



We're transforming into

California Infant and
Early Childhood Mental Health
Consultation Network

California Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMHC) Network Winter 2022 Newsletter



Happy New Year! In the fall we shared that funding for the California Inclusion and Behavior Consultation (CIBC) Network project moved to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) as part of the Child Care Transition from the California Department of Education, Early Learning and Care Division (CDE/ELCD) to CDSS. As part of this transition, CIBC has been renamed the **California Infant**

and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) Network. Our transition to CDSS brought an opportunity to offer an expanded suite of infant and early childhood mental health consultation resources and services to a broader group of early learning and care programs and providers, including family child care and family, friend and neighbor providers. If you care for young children in California, we are here to support you. Keep reading to discover the services and activities available to you through IECMHC Network.

Throughout this transition our [consultation services](#) remain available to you! Requests for consultation can be made at our current website: www.cibc-ca.org

What is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation?

Infant and early childhood mental health "is the developing capacity of the child from birth to 5 years old to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions; and explore the environment and learn — all in the context of family, community, and culture." (Zero to Three,

2017).

Infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) is a widely used approach that equips teachers, caregivers, and families to support children's healthy social and emotional growth.

Infant and early childhood mental health consultation is a preventative, strength-based, culturally responsive approach that provides early childhood programs, including early learning and care settings, access to infant and early childhood mental health consultants who are highly trained professionals with specialized knowledge about child development, mental wellness and the various factors and stressors that can impact child and family well-being. Consultants partner with early learning and care providers to support relationships and connections between young children and the adults who care for them.



Infant and early childhood mental health consultation is not therapy, nor does it include assessment or diagnosis of specific children. Consultation is used to assist caregivers, teachers, and families in creating an environment in which children's social and emotional development can thrive. IECMH consultants work to ensure that all children have the skills to express and manage their emotions, make friends, and gain valuable problem-solving skills. Infant and early childhood mental health consultation increases providers' competence in responding to children's behavior and improves their confidence, self-efficacy, and sensitivity, while reducing work-related stress, and staff turnover (Brennan, Bradley, Allen & Perry, 2008).

Infant and early childhood mental health consultants may 1) conduct classroom observations to better understand teacher/provider concerns; 2) model communication and language skills to promote positive interactions with children, families and other staff; 3) help teachers/providers identify and use tools and practices to enhance the early learning environment and reduce the likelihood of behavior adults find challenging; 4) improve programmatic functioning by: helping program administrators and/or staff consider their program's equitable and inclusive policies and practices as well as overall social and emotional climate, and 5) model and share personal wellness and self-care strategies for teachers and providers to build resilience.

Consultant Reflections



By Vanessa Bailey, IECMHC Consultant

Self-care has historically been low on the priority list for individuals who work in the field of Early Childhood. By nature, those of us in this field are consistently described as nurturing, caring, compassionate, selfless, and giving. Self-care frequently sinks to the bottom of the priority list and becomes something we **HAVE** to do, at some point, rather than something we regularly do because we should.

Certainly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this has gone even further by the wayside as we have consistently struggled to manage new regulations and expectations, while still successfully meeting the needs of young children and their families. The added administrative, health and cleaning practices tasks related to COVID-19, along with our desire to relieve the pressures felt by the children in our care, has increased the need for us to be intentional about self-care. Research clearly demonstrates a link between adults'

demonstration of self-regulation skills, and how children learn them. It is important that we are mindful of approaching each day with a clear head, open mind, and well-regulated emotions to successfully demonstrate appropriate self-regulation skills to the children in our care. We need to be “okay,” and in a good place mentally and emotionally, before we can help them learn to be as well. Being intentional about self-care so you can appropriately demonstrate self-regulation skills means coming up with a plan that works for you and sticking to it. Of all the resources available, the [Taking Care of Ourselves Workbook](#), from the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is one of my favorites. I strongly encourage you to download and complete the workbook, which includes support on identifying your own stressors, what to do once you’ve identified them, and strategies you can employ to take care of yourself. As you continue each day to do the important work that lies ahead, I encourage you to take just a minute and empower yourself before you do.

Other Resources:

- [Relaxation Exercises](#)
- [Posters to Combat Stress \(English\)](#)
- [Posters to Combat Stress \(Spanish\)](#)
- [California Surgeon General’s Playbook: Stress Relief during COVID-19](#)

IECMHC Network Webinar Series



Join us for a series of one-hour webinars that highlight different aspects of infant and early childhood mental health. Register for each session through the [California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry](#).

| Webinar Topic | Date & Time |
|---|---|
| <u>Serving Children and Families Who Experience Homelessness</u> Vanessa Bailey, MA, IFEC-ATMHP | Wednesday, March 9, 2022 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. |
| <u>Professional Resilience in Challenging Times</u> Debbie Reno-Smith, LMFT, IFECMHS, RPM | Wednesday, May 25, 2022 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. |

Communities of Support: Reflective Practice and Caregiver Well-Being

The IECMHC Network introduces a series of gatherings to promote the use of reflective practice in caregivers daily care and interactions with young children. The series is designed to support caregivers in implementing reflective practices and to provide a space for discussion of successes, barriers and challenges when caring for children. Participants will have the opportunity to gain new resources and experience peer-to-peer learning and support.

Facilitated by IECMHC Network Consultants, participants will meet virtually in small groups for six monthly, 90-minute sessions. **Coming Spring 2022!**

If interested, fill out the [interest form](#) and you will be notified when registration information is available.

Caring for Young Children: Home-Based Caregiver Workshop Series

Join us for a series of one-hour workshops highlighting different aspects of infant and early childhood mental health and designed specifically to support the work of caring for young children in home-based settings while highlighting different aspects of infant and early childhood mental health. Register for all sessions via Zoom.

| Webinar Topic | Date & Time |
|--|--|
| <u>How Your Past Can Influence Your Presence When Caring for Children</u> Breea Williams, LMFT, IFMHS | Thursday, February 24, 2022 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. |
| <u>Early Brain Development: The Caregiver Connection</u> Jess Bernal, MA, LMFT | Wednesday, March 30, 2022 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. |
| <u>Developmental Milestones Part 1: Recognizing Milestones</u> Michele Rogers, PhD, CDC CA, Ambassador, Learn the Signs, Act Early Program | Wednesday, April 13, 2022 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. |
| <u>Developmental Milestones Part 2: What to Do if You Have a Concern</u> Presenter To Be Confirmed | Wednesday, May 4, 2022 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. |

New IECMHC Network Services

Community Open-Door Sessions

What are Open-Door Sessions?

Open-Door sessions are an opportunity for any early learning and care provider in California to participate in virtual "on demand" group consultation with other early learning caregivers. These sessions are facilitated by IECMHC Network Consultants. Participants are encouraged to attend with questions, concerns and challenges related to infant, toddler, and young children's social, emotional, and behavioral health. The Open-Door is intended to be a confidential space to reflect, seek supportive input, share ideas and resources, discuss development, and network within community.



When are the Open-Door Sessions?

There will be one-hour sessions every month offered at varying times to reach early care providers with varying schedules.

Launching: Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Register for the [February 23 Open-Door Session](#)

IECMHC Network Helpline – Launching January 31, 2022!

What is the Helpline?

This is an opportunity to engage in "just in time" one-on-one support with a live IECMHC Network Consultant. Individuals are



encouraged to seek timely, non-emergency consultation and guidance regarding children who may be at risk of suspension or expulsion, discuss a specific question or concern related to infant, toddler and young children’s social, emotional, and behavioral health and receive helpful linkages to resources.

When Can I Call?

Call **1-877-524-2422** any time Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. All calls are confidential. If the representative is unavailable or calls are received after hours, you can expect to receive a call back within 24 hours.

Additional Resources

Sesame Street in Communities Professional Development

Sesame Street in Communities offers free professional development through the Sesame Street in Communities website. Training includes short videos, webinars, courses, and interactive training as well as occasional live streamed events. Sign up on for events via the [Sesame Street in Communities website](#).



Early Childhood Investigation Webinars

| Webinar | Date & Time | Location |
|--|--|----------|
| <u>Promoting the Positive Racial Identity of Black Infants and Toddlers in Early Childhood Programs</u> By Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D. | February 24, 2022 2 p.m. EST/ 11 a.m. PST | Virtual |

Coronavirus Resources for Early Childhood Professionals

We are grateful for the many resources about negotiating pandemic challenges made available over the past 21 months. As the coronavirus continues to be an issue in our communities, consider using the suite of resources developed by Zero to Three in your work with infants, toddlers, and their families: [Corona Virus Resources for Early Childhood Professionals](#).

State and National Conferences

Many conferences are still offered on virtual platforms. Confirm the type of conference and the location before registering. See the wide range of topics, presenters, and activities using the links below.

| Conference | Dates | Location |
|--|--|----------|
| <u>Beginning Together: 2021 Inclusion Facilitator Training Institute</u> | March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2022 12 p.m. – 5 p.m. | Virtual |

[CAEYC Annual Conference](#)

April 29, 30 and May 1, 2022

In Person