



**FREE**

**Behavioral & Mental Health Consultation Services are Available to Day Care and Pre-School Center Owners, Directors, Staff and Families.**



## **If I am concerned about a child or family, what should I do?**

- Talk with the parent and get more information about what may be happening
- Encourage the parent to talk with the child's pediatrician
- Recognize cultural differences
- Talk with your supervisor or another professional in a way that is respectful of the child and family
- Be alert for child abuse/neglect.

## **How do I Get Consultation for my Center?**

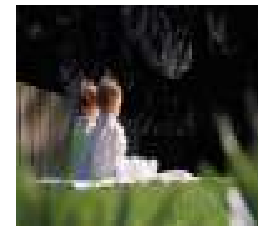
Contact Lauren Thorp at  
Trumbull LifeLines:  
(330) 675-2765 ext. 119  
[LThorp@TLifelines.org](mailto:LThorp@TLifelines.org)

Lauren will arrange for a licensed mental health professional to be assigned to your center.

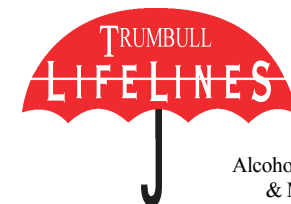
### **Acknowledgements:**

This information was partly developed by the Florida State University Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy: *What is Infant Mental Health* by Joy Osofsky, PhD. Idaho adaptation written by Carrie Mori, PhD.,OTR/L and Carolyn F. Kiefer, M.S. Compiled by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

# **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation**



**Provided by:**



Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board for Trumbull County

[www.tlifelines.org](http://www.tlifelines.org)

## What is Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation?

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is a partnership for observing, problem-solving and capacity building between a mental health professional, the early childhood staff and parents.

The consultative relationship is designed to improve the ability of parents, staff, programs and systems to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of mental health problems among children from birth to age five.

## What do Consultants do?

During a typical consultation session, a consultant may observe a particular child in the classroom, observe an entire class, confer with a teacher or director over a particular child's behavioral needs, discuss classroom strategies, provide referral information, address a parent's concerns, or provide education to parents and/or staff regarding early childhood mental health issues.

Consultants are trained in the use of the Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), The Incredible Years parenting program, and the Georgetown Model of Consultation.

The consultant's schedules are coordinated with the center's needs.

Consultants can also provide social and emotional training for center staff.

## What is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health?

Does the term "infant and early childhood mental health" make you think of a baby on a couch telling his problems to a psychiatrist? So, what is infant mental health?

Infant and early childhood mental health reflects social and emotional capacities and the primary relationships in children birth through age five. Because young children's social experiences and opportunities to explore the world depend on the love and care they receive, children's relationships are central to "infant and early childhood mental health."

It is essential to ensure that first relationships are trusting and caring, as early relationships provide an important foundation for later development.



## Who are the Consultants?

Consultants are licensed mental health professionals employed by one of the participating agencies:

- Churchill Counseling Services
- Homes For Kids, Inc./ Child and Family Solutions
- PsyCare, Inc.
- Valley Counseling Services, Inc.

Consultants are assigned to centers based on geographic region.

## What are Potential Signs That a Child May Need Some Help?

Intensity and frequency of the following signs may indicate that a child or family needs assistance. They do not indicate definite mental health concerns and are to be used only as "red flags" or warning signs:

### Infant (birth-12 months)

- Unusually difficult to soothe or console
- Limited interest in things or people
- Consistent strong reactions to touch, sounds, or movement
- Always fearful or on guard
- Reacts strongly for no reason
- Evidence of abuse or neglect

### Toddler:

- Displays very little emotion
- Unable to comfort or calm self
- Limited interest in things or people
- Does not turn to familiar adults for comfort and help
- Has inconsistent sleep patterns

### Preschool child:

- Consistently prefers to not play with others or with toys
- Goes with strangers easily
- Destructive to self or others
- Hurts animals
- Limited use of words to express feelings