What is Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation?

Do you feel isolated as a family child care provider?

Do you want more support for your family child care home but don't know what's out there?

Do you find that little ones these days need a little bit more from you, and it wears you out sometimes?

Families in Illinois have been turning to Family Child Care Homes for decades as a source of trusted early learning and preparing children for their first experiences in schools, right in their neighborhood. Research learning about infants and young children's growth, and development continues to evolve over time. Consultants collaborate with you to develop shared goals and enhance the magical ways you teach and nurture little ones every day.

I/ECMHC: Slowing down to become more thoughtful, reflective, and self-aware:

Early Childhood Professionals working with Consultants report:

Children in their care as having more social-emotional strengths

Fewer behavioral concerns with children

Reduced stress associated with children's behavior

"My consultant was able to bring new ideas. It aided in team work and it definitely made my job easier and more effective. It also give us extra useful resources."

Caregiver Connections
Intake Coordinator
217.592.0389

caregiverconnections.org

bit.ly/IL-IECMHC

Scan the QR code

- Open the camera app
- Focus the camera on the QR code by gently tapping the code
- Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the action

Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

Mental Health Consultation In Illinois

What does an Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant do?

Provides a safe place to reflect on your concerns or challenges.

Listens carefully to understand the meaning of children's behaviors, and shares observations to partner with you on a plan to meet your program goals.
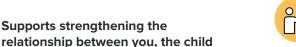
Explores stress management strategies to reduce burnout and staff turnover.

Supports strengthening the relationship between you, the child and the child's family.

Coordinate community-based referrals for developmental assessments.

Increase family retention.

Support providers/families to understand social-emotional development in young children.

Provides training and technical assistance based on areas you want to learn and grow your expertise.

Mental health consultation creates a safe and supportive space, where we can first unload, second think and explore what parts of the work we do are challenging and/or easy. In this context, we are able to process, accept and let go of the pieces that are not serving us; which in turn creates space for new possibilities as we can not give what we are not receiving.

"Once a new child is enrolled, we look at the entire family to help us better understand the needs of the child. Often, behavior is learned and can be corrected. We find this is a strength for us in our child care home, with the help of a Mental Health Consultant. We began working with children on various coping mechanisms, stress relief and "using our words". We help the kids work on, "Let us be a friend to each other before we get loud and act out". For other kids, "I'm going to the stress corner, or I just want to color or read a book". We get parents involved in using these tips at home as well. It may take some kids longer than others to use it but eventually, they all use it without being asked"

— Early Childhood Education and Care Professional

"Nearly 40% of ECEC programs that have excluded at least one child from their early learning program has never heard of mental health consultation."

— Kate Zinsser, PhD, University of Illinois at Chicago

How do I find an I/ECMHC?

As a family child care professional, you can access FREE Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in your community! To request training, technical assistance or Mental Health Consultation please visit the Caregiver Connections website at **caregiverconnections.org** or call 217.592.0389 to connect with a consultant in your community.

Based on Caregiver Connections 2022 Annual Child Care Provider Satisfaction Survey — 73% of providers reported that their consultant "provided me a space to feel heard and validated in the work I am doing with children and families".

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I/ECMHC: *Building Emotional Well-being, One Relationship at a Time*