

## **Project LAUNCH seeks to enhance the skills of professionals working with young children**

Scholarships are now available through Project LAUNCH to assist professionals working with young children and their families.

PA Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health), is a SAMHSA-funded initiative piloted by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS). LAUNCH is designed to support children birth to eight years of age, their families, and pregnant women, and focuses on many prevention and promotion strategies, including mental health consultation in early care and education.

As part of the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) aspect of the LAUNCH initiative, up to 40 scholarships are available for professionals seeking specialized training to support the promotion of infant mental health principles, prevention of related disorders, intervention through supports for affected children and families, and relationship-based treatment, when needed. Scholarship applicants must have a high school diploma or GED, but do not require any advanced or specialized degrees or training. Once selected, scholarship recipients will enroll in any one of eight individual courses or a four-course series leading to the Supporting Early Social and Emotional Development Credential from University of Minnesota's Center for Early Education & Development. All courses are delivered online.

"Infant and early childhood mental health is the cornerstone of healthy development. Families with young children are served by numerous, typically fragmented systems, and the Project LAUNCH scholarships are providing an opportunity to bring these cross-sector professionals together to learn about the critically important thread that binds their work," said Kim Eckel, young child wellness coordinator in Integrated Program Services (IPS).

The deadline to apply for the scholarships is June 30th. To learn more or apply for the scholarship, please visit <http://bit.ly/LAUNCHimhOnline18-19> or contact Patrick Webster at [websterp2@upmc.edu](mailto:websterp2@upmc.edu).