



HOLDING HOPE

Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
Provided by Child Care Aware of Washington

Holding Hope IECMHC Services – At a Glance

December 2022

Background

This Brief provides an update on implementation of Holding Hope: Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) at Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA of WA), funded by the Washington Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF). The program first launched in 2020 with funding for 6 consultants, and grew with additional funds from the Preschool Development Grant (2021) and the Fair Start for Kids Act (July 2022). The six regional member organizations and network office of CCA of WA now employ 15 Mental Health Consultants (MHCs) and provide supervision and implementation support for the program.

Program Highlights

October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

- 262 new referrals to Holding Hope IECMHC
- 294 child care providers with licensed capacity of 18,295 children received Consultation, serving multiple children and families and staff at most programs
- All programs served care for children/families receiving Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) Subsidy
- 4,494 Coaches and community partners received consultation (duplicated count)
- MHCs made 460 referrals for children and families for further developmental/mental health assessment and services
- MHCs have made 150 referrals for child care providers to support their mental health and well-being

Since the program began in 2020 Holding Hope has provided Consultation to 404 child care providers with licensed capacity of 24,436 children

About the Holding Hope Statewide Team:

- CCA of WA employs a talented, experienced and diverse team of 15 Mental Health Consultants to serve child care providers throughout WA
- All of our Consultants have advanced degrees, mental health licenses, or are currently working to complete independent licensure
- 60% of our Consultants identify as people of color, and services are offered in 6 languages
- CCA of WA stands ready to hire additional diverse staff as soon as investment increases

What is Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation?

Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) is an evidence-based, prevention-oriented, multi-level intervention that improves caregiver social-emotional support for young children and improves children's social-emotional well-being. IECMHC partners Mental Health Consultants with early learning professionals and families to: enhance caregivers' and families' capacity to support social and emotional development and well-being; prevent and reduce the impact of mental health challenges for children and families; improve adults' ability to manage challenging behaviors; address bias and racial disparity issues and reduce suspensions and expulsions from care.

How does IECMHC work?

Consultants are usually first engaged to support the needs of an individual child/family, but due to the multiple factors underlying child behavior, multiple needs within most programs and the complex stressors on caregivers/families/programs as a whole, Consultants support at multiple levels including: individual children and families, teachers, classrooms, program administrators and child care programs as a whole. It is truly a holistic and comprehensive approach to supporting the well-being of individual children/families and ultimately all children in care.

WA Child Care Providers report great need for IECMHC services:

A 2022 survey of all licensed child care providers statewide showed that:

- 67% of providers have seen an increase in social/emotional challenges with children
- 41% of child care providers indicated that the majority of children in their care were in need of additional support with behavioral or social emotional needs
- 60% of providers report that they need social/emotional, behavioral, inclusion or mental health supports

Parents say:

“ My husband and I have been working with a consultant from Holding Hope ... and we have been so thankful for this program! It has been incredibly helpful in developing intervention plans for our child's challenges at preschool and any other behavioral questions we have. All of the strategies have helped us feel more successful as parents in helping our child overcome his fears and behavioral challenges. ”

Parents say:

“ At a time when our concerns grew over our daughter's behavior and mental health, (our Consultant) affirmed that there is a sweet, empathetic, loving kid that we hoped others would be able to see. I personally wish there was a (Holding Hope Consultant) for every classroom, not only assisting the kids but coaching the staff through the children's challenges. (Our Consultant) has remained patient with us and provided feedback on what to do, and I feel teachers benefit from having immediate feedback in the moment as well. We greatly appreciate (our Consultant's) efforts, and our daughter's progress is testimony to his skill and compassion. ”

The Unmet Need for IECMHC in Child Care:

- All Holding Hope Mental Health Consultant caseloads are currently full!
- 110 child care providers on the waitlist for services as of August 2022
- At current funding level with 15 Consultants, we have only one Consultant for every 10,641 children in licensed care, a ratio that far exceeds the recommended 1 MHC for every 300 children in care
- Holding Hope cannot reach all eligible licensed child care providers and children/families in need
- Holding Hope cannot serve the thousands of children in other types of care who would also benefit from IECMHC services

IECMHC works!

Research shows that IECMHC results in:

- Improved social and emotional development among young children
- Decreased challenging behaviors in children and improved caregiver ability to manage behaviors
- Strengthened relationships among child care staff, children and families
- Reduced expulsions from child care/early learning - especially disproportionate expulsions and suspensions of young children of color
- Reduced teacher stress and turnover
- Improved classroom climate, enabling greater emphasis on quality care and instruction

Child Care Center Directors Say:

“

Not only has Holding Hope IECMHC been helpful in connecting our families in need with other services within our community, but also in helping to support our teachers to strategize when faced with challenging behaviors within the classroom. (Our Consultant's) advocacy for our students and insights into their behaviors has been an invaluable support at the school. Specific case consultations have directly and positively impacted retention of students with challenging behaviors within our program.

With Holding Hope IECMHC Services we have been able to more successfully engage with families to help recognize their specific need for services. I am also happy to report that we have been able to retain positive enrollment of students on modified behavior plans, supported by the teachers. This would not have been possible without the guidance and support provide by Holding Hope IECMHC. Continued funding of this program is essential and should be expanded... in order to make it equitably accessible to all communities within Washington State. ”

Family Child Care Providers Say:

“

...most importantly, (my Consultant) acknowledged me and helped me to realize if I'm not "healthy", my program won't be. ”

Child Care Directors Say:

“

...such an Incredible program. Our Consultant has been an answer to our dreams! ”

For further information about Holding Hope IECMHC, please contact Janet Fraatz or Celeste Farmer at holdinghope@childcareawarewa.org

Sources:

Sources: Davis, A., Perry, D. & Tidus, K. (2020) Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (2020). [Status of the Evidence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#). Shivers, E.M., Farago, F., Gal-Szabo, D. (2021). The Role of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in Reducing Racial and Gender Discipline Disparities Impacting Black Preschoolers. *Psychology in the Schools Journal*. The Athena Group, CCA of WA 2022 Provider Survey. Child Care Aware of Washington (December 2022).