

# Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMH-C)

Partnerships between qualified mental health consultants (MHC) and child care providers to enhance providers' capacity to support the social-emotional development of infants and young children.

IECMH-C is an equity-focused and evidence-informed approach intended to:



Reduce disproportionality in preschool expulsions, especially for Black/African American boys



Build caregiver awareness of implicit bias and capacity for understanding children's behavior through a healing-centered lens



Enhance children's social and emotional development

## IECMH-C Landscape Analysis

In 2020, DCYF conducted a landscape analysis<sup>1</sup> of self-identified MHCs to better understand access to resources and their professional experiences in early care and education settings. In the table below, quotes in the left-hand column are aligned to existing work streams in DCYF and in CCA of WA.

What We Heard (June 2020)	How it's Aligned to Existing Work	Program Highlight Example
Quotes from MHCs	DCYF plans to...	CCA of WA
<i>"During these times it has become even more important to be there for providers...It seems that the <b>high stress is causing [teachers] to have symptoms of compassion fatigue (burnout)</b>. This contributes to less connectedness to young children. Helping to alleviate burnout has helped [teachers] to respond and connect in positive ways. <b>Virtual consultation is a struggle</b>, however, several sites are managing it and finding it useful for the above reasons."</i>	Collaborate with public and private partners, including tribal representatives, to develop a <b>community-based and culturally responsive IECMH-C model</b> that includes a coordinated referral process.	Contracted with DCYF's Early Achievers program to <b>provide IECMH-C to support coaches and child care providers</b> at no cost to providers (MHC FTEs are fully covered by Legislature funds).
<i>"There is a <b>lack of structure</b> in the field to deliver services. <b>There is a need for a manual...</b>and a best practices framework... [T]here <b>should be a foundational best practice framework</b> for this type of work so new consultants have some guidance. <b>I feel very alone at my agency.</b>"</i>	Implement a <b>workforce development plan</b> , including implementation guidance and training, in accordance with nationally recognized competencies.	Planned to maintain/hire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 regional MHCs</li> <li>• 1 statewide Spanish-speaking MHC</li> <li>• 2 additional MHCs in King-Pierce counties</li> </ul> <b>Hired 13 of the new 15 MHC positions.</b>
	Design program evaluation protocol for outcome measurement and a <b>plan for a data tracking system for consultation activities.</b>	Provided resources, information, and <b>guidance regarding challenging behavior and expulsions.</b>

1. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (2020). WA Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMH-C) Landscape Analysis Survey. Retrieved September, 2021.

WASHINGTON'S PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT BIRTH THROUGH FIVE RENEWAL  
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[www.dcyf.wa.gov/publications-library/IAA\\_0004.pdf](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/publications-library/IAA_0004.pdf)



Washington State Department of  
**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

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Quotes from MHCs	DCYF plans to...	CCA of WA
<p><i>"It is a <b>delightful job</b> to have, but is one that is rarely talked about as so important. Especially right now it should be the most important topic. The world is upside down. Little learning goes on in the classroom, famil[ies]...[are] too stress[ed] to process things other than the <b>collective trauma, grief, and stress that is going on in the world right now.</b>"</i></p>	<p>Provide reflective consultation and <b>communities of practice for mental health consultants</b> to increase their ability to support providers' reflective practice and to process their own stress and vicarious trauma.</p>	<p>Supported <b>reflective practice for teachers and providers</b>, including opportunities to promote responsive caregiving, increase mindfulness, strengthen teacher-student relationships, and mitigate feelings of burnout.</p>

## What We Learned in 2020

The 2020 landscape analysis described Mental Health Consultants, the needs of the communities they serve, and the location of services. Of the 99 MHCs surveyed:



56% of MHCs practiced consultation in early care and education settings.



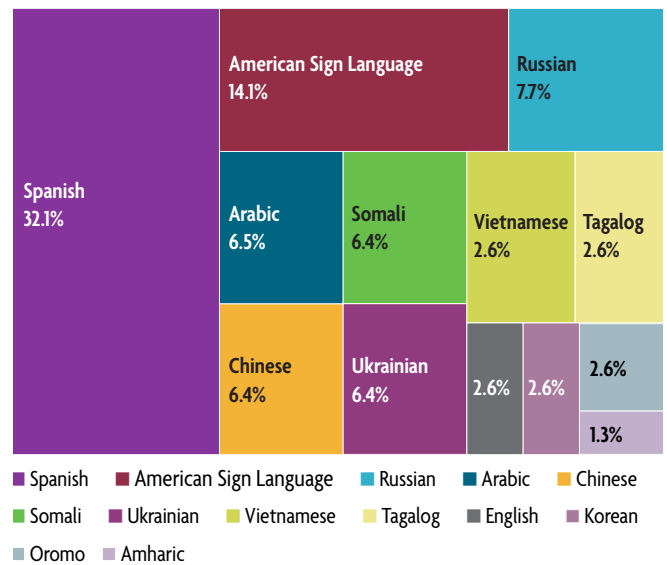
Less than 13% of MHC survey participants were consultants of color.



There were 5 counties where geographic representation of ECE mental health services were higher. King County was served by the most MHCs (15% of all MHCs surveyed). Together, Snohomish, Cowlitz, Spokane, and Yakima represented 22% of consultation services provided statewide. The remaining counties had 4 or fewer MHCs serving their regions.<sup>1</sup>

The landscape analysis highlighted a continued need to study representation in mental health consultation relative to the communities served through the lens of communication, language, and access:

30% of MHCs used an interpreter's assistance to provide services, with Spanish being the most common. 13 languages were used in translation while providing services.



## IECMH-C Next Steps

- Continue accelerating hiring, staffing the final vacant positions provided by the Fair Start for Kids Act (6 new MHCs and 1 program manager)
  - For more information about the Fair Start for Kids Act, go to [www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/government-affairs/fair-start-for-kids-act](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/government-affairs/fair-start-for-kids-act)
- Continue developing roadmap for statewide and cross-systems IECMH-C leveraging existing funding, staffing, and other resources, to lay a foundation for building a connected system of support for consultants and providers
  - For more information about funding, go to [www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/government-affairs/pdg](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/government-affairs/pdg)
  - Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Website: [www.iecmhc.org](http://www.iecmhc.org)

1. Duplicate counts included