



Monroe County United Ministries

827 West 14th Court
Bloomington, IN 47404
812.339.3429
www.mcum.org

We have an Early Childhood Therapist!

Compass is proud to employ a full time early childhood mental health therapist who can provide services to your child while they are here in our care, **at no cost to you**. This is a voluntary service. Our therapist focuses on the child and family's strengths through positive reinforcement as well as behavioral and cognitive modification.

The foundation for sound mental health is built early in life, as early experiences—which include children's relationships with parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers, and peers—shape the architecture of the developing brain. Sound mental health in the first few years of life provides an essential foundation of stability that supports all other aspects of human development—from the formation of friendships and the ability to cope with adversity to the achievement of success in school, work, and community life later in life.

Significant mental health issues do occur in children this age, and it can have social, developmental, physical and academic consequences as well as mental health issues such as anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Early intervention and prevention can help to strengthen their development by building resilience, protective factors, coping skills, self-regulation skills, relationships and identifying needs in the family.

Therapy will be conducted through therapeutic play, because this is how a child at this age communicates and learns. Play provides many benefits, including stress relief, provides positive connections, improves self-esteem, teaches emotion regulation skills, etc. It also allows children to practice these skills. Our sessions help your child (depending on age, developmental ability and individual need) learn to...:

- become more responsible for behaviors and coping skills.
- problem solve.
- regulate his or her emotions, including relaxation skills and anger management techniques.
- cultivate empathy and respect for the thoughts and feelings of others.
- learn new social skills and interpersonal skills for use at school and at home.
- develop an improved self-esteem.

Children may benefit from therapy if they...:

- have frequent tantrums or defiant behavior.
- have aggressive behaviors such as biting or hitting.
- are experiencing difficulties in school or childcare.
- have difficulty connecting with either peers or adults.
- exhibit fear, worry or anxiety, including separation anxiety.
- have eating or sleeping problems.
- are struggling with an adjustment such as the birth of a sibling, entering school or day care, etc.
- appear withdrawn or disconnected, or is experiencing regressive behaviors.
- are coping with a recent separation or divorce in the family.
- have experienced trauma such as domestic violence, abuse, hospitalization, etc.

Next Steps:

If you have any questions about early childhood mental health therapy, our program, or want to get to know our therapist to determine if this might be a good fit for your child, please contact our therapist, Megan, at (812) 339-3429 ex. 32 or mstahly@mcum.org for an initial assessment. Megan coordinates care with other agencies and can also help connect families with community resources, including MCUM's Self-Sufficiency Center.

Teachers are trained in referring children who may need individual support to Megan. If your child is referred, Megan will contact you. This is a voluntary service, which you are welcome to accept or decline.