

Mental Health Consultation Services

Purpose

This document defines Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and gives a brief overview of what Mental Health Consultants provide and how to access services.

Definition of Early Childhood Mental Health

Mental Health has always been an integral part of Early Head Start, Head Start and ECEAP programs. Early Childhood Mental Health is a child's (from zero to five years of age) growing capacity to experience, regulate and express emotions. It is the capacity to develop close secure relationships, explore their environment, and learn within the context of family and cultural expectations. Early Childhood Mental Health is social emotional development.

Consultation Services

Adapted from the Center of Excellence for Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:

Infant Early childhood mental health consultation is a prevention based, indirect service provided by a licensed, Master level Mental Health Professional that builds the capacity of families and professionals to help support the social emotional development of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Services can include the following:

- **Child/Family:** Observations of individual children to identify concerns and provide support.
- **Staff:** Reflective consultation, individual child, and family case consultation and training on specialized topics.
- **Classroom:** Assessment of social/emotional climate and on-site support to teachers and staff.
- **Program:** Support to program level practices to support social/emotional health of staff, children and families.

Accessing Services

HS

EHS

SWLS

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PSESD Mental Health Consultants will provide consistent and regular on-site visits to classrooms. Staff and families can request an individual observation or consultation of the PSESD Mental Health Consultant when there are concerns about a specific child. Upon enrollment, parents sign consent for a Mental Health Consultant to perform classroom observations throughout the year. Staff can also complete the [Request for Mental Health Observation/Consultation](#) and fax the document to the Mental Health Consultant prior to consultation.

EHS-HB

PSESD Mental Health Consultants are available to provide individual child and family case consultation, reflective consultation to staff, to attend group socializations, and to participate with home visitors during home visits. Mental Health Consultants are also able to provide specific trainings and to attend Staffings on children and families. To access services please email your Mental Health Consultant assigned to your program.

¹ SWLS: Shared Waitlist Sites are sites that have Head Start/Early Head Start and ECEAP programs sharing one waitlist.

ECEAP

ECEAP classrooms must contract with a Mental Health Professional found in the community or within the school district. This person must be either hired or identified from current district resources. Please see the [sample job description for ECEAP Mental Health Professional](#) for specific hiring requirements and level of service requirements.

Mental Health Referrals

- Communicate with families about any mental health concerns they have regarding their children or themselves.
- Be knowledgeable about mental health agencies in the community.
- If families do not have a way to pay for counseling or their health insurance does not cover mental health counseling, PSESD does have limited funds to pay for a contracted mental health provider to provide 10 hours of in-home counseling. Authorization of these hours by a Mental Health Consultant are required.
- Please contact your Mental Health Consultant to discuss whether the family or child would benefit from this service or not.
- Families must fill out the [Release/Exchange of Confidential Mental Health Information Form](#) and program staff fax to the Mental Health Consultant.