MN DHS Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation to Child Care

What is Mental Health Consultation (MHC)?

Mental Health Consultation is a mental health prevention service focused on building the adults' capacity to support children's emotional development and to prevent, identify or reduce mental health challenges (Zero to Three, 2017).

Fostering healthy early childhood development comes with joys and challenges. Mental Health Consultation includes a combination of reflective support (active listening, exploration of the provider's beliefs and feelings, and problem solving), training and skill building to promote the social and emotional health and wellbeing of not only young children and their families but the providers themselves. As providers experience support through relationship-based consultation, they have greater capacity to remain curious about, regulate and relate in healthy ways with the children and families they serve.

More about consultation in Minnesota:



Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in Minnesota - YouTube

What are Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation benefits?

For children

- Improved social skills and regulation
- Reduced challenging behaviors
- Reduced risk for expulsion

(Center of Excellence, 2023 ; Tidus et al., 2022)

For adults who work with children and families

- Improved knowledge of social-emotional development
- Improve interactions with children and greater confidence in managing child behavior
- Reduced stress and lower likelihood of turnover (preliminary evidence)

Who are the consultants?

Licensed mental health professionals (located throughout Minnesota) who honor participant's culture and lived experiences with specific training in:

- Early childhood mental health
- Trauma and healing
- Family system
- Reflective Consultation

When is consultation needed?

Consultation is voluntary and can be accessed for many reasons. Some early childhood service sites have an immediate need related to a child or staff and other sites are seeking professional development opportunities. Though services may begin around a specific concern, consultation is meant to be provided regularly and over time.

What to expect?

Once assigned a consultant, the site and consultant will co-create a plan for consultation.

- **Time:** At minimum monthly consultation sessions (see table below).
- **Schedule:** Regularly scheduled consultation sessions.
    - Schedule will be co-created by the consultant and site director/leaders.
    - Consultation is most effective when participants attend regularly.
- **Participants:** Any staff working with young children and families at the site. Site directors/leaders should have regular contact with the consultant.
- **Consultation may include**:
    - Small group consultation sessions.
    - Individual consultation sessions with educators/staff/leaders.

    and may also include:
    - Classroom consultation (consultant could accompany an educator on a home visit).
    - Child-specific consultation (with parent/caregiver written permission and collaboration).
    - Content-specific professional development (coordinated with the consultant).
    - System/Site -level consultation.

Cost?

Free. ECMHC is a State-funded service provided at no cost to participants.

Additional questions?

Contact the Minnesota Department of Human Service's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Coordinator: dhs.ecmh@state.mn.us

ECMH Consultation Service Types

Child Care Consultation Programs	Eligibility	Frequency, Duration & Format	Referral Process
Brief consultation to licensed providers	Any licensed child care provider	• 5 sessions (1-2 hours) • Virtual with limited in-person options available	Email: Teya.dahle@state.mn.us Or dhs.ecmh@state.mn.us
Consultation to Licensed Child Care	Licensed child care sites	• 1 year • 30-50 hours in-home child care • 50-100 hours center-based child care • In-person or virtual as mutually decided and/or safety permitted	Email: Teya.dahle@state.mn.us Or dhs.ecmh@state.mn.us
Consultation to non-licensed family friend and neighbor (FFN) child care providers	FFN providers connected to FFN grantees	• Monthly (2 hours) groups • Ongoing • Virtual with some in-person as mutually decided and/or safety permitted	Email: Teya.dahle@state.mn.us Or dhs.ecmh@state.mn.us
Consultation to child care directors groups	Directors/owners (often connected to other learning communities)	• Monthly (2 hours) • Duration based on group type. • Virtual (limited in-person options may be considered)	Email: Teya.dahle@state.mn.us Or dhs.ecmh@state.mn.us