



# Colorado's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program

Empowering Caregivers to Support the Healthy Social-Emotional Development of Infants & Children

## About Social-Emotional Development and Why it Matters for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers

In the same way that we nurture children's physical health — with healthy food, plenty of rest and exercise — it is also important to take care of their mental health. We can do this by supporting the social-emotional development of babies and young children. Social-emotional skills are learned over time with plenty of support from adults.



### INFANTS

Mental health for babies starts with a caregiver who is there, aware and cares. Caregivers can teach healthy social-emotional skills to babies by forming a special bond with them and being responsive to their needs. This helps them begin to develop a sense of themselves as individuals.



### TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

Toddlers and preschoolers need to have consistent boundaries communicated to them as they begin to explore their environments. Building social-emotional skills helps young children learn how to make friends, wait patiently and manage their emotions.

## Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Can Help Caregivers Support Social-Emotional Development & Address Challenging Behaviors

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION IS AVAILABLE AT **NO COST** TO EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS AND CAREGIVERS CARING FOR CHILDREN UP TO AGE SIX.



### Supports well-being for caregivers

All young children benefit when their caregivers are healthy and not too stressed. Consultants support the growth and well-being of caregivers, helping to:

- > **Reduce teacher, director and caregiver stress**
- > **Increase staff retention**



### Supports well-being for all children

Consultation increases the confidence and ability of early childhood professionals and caregivers to support healthy social-emotional development for all of the children they care for. With practice, the skills caregivers learn become more automatic, helping them to:

- > **Promote a warm and responsive care environment**
- > **Find and address mental health and developmental issues early**



### Addresses challenging behaviors

Consultants can also work with caregivers to support children who may be struggling. This helps to:

- > **Decrease behaviors adults find challenging**
- > **Reduce suspensions and expulsions**

Visit [MentalHealthStartsEarly.com](https://MentalHealthStartsEarly.com) or call the ECMH Support Line at (833)-ECMH411 to learn more.



## What it's Like to Work with an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant

Early Childhood Mental Health consultants have deep expertise in early childhood, social-emotional development and mental health. Consultants work directly with early childhood professionals and caregivers to support them in overseeing the well-being of the children in their care; consultants do not work directly with children, make a diagnosis or provide therapy.

Consultation begins with a short conversation between the early childhood professional or caregiver and a local consultant to discuss needs and helpful support. Services and training can be provided on-site at the program, remotely or at another convenient location.



### WORKING TOGETHER CLOSELY, CONSULTANTS CAN HELP CAREGIVERS IN THESE WAYS:

- › Professional development for caregivers, teachers and directors
- › Identify needs and work toward specific goals
- › Support for the classroom
- › Support for individual children
- › Workshops for families or professionals
- › Conduct developmental screenings
- › Resources and referrals to community services

### Learn more about what it is like to work with an ECMH consultant:

- › Take the eLearning course: Working With an ECMH Consultant — [www.coloradoshinespdis.com](http://www.coloradoshinespdis.com)
- › Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation - The Results Are Extraordinary — <https://bit.ly/3zcHbiB>

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learn more:



## When to Call an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant

### When everything is fine

All children benefit from early social-emotional and mental health promotion. When you build a relationship with your local consultant early on, you receive ongoing training and support.

### When you're feeling overwhelmed by the demands of caregiving

Consultants are trusted, reliable partners who can listen and help you identify the best ways to care for your own health and well-being.

### When you need more information

Consultants can also work with you to develop approaches to support individual children, including those who may be having a difficult time in your care.

### How to contact

- › Visit [MentalHealthStartsEarly.com](http://MentalHealthStartsEarly.com) to look for nearby **ECMH Consultants**
- › Call the ECMH Support Line at (833)-ECMH411 or **submit a request for services** online to get social-emotional or other resources for yourself, or for a family or child in your care.



**COLORADO**  
Office of Early Childhood  
Department of Human Services