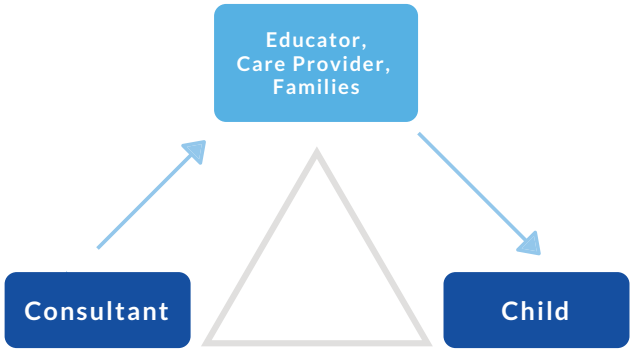
HELPING ADULTS HELP CHILDREN IN EARLY CARE & EDUCATION (ECE) SUCCEED

Mental Health Consultation Belongs in all Early Childhood Settings to Create Healthier, Stronger Communities in Wisconsin

What is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation?

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) is an evidence based collaborative intervention provided by a professional with mental health expertise that improves outcomes for all children. It builds adults' capacity to strengthen and support children's social and emotional health and development.



Why it Matters:

Increases children's levels of **initiative, self-control, and attachment**.

(Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2016)

Almost **one in three Wisconsin educators** are replaced every year.

(Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2016)

35%

There is a **35% turnover rate** in Wisconsin's ECE field annually. High turnover rate disrupts needed stability for supporting children's development.

(Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2016)

Prepared by the Wisconsin Children's Mental Health Collective Impact Infant and Toddler Policy Workgroup
www.children.wi.gov/Pages/Integrate/InfantToddlerPolicyWorkgroup.aspx

How Does it Work?

Consultants help ECE providers support healthy growth and development in their care settings (within centers and in family care settings) to:

APPROACHES	OUTCOMES
Ensure consistent ECE settings for children.	**Prevent expulsion and suspension of young children from the setting.**
Meet the mental health and social emotional needs of young children and their families.	**Increase parenting skills and reduce stress.**
Increase communication between families and providers.	**Decrease provider stress and turnover.**

An Example of Mental Health Consultation

Anna is a director of an early care and education (ECE) center. Two of her educators in the toddler room are struggling with a toddler who is aggressive and they can't seem to figure out why. The educators are exhausted and one has expressed wanting to quit. Andrew's parents have agreed to come to the center for a meeting and have also agreed to have Marie, a IECMHC consultant join this meeting. Marie facilitates the meeting, listening to both Andrew's parents and educators. Marie offers a plan to move forward. She will come in to observe drop off time the next morning. She explains that she will be there to continue asking questions and gathering more information to help them all best support Andrew. Over the next few weeks, Marie meets with the family and educators again to discuss the observations and answer further questions that have come up about Andrew's behaviors and consider what other steps they may need to take. For example additional steps might include Marie observing Andrew's behaviors at home and at other times of the day at the center, Andrew's parents attending a parenting skills group, Andrew's ECE providers attending professional development or referring Andrew to other services if needed.

Keys to Success

1. The Right Supports at the Right Time: Consultants are able to respond to experiences with children that arise in early care and education settings, and offer support to the providers and families when they are needed.

2. Infrastructure: ECE settings have access to consultants whom they have relationships and rapport with, and who know their ECE setting context.

3. Help the Helpers: Consultants provide ongoing and as-needed support and training to ECE providers. Sometimes this is for program-wide support, ECE provider skill development, and sometimes it is for support around a specific child or family.

4. Links to Community Resources: Consultants have an extensive network of services and resources that they can utilize or refer families to that will provide further support for children and their families.

References:
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association. (2016). Wisconsin's child care workforce: wages, benefits, education and turnover of the professionals working with Wisconsin's youngest children. Retrieved from https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2016-Workforce-study.pdf