

Early Childhood Mental Health Initiatives in Delaware, Maryland, and Ohio

This resource was prepared in response to a request for information from a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) State about that have initiatives related to early childhood mental health consultation in [Delaware](#), [Maryland](#), and [Ohio](#). This information will be helpful to other States as they consider initiatives that will support the development of social and emotional competence in infants and young children

This summary descriptions of the role that State mental health agencies play in providing services and highlights recent successes. ELC TA reviewed the 2014 RTT-ELC Annual Performance Report data that the 20 RTT-ELC States submitted to the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services in the spring of 2015 and State websites. Individual State APRs are posted at <https://elc.grads360.org/#program/annual-performance-reports>.

Highlights of State Practices

Delaware

The **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)** is a service supported by the RTT-ELC grant that is available to all programs in the Delaware Stars quality rating and improvement system. The new [Federal policy on the expulsion and suspension of young children](#) from early learning settings makes more people aware of an issue that has been experienced in Delaware. The consultation service, named in the Federal policy statement as one of the most effective in addressing the problem, is highly valued by Stars programs and often requested. Even while called in during the late stage of an issue, Delaware's ECMHC service maintains a success rate of 97 percent in avoiding expulsions where child-specific consultation service is provided to the early learning program staff. The professional development trainings offered by the ECMHCs include a six hour Child-Adult Relationship Enhancement (CARE) course; one hour special topic brown bag courses; and Teacher-Child Interaction Training.

More than 50 early educators have completed Teacher-Child Interaction Training, an intensive, on-site 10 week course for early educators that includes training, consultation, coding and coaching, and feedback. Teacher-Child Interaction Training is shown to reduce early educator stress, the number of classroom disruptions, as well as increase job satisfaction.

During Year Three, Delaware was awarded a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Project LAUNCH grant that will add one more early childhood mental health consultant.

The RTT-ELG grant also allowed Delaware to strengthen **access to behavioral health treatment for young children and their families**. In the third year of the grant, 27 more community clinicians completed the 40-hour Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) training and participated in follow-on consultation. This increased Delaware's capacity to provide evidence-based treatment to young children and their families. Eight clinicians from local mental health provider agencies were certified as PCIT trainers after completion of advanced training and meeting national certification criteria, further assuring sustainable access to evidence-based treatment for young children and their families. A full-day community-of-practice PCIT conference drew more than 100 PCIT-trained clinicians from mental health providers across the State and featured national experts sharing new research and practice adaptations. The Children's Department further increased access to evidence-based treatment for young children by providing infant mental health treatment, using Attachment Bio-Behavioral Catch-up, or 'ABC,' an intervention developed by Delaware's Mary Dozier, Ph.D. for children from birth to age 2 in collaboration with the RTT-ELC.

Maryland

In Maryland, the **Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation Project** improves the ability of staff, programs, and families to prevent, identify, treat, and reduce the impact of social, emotional and other mental health problems among children birth through 5 years of age. The Project began in 2002 as a 3-year pilot program in Baltimore City and on the Eastern Shore. In 2006, based on the project's success as shown in the program evaluation, the Maryland State Department of Education funded the expansion of the ECMH Consultation Pilot Project statewide to the 12 child care licensing regions. The project is both child/family focused and classroom/program focused. This hybrid model allows consultants to focus on specific child behaviors while working with teachers to improve the overall quality of the classroom environment.

Maryland's Child Development Innovations strategies focus on **identifying children's mental health and/or developmental challenges and connecting professionals** with resources for these children. In July 2016, Maryland will put in regulation that all child care providers must administer developmental screenings for children in their care from birth to age 5. Maryland has established a review process to recommend the use of five developmental screening instruments. One of the instruments, Best Beginnings, developed by the University Of Maryland School Of Psychiatry, was piloted through the RTT-ELC grant and met the validity and reliability standards which were established by the review committee. One Innovations strategy provided pediatricians with training on recommended developmental screening tools for use with young patients. Finally, the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL) professional development training is on line and available to the families. Online training opportunities for providers serving children birth to 5 years are also being offered.

The plan for pediatricians was completed in partnership with the University of Maryland-Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Training for 20 primary care providers from across Maryland started in February 2013. Established statewide, the **early childhood mental health consultation hotline** provides immediate consultation

to pediatricians and family practices for young children, birth to age 8, with social/emotional/behavioral concerns including psychotropic medication consultation and referrals to ECMH resources and services. Maryland plans to evaluate the impact of training and consultation services.

The State has also conducted regional resource maps related to early childhood mental health. The Institute for Innovation and Implementation at the University of Maryland's School of Social Work has also **launched a new and improved Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning (SEFEL) website** that offers professional development training modules and resources developed for parents and for those teaching or implementing SEFEL in early learning programs across the State.

Ohio

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) provides cross-system leadership through its **Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH)** initiative that supports evidence-based training to equip parents and caregivers of young children with the skills to help their children develop into mentally healthy individuals. Parents and teachers who effectively nurture, support, and connect with young children, especially those experiencing social or emotional difficulty, can ameliorate future disabling problems. The ECMH initiative is aimed at promoting healthy social and emotional development (i.e., good mental health) of young children (birth to 6 years). It focuses on ensuring these children thrive by addressing their behavioral health care needs, which increases their readiness for school and later academic success. This is accomplished by building protective factors in young children's lives and increasing competencies and skills of parents and early childhood providers. Much of the development and implementation of the Ohio ECMH program has been built upon the research and resources available from the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

Ohio has used the RTT-ELC grant to **strengthen early childhood mental health practices through a network** that includes 17 early childhood mental health consultants, led by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (ODMHAS). These professionals work with existing providers serving children with high needs to support the use of standards and assessments related to social and emotional development and approaches toward learning. Trained as trainers of the Early Learning and Development Standards, the consultants have been working closely with child care resource and referral agencies and State support teams to determine service needs in their area and to collaborate on providing professional development.

To facilitate the **use of standards and assessments**, these early childhood mental health consultants will work with providers serving children with high needs and will support their use of standards and assessments related to social-emotional development and approaches toward learning.

Resources

2014 RTT-ELC Annual Performance Reports are available at <https://elc.grads360.org/#program/annual-performance-reports>

Maryland Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation Project

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/child_care/program/ECMH.htm

Ohio Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) <http://mha.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=279>

The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education. *Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings*. 2014.

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/hhs_and_ed_joint_letter.pdf,

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/expulsion_suspension_final.pdf

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