

This resource is intended to be used primarily by program managers and administrators of infant and early childhood mental health consultation programs to describe the process of orienting, training and development of competent and confident early childhood mental health consultants. It will equip managers and consultants alike in understanding the how training and support unfolds and deepens over time and provide the space and time to think together about the ways in which consultation promotes equity and can address bias in early childhood systems.

The IECMHC training graphic illustrates the embedded and interacting spheres of expertise that consultants need to have. Most experienced consultants tell us that it takes time, practice, and reflection to feel comfortable in the consultative role, and this is an accurate and an important perspective to remember. Milestones are identified in this resource according to a timeline, but the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and experiences is dependent on many considerations including what level the individual begins at and the setting they are operating in. Reflective supervision is essential at every phase of building competency and to address cultural considerations of the work, implicit and explicit bias and the effects of systemic racism in the lives of children and adults. The steps below are intended to help guide a systematic approach to training consultants and provides prompts that lead to inquiry, conversation, and reflection.

IECMHC is an evidenced-based service that pairs mental health professionals with those who work with and care for very young children. This service relies on and embeds competencies in the domains of infant mental health, adult mental health, professional consultation and equity. There is growing evidence that consultation plays a role in reducing disparities and promoting equity in early childhood systems. Consultation involves finding concrete ways to articulate complex concepts and joining with providers and parents about very personal issues related to parenting, child growth and development, trauma, risk and resiliency. Resources are available in this guide to help IECMHCs acclimate and settle into their new roles.

This resource presents a sample plan showing how to go about training and supporting new consultants and it's organized according to a typical timeline that is needed for a consultant to acquire knowledge, skills, and experience. In other words, we identify the things you will help the consultant learn, do, and think about as they undertake this IECMHC journey. Variations in timing and depth are expected and you are invited to individualize this plan to fit the needs of your program and of the consultant.

All of these areas are critical for the development of competency and it's important to think ahead about how you might facilitate each of these separately and collectively for the benefit of the individuals and team. These actions are intended to be mutually reinforcing and the required readings and suggested activities are selected to strengthen competency, build the confidence of the consultant, and provide effective services in all types early childhood settings.

This Sample plan is designed to be used for consultants in many settings. It's intent is to give you some specific, labeled actions that you can employee right away as well as some generic ideas of other places where you can build out resources. As manager, you will want to select additional readings and experiences germane to your particular setting. For example, if you are providing training and support to a consultant in an early learning setting, you will want to include information specific to child care in your community. There are rules and regulations that govern child care licensing that the consultant should be familiar with. Please add these in to your training plan so that the consultant is getting setting-specific information.