



What is Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation?

Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC) is a prevention-based approach that pairs [an infant/early childhood] mental health consultant with adults who work with infants and young children in the different settings where they learn and grow, such as child care, preschool, home visiting, [Early/Head Start,] and early intervention... Mental health consultation is not about behavior modification. Nor is it therapy. Mental health consultation equips caregivers to facilitate children's healthy social and emotional development.

— Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation at Georgetown University

Governor's Office of Early
Childhood Development
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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



What I/ECMHC is?

PROMOTION/ PREVENTION FOCUSED

Accessing support
before a crisis



INDIRECT

Primarily working with
program staff



RELATIONSHIP-BASED

Working in collaboration
with program staff



CAPACITY BUILDING

Helping staff and leaders to
build self-efficacy



BIG PICTURE

Exploring common themes
across the program



What I/ECMHC is NOT?



THERAPY

Providing clinical
treatment



"FIXING THE CHILD"

Creating a behavioral
modification plan



COACHING

Supporting the goals of
the learner



SUPERVISION

Monitoring and managing
staff performance



A SOCIAL WORKER

Managing family cases
and referral to resources

Head Start Program Performance Standards with a Mental Health and Social-Emotional Focus



A pro-active focus on implementing a program wide culture of wellness that promotes mental health and social and emotional well-being of children, families and staff (1302.45) (1302.30)

- Supporting children, early childhood professionals and families before there is a crisis.



Requirements for programs to use mental health consultants to support children's mental health and social and emotional well-being (1302.45) (1302.91)

- This can be done by contracting with a qualified Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant on a part-time basis. Or by hiring a qualified Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant at your Head Start program.
- I/ECMHC listed on the Gateways Database, have at least master's degree in certain fields, specialized training, professional development, and experience working with young children age five and under.



The establishment of collaborative partnerships with child and adult mental health professionals; and (1302.46) (1302.53) (1302.93)

- Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is a part of the mental health continuum of promotion, prevention, intervention, and treatment.
- There may be times when a child, family, or early childhood professional might benefit from more long-term support that goes beyond the scope of the role of the Mental Health Consultant.



Emphasis on the prohibition of suspension and expulsion for challenging behaviors (1302.17) (1302.31)

- Short-term exclusions can have a lasting impact on a young child.
- The dynamic and comprehensive team at Head Start programs are built to be collaborative and to focus on the strengths within children, families, and communities.
- The Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant can facilitate opportunities with the team to reflect on what has worked in the past and explore strategies for the future.

Where do I find an Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant?

Please visit the [Gateways to Opportunity Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant Search](#) to locate a consultant working in your community. The database is a central place to locate a consultant in your community. Consultants are located across the state of Illinois, support is available in multiple languages, and the number of consultants continues to grow.