

Frequently Asked Questions

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)

2022-2023

1. What is the Virginia Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) program?

The Virginia ECMHC program helps early childhood teachers and families promote young children's healthy social-emotional development – skills like expressing emotions, forming relationships with others, and successfully engaging in the classroom or learning space. Teachers and families may need extra support to promote children's social-emotional skills due to disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. What are the benefits of the ECMHC program?

The ECMHC program benefits young children by supporting their teachers around:

- Addressing challenging behaviors from one child or a few children
- Promoting children's healthy social-emotional development
- Addressing possible trauma, anxious or withdrawn behavior
- Managing feelings of stress or burn-out
- Improving teacher-family communication
- Preventing practices that remove a child from learning, such as sending a child home early or asking the child's family to withdraw from the program

3. What will the ECMHC program look like?

ECMHC will involve collaborative, one-on-one coaching with early childhood teachers based on identified needs. Consultants will support teachers to effectively implement evidence-based social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies with children using a Practice-Based Coaching format. In some cases, consultants will also meet directly with families. Consultants will not provide services directly to children.

4. Where is the ECMHC program being offered?

Services are available in the following cities and counties in 2022-2023:

Albemarle County, Charles City County, Charlottesville City, Chesterfield County, Colonial Heights City, Goochland County, Hanover County, Henrico County, New Kent County, Petersburg City, Powhatan County, and Richmond City

Programs that receive public funds – including but not limited to childcare subsidy, VPI, and Head Start/Early Head Start funding – will be prioritized for services.

5. What is the format of the ECMHC program?

We will work with teachers and programs to determine the best format of consultation to meet their needs. ECMHC can be delivered remotely, in-person, or through a hybrid approach. The specific format is flexible and will depend on factors including location, internet access, technology, and COVID-19 policies.

6. Will Mental Health Consultants diagnose a child or provide therapy services to a child or family?

Mental Health Consultants will NOT diagnose a child or provide therapy to a child or family. They can make referrals to outside services when appropriate to supplement ECMHC services. ECMHC is a preventative service intended to help teachers and families implement strategies that help children develop healthy social-emotional skills and find ways for every child to succeed in their early childhood classroom. We believe that partnering with adults to support children in the settings where they learn and grow is key to promoting wellness and preventing exclusionary discipline. Teachers and families are encouraged to discuss their concerns and requests for any referrals to mental health or other services with their consultant.

7. Who should I contact for more information?

- Infant/Toddler (birth-3 years, or 0-35 months):
 - Lynette Williams at ecmhc@cdr.org or 757-208-0288
- Preschool (3-5 years, or 36-60 months):
 - Rasha Salous at rs2ar@virginia.edu or 434-373-0616

Request Services Online at: <https://tinyurl.com/ECMHCCReferralForm>



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