

## **What is Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation?**

Because young children's emotional well-being is tied so closely to the emotional status of their parents and non-family caregivers, the emotional and behavioral needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are best met through coordinated services that focus on their full environment of relationships.

ECMHC seeks to promote positive outcomes for infants and young children by helping caregivers (i.e., family members and early care and education providers) develop the attitudes and skills necessary to effectively support the social and emotional development of the young children in their care. The emphasis on capacity-building also extends to the overall early care and education program, with a focus on strengthening the program's ability to create nurturing environments that foster mental wellness among children, families and staff.

### **Whole Class or Routine Consultation Site Visit:**

The goal of routine consultation visits are to build relationships with teams, be on-site to answer questions with Teachers and Family Service staff, meet with families, and observe the classroom environments. A routinely scheduled site visit may include one or more of the above elements, and will differ, depending on the need.

Whole class observations can serve several purposes including, but not limited to:

- 1) Getting to know the children in the classroom. Sometimes the MH Professional will stand/sit back to observe the classroom social/emotional environment. And, sometimes s/he will interact with children.
- 2) Identify children who may need more support in the social/emotional realm (i.e Counseling and/or classroom supports.)
- 3) Observing the social/emotional climate of the classroom.
- 4) Meeting a request by the Regional Manager for additional classroom guidance on the social/emotional climate of the classroom.

### **Individual Child Observations:**

Individual child observation/recommendation requests must come through the Collaboration Team with a parent/guardian signed 'Permission for Additional Services' form.

The goal of an individual child observation is to provide expertise and guidance for Teachers and Family Service staff on the Mental Health needs of one child. The MH Professional will observe and interact with the child to assess his/her need(s).

In most cases the mental health professional would like to talk to you before making recommendations, preferably before the observation. Therefore, in many cases the mental health professional will be interested in talking to you when he/she arrives at your site. We recognize that you may not be able to talk during class time. You can let the mental health professional know

that it is not a good time to talk or he/she may not approach you if that is obvious. There may be other reasons for not being able to discuss the child before the observation. If you know this will be the case, you are welcome to contact the mental health professional before the day of the observation to give some additional input.

The mental health professional may have questions after the observation. He/she will ask you if it is a good time for you to talk. Please let the mental health professional know that you want to talk before recommendations are written if there is a need.

You will receive written recommendation in report within one week (in most cases.) If you have questions or need support implementing any of the recommendations, please contact your Regional Manager and the Mental Health Professional.