to be there for Guam’s children and families.



WHY PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION MATTER

The science of early childhood and neuroscience tells us that early experiences, particularly young children’s relationships with their parents and caregivers, literally shape the architecture of the developing brain. Nurturing and responsive interactions build healthy brain architecture and are the foundation for learning, behavior, and health. Social emotional development is especially important, as it lays the foundation for all later learning.

Exposure to extreme or repeated trauma, stressors, and/or disruptions in the child-parent relationship can affect young children’s ability to self-regulate, experience and manage emotions, and form relationships. Children exposed to maltreatment, parental depression and/or mental illness, domestic violence, and poverty are especially vulnerable. Problems in children’s social emotional development are often indicators of early, as well as future, mental health problems, which can result in poor health and outcomes throughout the lifespan. Guam’s high rates of substance abuse, suicide, family violence, and crime are indicators that many of our children and families are in need. Caregivers receiving Kariñu home visitation services were asked about their children’s exposure to trauma. Forty-one percent (41%) reported that their child had witnessed/experienced something that could cause serious harm to them or others. Clearly, many of Guam’s young children are at risk.

The good news is that early intervention works. The developing brain is incredibly resilient and there are proven strategies to address young children’s social emotional development and mental health. Kariñu’s approach to helping young children is grounded in this knowledge and reflects best practice strategies for young child wellness.

SOME SOBERING DATA

1. Nationally, approximately 10 – 15% of typically developing preschool children have chronic mild to moderate levels of behavior problems. Fewer than 10% of these children receive any services to address their needs.
2. Young children displaying challenging behaviors:
 - are more likely to be rejected by their peers
 - receive less positive feedback
 - do worse in school
 - are less likely to be successful in kindergarten
3. Guam’s young children are at increased risk:
 - Less than half (47%) of children screened were developing typically
 - Nearly half of all children ages 3 – 5 who were screened had scores that indicate social/emotional or behavioral problems that require additional assessment or intervention



GUAM’S EARLY CHILDHOOD COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

Kariñu is part of Guam’s Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) which was initially established in 2005 through federal funding for Project Tinituhon (The Beginning). The Guam Early Learning Council (ELC) provides leadership to the ECCS to build and integrate systems; improve coordination and alignment of early childhood programs/services and workforce development; leverage resources; and collect, share, and use data. All early childhood programs and initiatives report to the ELC through quarterly meetings. The ELC is established in statute (P.L. 31-62) and through December 2018 was co-chaired by the First Lady of Guam and the Early Childhood Consultant for the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (CEDDERS). Per P.L. 31-62, members of the ELC are appointed by the Governor of Guam and represent key child serving agencies, including government agencies (directors and agency heads) and private organizations directly and indirectly involved in supporting young children wellness and school readiness.

The work of the ECCS is accomplished through four voluntary Early Childhood Workgroups: (1) Early Promotion and Identification; (2) Family Engagement; (3) Early Care and Education; and (4) Social Emotional Wellness. Workgroup members include program administrators, managers, and service providers from across Guam’s early childhood programs and initiatives, as well as programs that support the families of young children. For almost 20 years, the ELC and Early Childhood Workgroups have collaborated to build, improve, coordinate and integrate services for Guam’s young children and their families and has accomplished a great deal.



KEY MILESTONES

- Development and island wide adoption of the Universal Referral Form (URF)
- Development and implementation of the Island-wide Developmental and Behavioral Screening System (iDBSS)
- Promoting cross agency professional development for Guam’s public health and early care and education workforce
- P.L. 31-73 establishing rules and regulations for child care facilities and group child care homes
- Implementation of the Neni 3-1-1 warm line
- Establishment of the Multiagency Case Review Team to address the needs of children with complex needs and multiagency involvement