

Activity: Do You and the Programs You Serve Embrace the Same Approach to Mental Health Services and Supports?

To determine to what extent you and the HS/EHS programs you serve are in agreement about the approach to early childhood mental health, use the guide below to check which values are mutually present and/or to facilitate a discussion among key partners. (Checklist adapted from Hepburn & Kaufmann, 2005).

- All young children deserve to spend their days in a safe, stable, caring, and nurturing environment.
- A safe, stable, caring and nurturing environment is crucial to promoting healthy social and emotional growth and resiliency to protect young children from psychological harm, and to create caring conditions conducive to appropriate social and emotional well being.
- The quality of the child's many relationships with parents and other important people in their life is critical to positive social and emotional development. The mental health of a child's parents and caregivers is important in meeting the mental health needs of very young children.
- Families are considered to be full participants in all aspects of design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services for their young children.
- Early childhood mental health services are responsive to the cultural, racial, and ethnic differences of the populations that they serve.
- Practices build on, promote, and enhance the strengths of the individual, the family, and early care and education staff.
- Early childhood mental health consultation is one strategy for promoting the mental health of young children and their families, as well as preventing and reducing the impact of troubling or challenging behavior.