**Definitions and Considerations for Community Data Review**

**Important Definitions**

**…..Early childhood mental health (ECMH)** is the optimal growth and social-emotional, behavioral, and cognitive development of the young child in the context of the unfolding relationship between child and parent.”

(Source: Early Childhood Mental Health: A Report to Nebraska

March 2002)

**Social-Emotional Development** is defined as the developing capacity of the young child to:

-experience, regulate, and express emotions

-form close & secure relationships

-explore the environment & learn

All occur in the context of a caregiving environment that includes family, community and cultural expectations.

**Responsive relationships with consistent primary caregivers** help build positive attachments that support healthy social-emotional development. These relationships form the foundation of mental health for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. **The mental health of young children is intimately and inextricably linked to the well-being of their caregivers** (i.e., parents, guardians, teachers, and other caregivers).

**Considerations when reviewing community data:**

* Factors that may affect child outcomes (educational level of parents, teen parents, poverty, mental health diagnosis (caregiver), incarceration, single parent households, living wage, etc.)
* Screening with services available to provide intervention if needed (could include maternal depression screening, social-emotional screens, substance abuse, domestic violence, etc.)
* Adult mental health services and supports
* Individual parent-child therapy services available
* Parenting supports/educational opportunities (e.g. respite, parenting classes, home visiting)
* High quality child care availability
* School supports