

EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION PARTNERSHIP

Introduction:

While the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership program is only five years old, very strong interest and persistent advocacy was in place well before the program's implementation. Over the past several years there has been a strong commitment by Early Childhood Stakeholders throughout Connecticut to develop an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation system in order to address the gaps in services particularly as they relate to Mental Health Services for young children. It is through their dedication and advocacy that ECCP has come into being. These stakeholders remain strong advocates and dedicated partners of the ECCP today.

The need for such a service is highlighted in a recent national study conducted by Walter S. Gilliam, PhD Assistant Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine, which notes the high suspension and expulsion rates of Children in Early Care and Education settings. Dr Gilliam's work speaks to the implications that Mental Health Consultation can have in reducing the suspension and expulsion rates by providing – appropriate services and consultation to caregivers in order to meet the social emotional needs of young children.

Early Childhood Consultation Partnership

The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) is a mental health consultation program, designed to meet the social/emotional needs of children birth to five by offering support, education, and consultation to those who care for them.

Funding

While the majority of funding is provided by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), DCF has also entered into a partnership with the State Department of Education to fund a smaller sub-component of the program.

The Department of Children and Families provides:
\$2,200,000 Program Funding
\$ 140,000 Independent Evaluation

Program Management

Advanced Behavioral Health, a nonprofit behavioral health management organization, provides statewide oversight for program operations through the following:

- a. Statewide Program and Assistant Program Manager
- b. Centralized Data collection and Reporting

- c. Sub Contracts with 10 Non Profit Behavioral Health Agencies located throughout Connecticut
- b. Trains and supervises 20 ECCP Master's Level Early Childhood Consultants

Mission

- **Provide mental health prevention and early intervention services**
- **Build capacity of parents, teachers, and caregivers**
- **Support and enhance relationship building**
- **Promote enduring and optimal mental health outcomes for young children and their families**

Program Goals

1. Reduce the risk factors associated with Early Childhood Suspension/Expulsion
2. Build the capacity of early childcare providers and families to understand and promote healthy social emotional development and to more effectively address the social and emotional needs of children ages' birth to five.
3. Engage in and/or develop community, regional, and statewide partnerships on an ongoing basis to support capacity building in the area of healthy social and emotional development for young children.

Program Overview

1. Referrals come from a variety of sources including Families, Educators, and Directors. Referrals can be made through Help Me Grow, or by calling the ECCP Program.
2. ECCP consultants provide mental health consultation to caregivers of young children.
3. ECCP is an active partner in a variety of Early Childhood Community and Statewide Collaborative:
4. Provides Social Emotional Trainings at community, regional and statewide levels and across various Early Childhood disciplines.
5. Coordinates services with Early Childhood Providers
6. Provide linkages to community based education, social and mental health services.
7. Provides an array of services that are easily accessible and Culturally Competent

Services

Services range from Brief Phone consultation to Child Specific, to Core Classroom, to Intensive Center Based Services.

Services include Pre and Post Assessment, In Home and Classroom Observations, Action Planning that involves Parents, Teachers, Directors, and other Early Childhood Providers, Consultation and Support, trainings, referrals and recommendations, and Policy/Director support.

Outcomes

- First statewide data driven systems of care for early childhood mental health consultation.
- Served over 6,000 children, with over 700 of these children being served intensively.
- Over 1,600 teachers and assistant teachers have been served
- Coordinates care among various state systems.
- ECCP Consultants are involved with capacity building at a systems level. Program staff is involved in various local and statewide early childhood collaboratives.
- Information collected at 6 month - follow up indicates that. 97% of those children served were neither suspended or expelled from their child care/early education setting.
- 93% of classrooms served demonstrated improvement in the overall quality of care.
- Many of the ECCP Consultants are trainers for a variety of Early Childhood Social Emotional assessments, curricula's and training materials.
- Over 7,000 Training Units have been provided to Early Childhood Educators and providers.
- The ECCP Evaluation results completed by Walter Gilliam, Ph.D. will be presented on May 15 at 8:30 am at the State Capitol. The preliminary results show a positive impact upon the children we serve.

Impact

A rigorous random-controlled evaluation of the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) was conducted by Walter S. Gilliam, PhD Assistant Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine.

- This study is the first evaluation of a large-scale early childhood mental health consultation, and its results will be of interest to program developers, scholars, and decision-makers within Connecticut and nationally.
- The evaluation is the first random-controlled evaluation of a widely implemented system of early childhood mental health consultation. Although the pathways of effect remain unclear, ECCP was effective at improving teacher-rated externalizing behavior problems and the model warrants expansion and further evaluations to better determine its mechanisms of effect

- Overall, ECCP demonstrated statistically significant decreases in teacher-rated externalizing or acting-out behavior problems in the classroom, relative to the control group. The effects generally were consistent across the two measures employed, and were of a meaningful magnitude. Effect sizes were greatest in the area of oppositional behaviors and hyperactivity.