



Mental Health Newsletter

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What is Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC)?

Infant early childhood mental health consultation (I/ECMHC) is emerging as an evidence-based intervention for supporting young children's social/emotional development and addressing challenging behaviors. I/ECMHC is an intervention that teams a mental health professional with early care professionals, like a classroom teacher or home visitor, to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral health of children in early care and education programs.

Early childhood mental health consultation builds the capacity of staff, families, programs, and systems to prevent, identify, treat and reduce the impact of mental health problems among children from birth to age 6 and their families. (Adapted from Cohen & Kaufmann, 2000). The I/ECMHC consultant meets with early care and education professionals and families to explore strategies to help children develop social and emotional skills.



Head Start's Commitment to I/ECMHC

Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) has a long-standing commitment to I/ECMHC. HS/EHS Program Performance Standards specify HS/EHS programs must “secure the services of mental health professionals on a schedule of sufficient frequency to enable the timely and effective identification of and intervention in family and staff concerns about a child’s mental health.” Programs must also enlist the services of a licensed mental health professional to provide regular onsite mental health consultation. The minimum requirements for this consultation, as outlined in the Performance Standards include the following tasks:

- Design and implement program practices responsive to the identified behavioral and mental health concerns of an individual child or group of children
- Promote children’s mental wellness by providing group and individual staff and parent education on mental health issues
- Assist in providing special help for children with atypical behavior or development
- Utilize other community mental health resources, as needed [1304.24(a)(3)i-iv].



What's New/Relevant on ECLKC

Infant early childhood mental health consultation (I/ECMHC) online professional development module:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/mental-health/ec-mental-health-consultation/mh-consultation-tool>

The I/ECMHC learning module highlights the role of the I/ECMHC consultant. The interactive module is divided into lessons with realistic scenarios and short video clips. Each lesson has its own resource area designed to provide extensive support around I/ECMHC. Revisit it as needed to gain a better understanding of your role as a Head Start I/ECMHC consultant.



Outcomes associated with I/ECMHC

A variety of positive outcomes are associated with I/ECMHC.

Child and family outcomes associated with I/ECMHC:

- Reduced preschool suspensions and expulsions
- Decreased problem behaviors, especially externalizing behaviors
- Increased gains on socialization, emotional competence, and communication
- Improved social skills and peer relationships
- Reduced missed work days for parents

Staff outcomes associated with I/ECMHC:

- Demonstrated improvements in teaching feelings and managing children's behavior
- Engaged families in home visiting
- Improved staff interactions with children
- Increased the frequency of home visits with families
- Improved CLASS scores
- Improved home visiting retention

Program level outcomes associated with I/ECMHC:

- Increased in supportive policies and reflective supervision
- Reduced staff feelings of stress and burnout
- Reduced staff turnover
- Improved children's attachment/resilience
- Improved children's school readiness

Systems level outcomes associated with I/ECMHC:

- Increased in ongoing developmental screening with referral and follow-up
- Mental health problems identified earlier
- Specialty services such as early intervention or mental health services referred more appropriately.

OUTCOMES



Make Sure to Watch these I/ECMHC Webinars

Professional Development in I/ECMHC Webinar:

Examine effective infant/early childhood mental health consultation (I/ECMHC) in this webinar. Presenters discuss I/ECMHC outcomes and share implementation strategies. The webinar also highlights a new professional development resource for I/ECMH consultants. Watch video clips of reflective practice and see mental health consultants talk about their role.

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/mental-health/ec-mental-health-consultation/mh-consultation-webinar.html>

What Works: A Series on Effective Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation.

This webinar series includes 8 recorded webinars focused on critical elements of I/ECMHC including: workforce development; high quality and effective service; readiness for I/ECMHC ; evaluation and infrastructure.

<http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/90642.html#PreviousWebinars>

I/ECMHC Resources

1. [Center for Early Childhood Mental Health](#)
2. [What Works? A Study of Effective ECMHC Consultation Programs](#)
3. [Research Synthesis: Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#)
4. [Family Connections: A Systematic Mental Health Consultation and Professional Development Model](#)
5. [Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders, 2005 Series, Volume 1](#)
6. [A Training Guide for the Early Childhood Services Community: Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders, 2015 Series, Volume 2](#)

Other Resources:

1. [Early Childhood Consultation Partnership](#)
2. [Mental Health Consultation in Early Care and Education](#)



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Early Childhood Health and Wellness

The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness welcomes your feedback on this newsletter issue as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to health@ecetta.info or call (888) 227-5125. Subscribe or view all issues of Health Services Newsletter on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/newsletters/newsletters.html>.

School readiness begins with health!