

Health Committee



Co-Chairs: Sheila Caldwell & Elyse Pivnick

Description: Improve relationships with the NJ health system to improve lead poisoning prevention and offer better services for children affected by lead exposure.

Top priority: Improve access to blood lead level screening in NJ

Next steps:

- NJ American Academy of Pediatrics, pediatrician council meeting on August 28
- Meet with pediatricians, insurance providers, Medicaid
- Meet with NJDOH and local health departments
- Pursue legislative solutions



Virtua Pediatric Mobile Services Blood Lead Level Testing

Meet Your Presenter

Maria Emerson, MA, CCC-SLP, Director Rehabilitation Services, Pediatric and Community Based Services

- Contact: memerson@virtua.org or (609) 304-7176
- 31 years working with children, birth – 21 years old, throughout New Jersey
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Oversees Virtua Rehab Pediatric programs including Early Intervention, School Therapy, Pediatric Mobile Services, Good Foods to Grow, and Aqua Buddies with a dotted line to OP Pediatric Services, NICU and SCN
- Passionate about Health Equity and that **ALL** Children and Families have an equitable start



Why?

- The first 5 years of a child's life are critical periods in development.
- The neuroplasticity of the brain is the “Secret Ingredient”, the ability to rewire, relearn, and strengthen connections
- The recent interest in the early years has been prompted by growing awareness that what happens during this period of development has lifelong consequences for children's health and wellbeing.
- It has also been prompted by a growing understanding of how early disparities in children's functioning can develop and the problems that this can create for future education, employment and opportunities.
- This heightened awareness of the importance of the early years has led to many government initiatives, nationally and internationally.



Who?

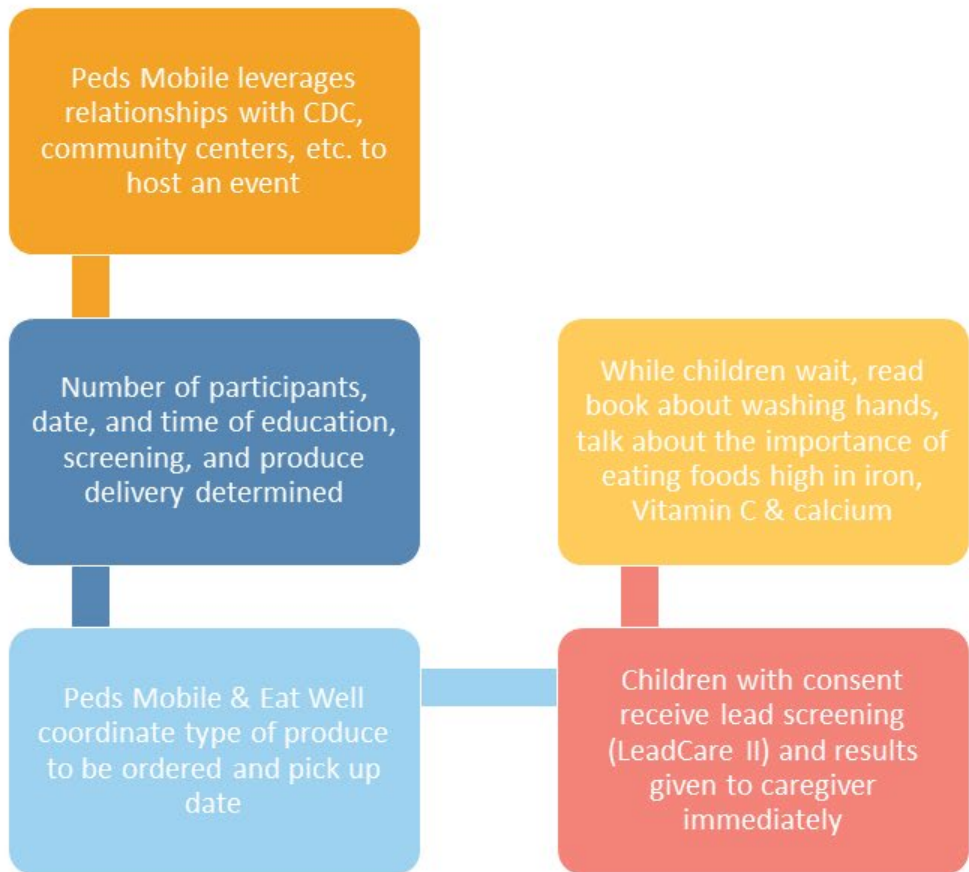
Children under 6 years old

Pregnant and lactating woman

Siblings of children (all ages) who had elevated BLL



The Program





How We Do It...



Collaboration & Community Buy-In



- Keys to Success:
 - Start by educating community “influencers”
 - Use trusted community members to spread the message
 - Hire Best People who are ENGAGED

