

# Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

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



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

# Vision

Building a high quality and responsive continuum of early childhood mental health supports across Colorado.

# Mission

The Colorado Early Childhood Mental Health program drives alignment among partners representing the continuum of supports. We build adult knowledge and skills by investing in training, technical assistance, and data sharing that promotes social and emotional health of children and their caregivers.



# Social Emotional Development for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers



Social emotional development begins at birth and is learned over time with support from adults.

Fostering strong mental health in infants and young children requires a caregiver who is there, aware, and cares.

When caregivers feel supported and confident, they are better able to:

- Develop relationships with children
- Teach social emotional skills
- Create a foundation for positive mental health
- Ensure school readiness

# Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Free and voluntary support program that pairs a masters-level consultant with adults caring for children ages birth to 6-years who desire extra support to foster the **social-emotional development** and **mental well-being** of children in their care

1.

No cost, voluntary program supported by state and federal funds

2.

Prevention and promotion

3.

Partner with early childhood providers/caregivers to support the well-being of *all* children in their care

4.

Relationship-based, reflective practice

5.

Targets learning environments and programs, with tailored supports available for specific children

6.

Accessible to all adults caring for children birth (including prenatal) to 6-years, regardless of setting

A photograph of a woman with curly hair hugging a young child from behind. They are both smiling. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# ECMH Consultants

## Who are they?

Mental Health providers with **deep expertise** in early childhood, social-emotional development and mental health.

## How many?

**44 full time state funded consultants**, housed in **23 sites** across the state.

**19 full time funded by philanthropy.**

## Where do they serve?

\$4.2 million in state and federal funds are dedicated to the program for FY 2021-22. Philanthropic partners also fund consultation statewide. The public-private partnership ensures coverage of ECMH consultation across **all 64 counties.**



# Benefits of Consultation

ECMH Consultation addresses both caregiver and child well-being

## Supports Well-being for Caregivers

Consultants support the growth and well-being of caregivers by:

- Reducing teacher, director, and caregiver stress
- Increasing staff retention

## Supports Well-being for Children

Consultants build the capacity of adults to meet all children's needs by:

- Promoting a warm and responsive care environment
- Finding/addressing mental health and developmental issues early

## Addresses Challenging Behaviors

Consultants partner with caregivers to help:

- Decrease behaviors adults find challenging
- Reduce suspension and expulsions

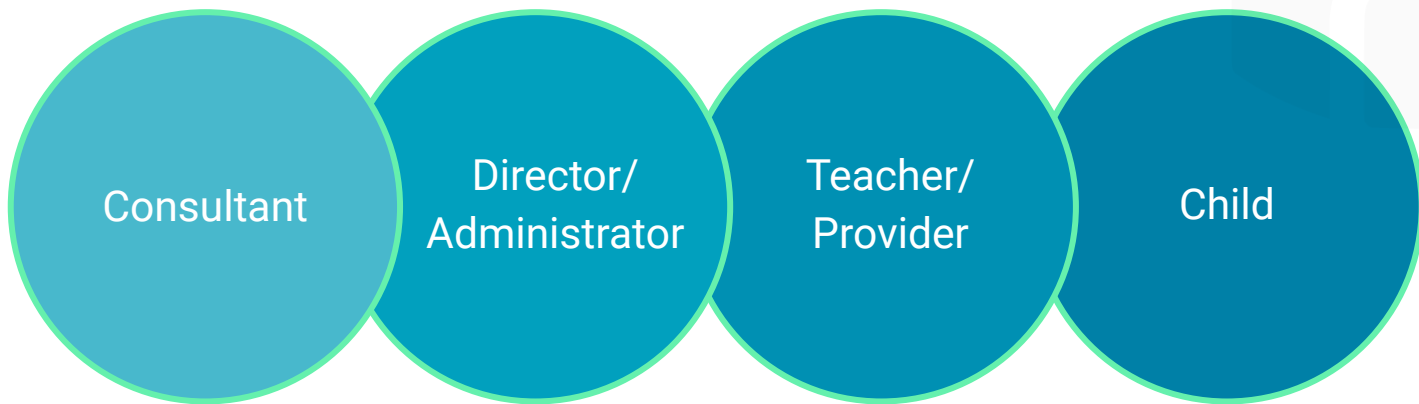
# Hear From a Consultant



**Jennifer Sommer Shepard, LCSW**  
Aurora Mental Health Consultant & Supervisor  
Arapahoe & Adams Counties

# What Can ECMH Consultation Services Look Like?

*“Do unto others as you would have others do unto others.”  
- Jeree Pawl*







# National Perspective- Impacts of COVID-19 on EC Workforce

COVID-19 has resulted in increased stress at work and at home

- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, **7%** of child care providers reported significantly elevated levels of stress
- At the beginning of the pandemic (May & June 2020), about **20%** of child care providers reported significantly elevated levels of stress

Teacher job stress increases the likelihood that children get expelled from school

- **5%** of teachers expressing low levels of stress have expelled a child vs. **14%** of teachers reporting high levels of job stress

Teachers who screened positive for depression expelled at **roughly twice the rate** of teachers who screened negative for depression



# Supporting Adult Mental Health

All young children benefit when their caregivers are healthy and not too stressed.

## CARES Stimulus Funding

Flourishing During a Pandemic:-Addressing Learning and Growth During Uncertainty

## Preschool Development Grant

[Roots@: Trauma-Informed Care and Beyond](#) Pilot Program: a trauma-informed pilot program for child care directors in the Denver metro area; increased cohorts resilience and ability to lead effectively during the wake of a pandemic



# HB20-1053: Part 4

[Link to the Full Bill](#)

**Alignment &  
Coordination**

**Diverse Settings**

**Equity, Diversity &  
Inclusion (EDI)**

**Competency Based**

**Professional  
Development**

# When and how to Refer?



When everything is fine!



When feeling overwhelmed by the demands of caregiving.



When you need more information.

Submit an  
Online Referral:  
[ECMH Online Referral](#)

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION REFERRAL FORM

Please provide your name, contact information and a brief description of the services you are requesting below or call the ECMH Support Line at (303) 866-4202 Monday through Friday to speak directly to a consultant.

First Name:\*  Last Name:\*

How did you hear about ECMH Consultation?\*

Consultation Need:\*

Phone Number:\*

Directly contact  
a [Consultant](#)  
[Near You](#)

Colorado Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultant List				
Program	Counties Served	ECMH Consultant/Supervisor	ECMH Specialist/Supervisor Email	Phone Number
Arapahoe Mental Health Center, Inc. (AllHealth Network)	Arapahoe, Douglas	Annie Deutschmann	adeutschmann@allhealthnetwork.org	(720) 707-6494
		Crystal Reeder	creeder@allhealthnetwork.org	(720) 208-8590
		*Heather Hyland (supervisor)	hyland@allhealthnetwork.org	(720) 696-7496
Aurora Mental Health Center	Arapahoe, Adams	Rose Lavley	roselavley@aumhc.org	(720) 690-1763
		Katie Foster	KatherineFoster@aumhc.org	(303) 923-2980
		Jessica Kirkman Leone	jessicakirkman.leone@aumhc.org	(303) 923-2985
Centennial Mental Health	Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgewick, Washington, Yuma	*Jennifer Sommer Sheppard (supervisor/consultant)	jennifer.sommer.sheppard@aumhc.org	(303) 612-2629
		Amy Naton	amyn@centennialmhc.org	(970) 571-2174
		Danielle Storevik	danielle@centennialmhc.org	(970) 571-4224
Centura/St Thomas More	Fremont	Cheryl Bills	cheryl@centennialmhc.org	(970) 585-7224
		Shannon Parker	shannon@centennialmhc.org	(970) 571-5966
		*Erin Pounds (supervisor/consultant)	erinn@centennialmhc.org	(970) 520-3320
Chaffee County Early Childhood Council	Chaffee, Fremont	Charmayne Sandoval	charmaynesandoval@centura.org	
		Summer Martinez	smartinez@cecc.org	
		Heather McFadden	hmcFadden@cecc.org	

Call the ECMH  
Support Line

Monday - Friday 10:30a-5:30p  
**(303) 866-4202\***

\*Transition to toll-free number and designed outreach materials anticipated Fall 2021

# ECMH Consultation Resources

## [ECMH Consultation Flyer](#)



### 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 [ColoradoOfficeofEarlyChildhood.com](http://ColoradoOfficeofEarlyChildhood.com) or call the ECMH Support Line at 303-866-4202 to learn more.

## [ECMH Consultation FAQ](#)



### Frequently Asked Questions

What is Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation?

ECMH consultants have deep expertise in early childhood, social-emotional development and mental health. Directors, early childhood professionals and caregivers of children age birth to six are eligible to receive no cost support and training on-site from consultants at the program, remotely, or another convenient location. Through the consultative relationship, caregivers build skills that foster strong adult-child relationships, build healthy environments, and prepare them to effectively respond to challenging behavior. Consultants support and strengthen early childhood professionals in their role as caregivers; consultants do not work directly with children, make a diagnosis, or provide therapy.

Curious what it is like to work with an ECMH consultant? Take the eLearning course, [Working With an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant](#) on the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS) or view the short video [Early Childhood Mental Health - The Results are Extraordinary](#).

Why is it important to focus on social-emotional and mental health for infants and young children?

Social and emotional development begins at birth. Research indicates that children's development and mental health can be negatively impacted by the influences around them (e.g., early adversity, trauma). Fortunately, children's development and mental health can be positively impacted by influences around them, as well. Research shows that quality, evidence-based practices in the early years of life can increase resilience and dramatically improve outcomes for young children.

What are the benefits of ECMH consultation?

The benefits of ECMH consultation include improved classroom or other learning and care environments, reduced incidents of behaviors adults find challenging, increased understanding of typical child development, and reduced caregiver stress and teacher turnover which, in turn, can increase staff retention and reduce the likelihood that a child will leave a program.

Over the long term, research shows that children who attend early childhood programs that promote their social and emotional development are more likely to graduate from high school and enter college, and are less likely to repeat grades or become involved in the criminal justice system.

Who is eligible for ECMH consultation services?

ECMH consultation is available to any adult who cares for children ages birth to 6 years, including the prenatal and postpartum periods. ECMH consultation is typically delivered in early childhood settings including child care, home visiting, medical home and other locations as appropriate both in-person or via telehealth by trained mental health professionals.

## [ECMH Webpage](#)

### EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION

#### Do You Care for Children Six or Under?

Interested in creating an environment that supports social emotional development and mental health?

Want to develop stronger relationships with the children in your care?

Wondering if a child needs a screening or referral?



#### Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Can Help!



Find a consultant near you

Sign up for a consultation

View service map



A background image showing a woman and a young girl looking out a window. The woman is on the left, and the girl is on the right, both looking towards the right side of the frame. The image is slightly blurred and has a warm, golden light.

# Thank You!

## Contact Information

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Unit Director

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Sheppard, LCSW**

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