

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in Texas: What It Is and What It Is Not

	IECMHC in Texas <u>IS</u>	IECMHC in Texas <u>is NOT</u>
Focus/ Goal	Indirect and prevention focused—helping early childhood programs, staff, and families to support children’s social-emotional needs as well as their own.	A way to diagnose and provide direct therapy or treatment for children, families, or staff.
Who it Helps	A prevention-based support to early childhood programs such as early childhood care and education (ECCE), home visiting (HV), early childhood intervention (ECI), and primary care programs.	For children or caregivers or staff who need direct mental health treatment.
Where it Happens	Provided on site at early childhood programs, in a family’s home, community, or remotely (as agreed upon by all parties).	An outside therapeutic intervention that occurs in a therapeutic clinic, private office, or hospital.
How it Happens	Ongoing, reliable, and predictable support from a mental health consultant that occurs for an agreed upon length of time (per service agreement or memorandum of understanding) or until goals/desired outcomes are achieved.	A quick-fix or on-call only.
How it Works	Partnership and support to adult caregivers to promote the mental health of children in their care through deepening knowledge, skills, and well-being.	Someone telling the caregiver how to do their job or providing direct mental health services for children or families.
How Information is Shared	Private and confidential.	A way to gather specific information to report what families or staff share with the consultant.
The Consultative Stance	Supportive and respectful process to help caregivers/staff reflect on their experiences, examine situations from multiple perspectives, and find solutions that support child and adult well-being. Includes testing and refining strategies to find what works.	Judgmental, blaming, or punitive top-down approach that ‘provides the answers’ to staff/ caregivers rather than figuring out and testing together.
Purpose	A way to help early childhood staff and parents/caregivers build knowledge and skills, deepen self-awareness, and create nurturing and supportive environments.	Therapy, counseling, medical treatment, or a direct mental health service provided to families.
Core Activities	A mix of training, group reflective consultation, and 1:1 support to directors and staff to address program-wide, classroom/ caseload, or individual child/family concerns.	1:1 therapy with staff or families participating in ECCE, ECI, HV or primary care programs.
Flexibility	Flexible—Consultants adjust to challenges and unexpected needs of the program; goals are regularly revisited and can be revised or added when initial goals are met.	Strict and the same for every situation.

For more information on IECMHC, see: <https://www.tiemh.org/early-childhood-mental-health-initiatives/>