

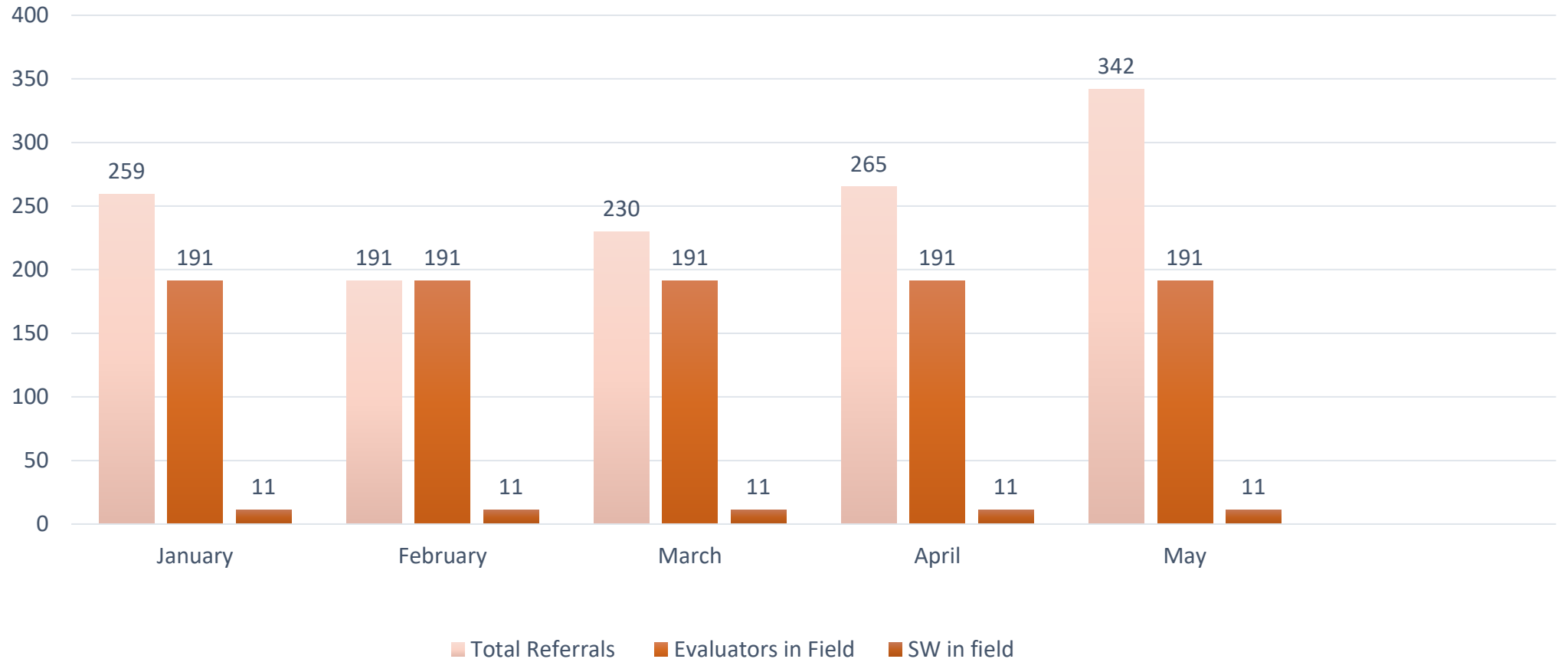
# Expanding Access to Social Emotional Assessments for Infants and Toddlers

July 22, 2024

# Problem

- Evaluations with social emotional concerns are taking longer to determine eligibility due to a shortage of mental health professionals (LCSW, psychologist) needed to conduct an assessment.
- We gathered information from Birth to Three programs to determine how much of a problem this is for programs and gather information on the effect that proposed solutions would have.

# Current Referrals January 2024 - May 2024



# Current Birth to Three Policy

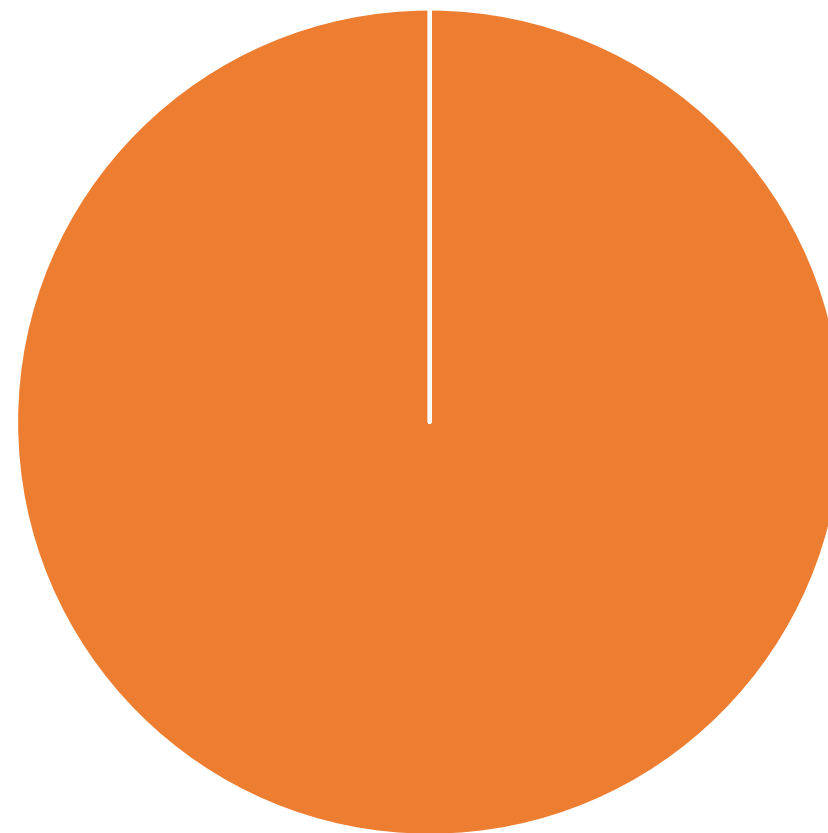
- Evaluation and Assessment Procedure, section 3.1.5, 4e states that "mental health clinicians include social worker, counselor, psychologist, other licensed mental health clinician." A mental health clinician must use a domain-specific tool prior to the child being found ineligible through the use of a multi-domain tool. (CT Birth to Three Evaluation and Assessment Procedure, effective 9/1/2024, page 16)

# Qualifications to administer DECA I/T

- According to the Devereaux Center for Resilient Children, the DECA I/T can be administered by professionals who have "formal training in the ethical administration, scoring, and interpretation of clinical assessments."
- This includes educators, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, and mental health clinicians with training specific to assessing children and with expertise in infant/child development.

## What's Happening Now

- Agencies will try to have a SW go out on the Initial Evaluation with a Social Emotional Concern.
- When a SW is not available, an additional assessment will need to be scheduled, delaying eligibility and start of services.



■ Always have an SW available in timely manner

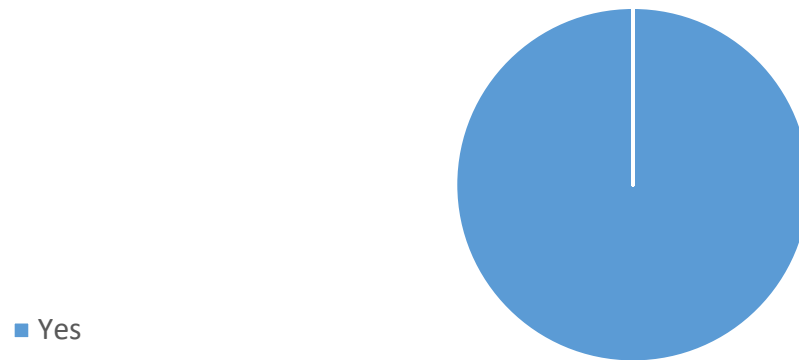
■ Yes, but the SW needed to Schedule an additional assessment AFTER Initial Evaluation

# What is currently happening...

- Evaluations are taking longer to schedule in order to send an LCSW.
- Evaluations are being scheduled with staff of other disciplines and an LCSW schedules another assessment sometime after the initial evaluation if needed, delaying the determination of eligibility.
- None of the responding programs have an LCSW with ample availability to schedule an initial evaluation within a few weeks.

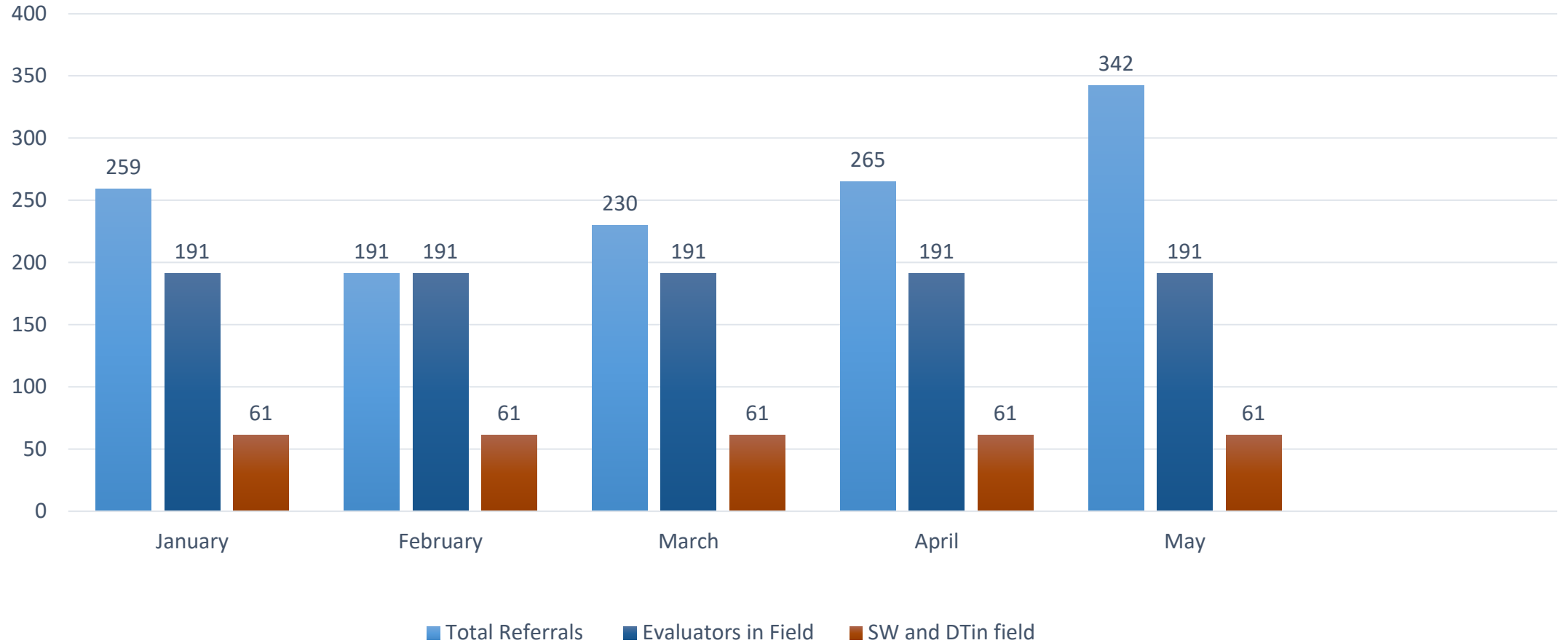
# These Solutions Will Accomplish

- 100% of responding programs felt that evaluations could be scheduled in a more timely manner if other disciplines were able to administer the DECA I/T or another social emotional assessment.





# Current Referrals January 2024-May 2024



# Qualifications of other Disciplines

- **Developmental Therapists**

- Promote young children's social and emotional competence and communication
- Proactively plan and implement function-based interventions to prevent and address challenging behaviors
- Identify and create opportunities for young children to engage in meaningful play experiences with others.

- **Occupational Therapists**

- Use meaningful activities to help children participate in what they need/want to do in order to promote physical and mental health.
- Strategies that help foster social emotional learning help children recognize and manage emotions, think about feelings and how they should act, and regulate behavior.

# Ease of Administering the DECA I/T

- The DECA I/T takes approximately 5-10 minutes to administer the paper version and about 3-5 minutes to administer the electronic version.
- Questions are answered by the parent or caregiver.
- It is easy to score quickly in the field.

# Training Available for the DECA I/T

- According to the Center for Resilient Children, training is not required to administer the DECA I/T.
- Recorded and live webinars are available to provide professional development on use of the DECA.

# Proposed Solutions Require a Policy Change

- Change the current policy to allow other disciplines to administer and score a domain-specific tool to measure social-emotional skills during evaluations, provided that staff member meets the requirements set forth by Birth to Three to conduct evaluations and by the test publisher for administration of their domain-specific tool.
  - For the DECA I/T, this includes any staff trained in the ethical administration, scoring, and interpretation of clinical assessments.