CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR
Infant & Early Childhood
Mental Health Consultation
Growth. Advancement. Impact.

Attunify
By THRIVE CENTER

A BRIEF FOR HOME VISITING LEADERS

Home visitors carry a lot. Consultation gives them someone to think with.

What consultation is, what it adds and what changes for home visitors. Use it to make the case to your team or your funder.

NEW **See the research, read the stories and plan how to pay for it.**
iecmhc.org/evidence/home-visiting



THE PROBLEM

The work has outgrown the preparation

Home visitors hold mental health work they were never trained for.

Illinois funded consultation for its MIECHV sites after the data showed home visitors weren't trained for complex family problems. Colorado started its Enhanced Home Visiting project for the same reason and to help with secondary traumatic stress. In our September small groups, programs named the situations: **trauma, safety, suicidality, boundaries and a child's development or behavior.** Staff face them again and again.

SOURCES

- Illinois: building and sustaining IECMHC
- Meeting Colorado Families and Early Childhood Professionals Where They Are (2023)
- CoE small groups with home visiting programs, September 2026



WHAT CONSULTATION IS

A mental health consultant paired with the people who support families

It works through the adults and builds their resilience and confidence.

The consultant brings mental health and early childhood knowledge. The home visitor brings the family, the model and the community. **Together they make sense of a family's situation and decide how to respond.** The consultant can work with one home visitor, a supervisor, a leader or the whole team.

SOURCES

- Consultation in home visiting, iecmhc.org
- Status of the Evidence for IECMHC (CoE, 2023)
- Financing Guidance for IECMHC (CoE)



WHAT IT ADDS

If you already have reflective supervision, consultation adds to it

REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION ASKS

How is this work, and these situations, affecting you, your relationships and your practice?

CONSULTATION ADDS

What may be happening here developmentally, relationally, emotionally or behaviorally, and how do we respond in ways that help the family and us?

Both matter. In our September small groups, **programs with strong reflective supervision still described a separate need for consultation.** Several said reflective time gets overtaken by operational supervision and compliance. Some protect a separate space for it. Others value an outside consultant who isn't also evaluating them.

SOURCES

- Consultation vs reflective supervision, iecmhc.org
- CoE small groups with home visiting programs, September 2026
- Reflective Supervision Info Sheet (CoE)

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Three levels alongside the model you already run

Each level links to a Michigan consultant's story of the work.

1 Child and family

Case consultation on one family. The consultant may join a home visit to observe. Read **Story 4** and **Story 7**.

2 Home visitor and team

Reflective consultation one on one or in groups. Training for the team. Read **Story 5** and **Story 6**.

3 Supervisor and program

Reflective consultation for supervisors. Help changing policies for administrators. Read **Story 2**.

SOURCES

Financing Guidance for IECMHC (CoE): types of consultation in home visiting

Consultation in Action: seven stories from Michigan consultants (MDHHS, 2025)

Michigan Home Visiting Initiative IECMHC report (MPHI, 2019)

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

More responsive. More reflective. More confident.

More responsive

Illinois rated visits by 7 home visitors with 42 families. Those with a consultant scored **significantly higher on responsiveness to the family** than a matched group.

Burkhardt et al., 2023 · Illinois full report

21 months

The same pilot followed 136 staff including home visitors. **Their reflective capacity rose significantly.**

Spielberger et al., 2022 · Executive summary

3.63 to 3.86

Michigan measured home visitors at four sites before and after. **Self-efficacy rose. Job demands fell and job resources rose.** All three changes were statistically significant.

Michigan Home Visiting Initiative report, 2019

24 months

Home visitors in a Healthy Families America pilot **gained mental health knowledge and confidence partnering with parents.**

Lambarth and Green, 2019 · Annotated Bibliography (CoE)

81%

Colorado surveyed 92 home visitors and supervisors in 2023. **81% rated themselves strong or very strong at navigating job stress.**

Meeting Colorado Families Where They Are, 2023

The gap

Most of the evidence for consultation comes from center-based programs. Few studies have looked at home visiting. None has measured retention there yet. **We're building the research to close that gap.**



WHERE TO START

You don't need a funded position to bring consultation in

Only 20% of the states we spoke with had a structured program for home visiting. Programs wait for positions they can't fund and clinicians they can't find.

Train your own staff. 4 months of training and 8 months of reflective supervision. 91% were using the skills in their roles within 2 months. Next cohort February 2027.

Get consultation now. Georgetown consultants deliver it virtually within days. From $200 per person a month.

Design a system. Work one on one with a Georgetown advisor. You leave with a plan you own.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

Our goal: double the number of consultants in the field by 2030.

Home visiting is next. Start with the **research and stories**.

PROUDLY BUILT AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY | THRIVE CENTER

Research and stories

Train your own staff