

## Project Overview

The present study investigates ways Early Head Start (EHS) home visitors' (HV) participation in a Professional Learning Community may contribute to growth in their Infant Mental Health (IMH) knowledge and emotional regulation, and confidence to implement these competences into their practice.

**Professional learning communities** have been recognized as a professional development design that supports participants' ability to work collaboratively (Hallam et al., 2015), better use instructional practices (Tam, 2015), and enhance learner success (Vescio et al., 2008).

**Partnering with Peers** was created to support EHS HVs development of their IMH knowledge over 12-weeks through guided lectures, community sharing and, real-world applications.

We investigated how **Partnering with Peers (PWP)**, a professional learning community, supports EHS HVs developing IMH knowledge and emotional regulation.

## Participants

This study includes 19 EHS HVs from 6 sites throughout Allegheny County.

(N=19)	M	SD	Min	Max
Age	41.74	11.80	25.00	60.00
Years at Site	4.45	4.70	1.00	21.00
<b>Race</b>				
Black	9 (47%)			
White	9 (47%)			
Biracial	1 (6%)			
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	19 (100%)			

## Measures

Surveys were used to collect information before the start of PWP (Time 1) and after (Time 2) on the following scales:

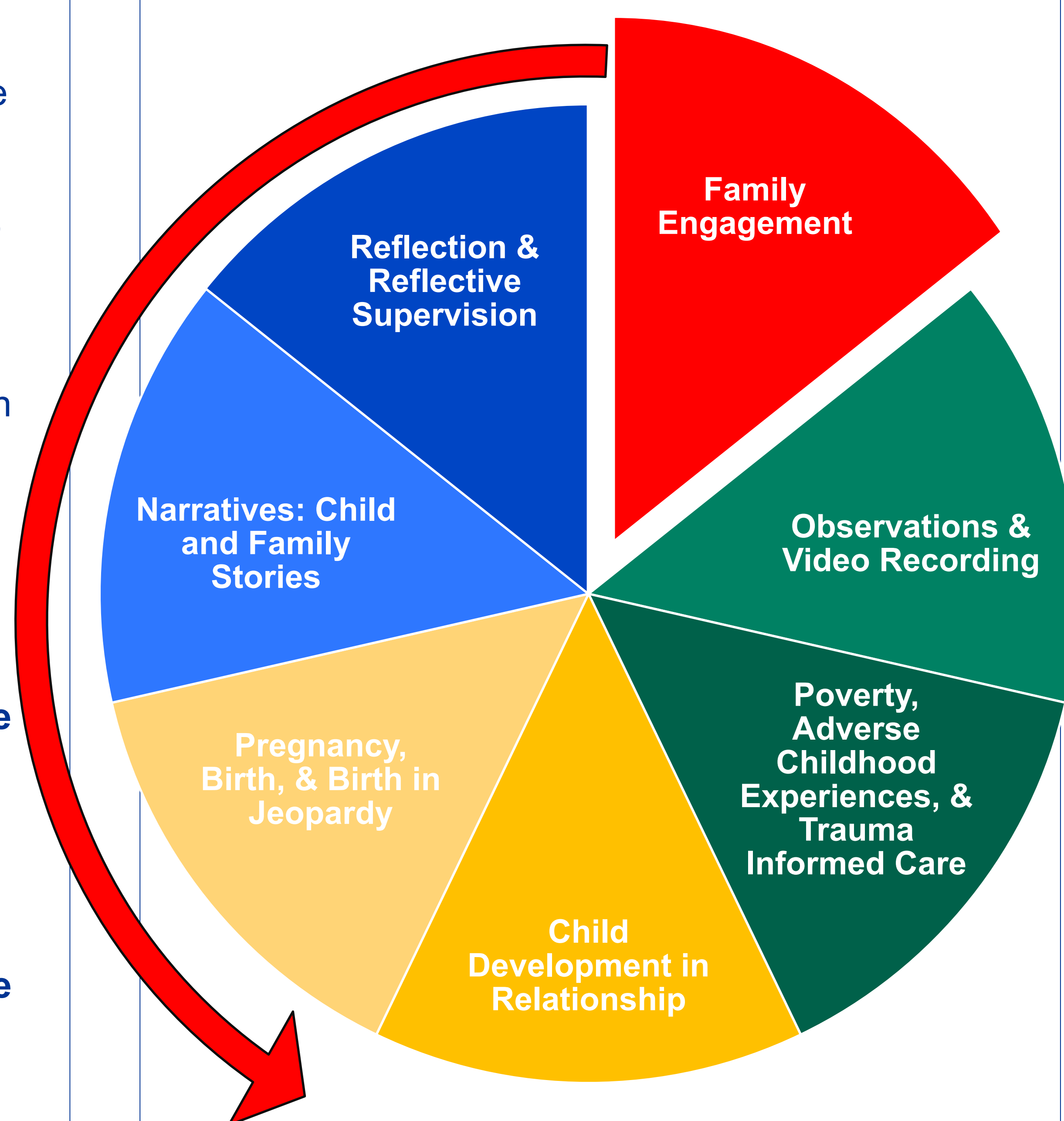
### Infant Mental Health Confidence

- 23-items; developed by authors.
- Scale ranges from not at all confident to totally confident (1-4;  $\alpha = .98$ ).

### Emotional Regulation at Work

- 8-items; adapted from Taylor et al., 2016.
- Scale ranges from not at all confident to totally confident (1-5;  $\alpha = .85$ ).

## Partnering with Peers Lesson Topics



## Example Lesson Components

As a professional learning community, PWP aims to create:

- Collaborative culture
- Compassionate community
- Collective responsibility
  - Group norms
  - Showing up
  - Being your authentic self
  - Getting to know each other deeply

**Family Engagement**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ask:</b></p> <p>What are the characteristics of a person you would allow in your home once a week to be with you and your family?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wonder:</b></p> <p>-- Noticing and inquiring -- Accepting, <i>not</i> judging -- Discovering, <i>not</i> assuming -- Staying open, <i>not</i> rushing to conclusions</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflect on Positionality:</b></p> <p><i>Turn our critical lens both inward and outward.</i></p> <p>-- How is your knowledge "situated"?</p> <p>-- How is what you see shaped by where you stand?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Center Race, Identity and Culture:</b></p> <p>-- How does this relate to observations and family engagement?</p> <p>-- Angels and Ghosts in the Nursery.</p>

## Insights from an EHS HV

"PWP helped me to organize and solidify my understanding of IMH."

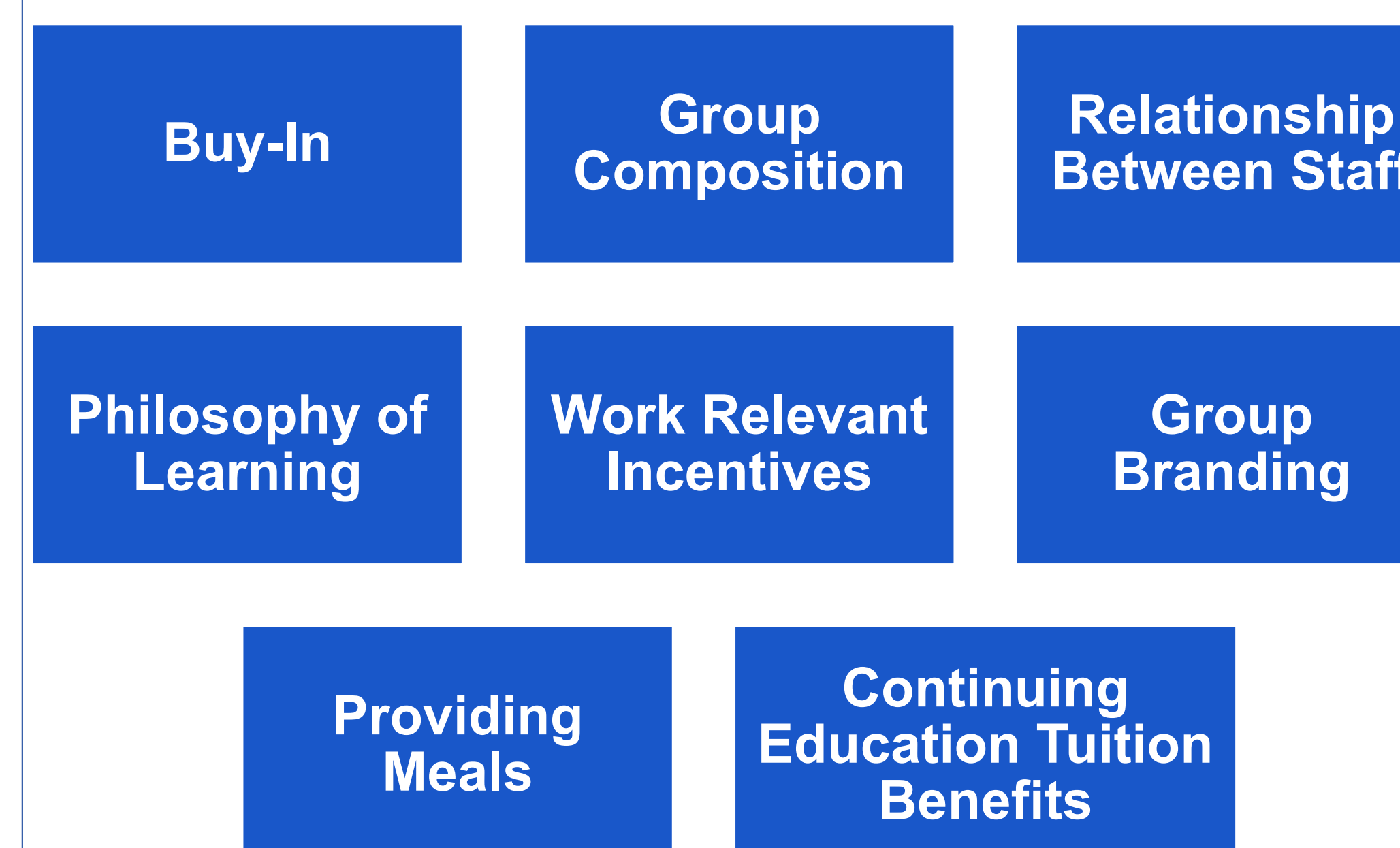
"In PWP, we studied the impact of birth stories, attachment, adverse childhood experiences, and intergenerational transmission of experiences. Understanding the roles these topics play in building a person, helps the home visitor to see the whole picture of the family that was put in motion long before the home visitor meets the family for the first time."

"Understanding the family's backstory leads to empathy, which leads to building a relationship with them."

"My favorite part of PWP was being able to engage in constructive discussions with my peers."



## Lessons Learned



## Research Questions & Results

**RQ1: What is the nature and variability of EHS HVs ratings of their IMH competences and emotional regulation?**

- PWP participants identified that they felt fairly confident in both their ability to use IMH competencies and emotional regulation (Time 1), which increased to highly confident after completion of PWP (Time 2). For full results see Tables 2 and 3 via QR code.

(N=19)	M	SD
<b>IMH Confidence</b>		
Time 1	3.21	0.60
Time 2	3.72	0.42
<b>Emotional Regulation</b>		
Time 1	4.03	0.80
Time 2	4.51	0.60

**RQ2: How does EHS HV IMH confidence relate to their emotional regulation?**

- EHS HVs IMH confidence was significantly related to emotional regulation ( $\beta = .94, p < 0.00$ ).

**RQ3: Does participation in PWP relate to increases in EHS HVs IMH confidence and emotional regulation?**

- Both HVs IMH competences ( $p < 0.00$ ), and their emotional regulation ( $p < 0.01$ ) significantly increased.

## Implications for Applied Practice

- The importance of providing ongoing professional development as an essential component of any home visiting program.
- Creating an environment for home visitors to grapple with IMH topics and practices.
- Establishing home visiting as a unique system for providing children and families early care and services AND home visitors as educated, informed professionals.

The current study offers insights to how a professional learning community can be used to support the development of EHS HVs IMH confidence and emotional regulation to implement this knowledge into practices with children and families.

Scan me!

