

# Maryland's Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation Project:

Helping children remain in stable, quality early care and education arrangements



## Quality Services and Well Trained Consultants

Learn more about ECMH consultants by visiting us online at [http://marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/child\\_care/program/ECMH.htm](http://marylandpublicschools.org/msde/divisions/child_care/program/ECMH.htm).

ECMH consultants implement a teaching framework based on the Maryland Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (SEFEL) model, which can be accessed online via an informative website made available through support from the *Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant* and a partnership with the University of Maryland Innovations Institute.

Visit <https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/SEFEL> today for:

- Online training
- Resources for families, teachers and caregivers
- Tools for SEFEL trainers/coaches

"The support I recieved was just amazing...This was the last resort for two of my children. I can't say enough about the amazing turn around in my child care..."

- Early Care Provider served by the Anne Arundel County ECMH Project, Arundel Child Care Connections



## Local Early Childhood Mental Health Projects By Regional Jurisdiction

Champs Program [Anne Arundel]	410-222-1715 ext. 1286
Early Intervention Project [Baltimore City]	410-685-5150 ext. 226
Abilities Network [Baltimore County]	410-828-7700 ext. 1204
Child Care Choices, PERKS [Carroll County]	410-751-2917
Child Care Choices, PERKS [Frederick County]	301-662-4549
Abilities Network [Harford/Cecil County]	410-828-7700 ext. 1204
CARE Center [Howard County]	410-313-2273
Lower Shore Early Intervention Program [Somerset/Wicomico/Worcester Counties]	410-677-6590
ChildLink [Montgomery County]	240-777-4769
Project WIN [Prince George County]	301-772-3607
Southern Maryland Project First Choice [Charles/Calvert/St. Mary's Counties]	301-290-0040
Upper Shore Project Right Steps [Caroline/Dorchester/Kent/Queen Anne's Counties/Talbot]	410-822-5400 ext. 321
Western Maryland APPLES for Children	301-733-0000

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools

Martin O'Malley  
Governor

Charlene M. Dukes, Ed.D.  
President  
State Board of Education



Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
<http://marylandpublicschools.org/msde>

## ECMH Consultation Services can:

- Enhance teacher-child interactions
- Improve quality of classroom climate
- Reduce children's problem behavior and increase social skills
- Prevent expulsions
- Decrease teacher stress

This material was produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Development.



## About the Project

The project started in 2002 as a three-year pilot known as *The Early Intervention Project* in Baltimore City, and *Project Right Steps* in five counties located on the Eastern Shore. The pilot project has since expanded across the state and its goals include:

- Promoting good mental health practices and services to young children and their families;
- Identifying and working proactively with children who may have developmental, social, emotional, and behavioral concerns;
- Helping young children acquire the social and emotional skills necessary to enter school ready to succeed; and
- Referring children and families in need of more intensive mental health services to appropriate support programs.

A three-year evaluation of MD's ECMHC Project conducted through a partnership between MSDE, University of MD School of Medicine, CKD Communications, LLC., and Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development found:

- ECMHC improves the effectiveness of ECE Providers' approaches to promoting a classroom climate conducive to positive behavior and social emotional functioning.
- ECMHC interventions improve the overall level of social functioning for children and reduce the level of challenging behaviors in the classroom.
- 88% of all the children served remained in their current care setting or moved to a more appropriate setting.



## Project Highlights

### Child care program consultation services have benefited:

- Child care centers;
- Family child care providers;
- Head Start/Early Head Start sites;
- Prekindergarten classrooms; and
- Foster Care providers, grandparents, and informal providers.

### Child-specific consultation services available to individual children include:

- Social/Emotional Assessments;
- Planning appropriate supports to increase a child's success at home and in school; and
- Referrals to community intervention programs such as the Infants and Toddlers Program, Child Find, therapeutic nurseries or other community early childhood mental health providers.

Formal trainings are provided by consultants to child care staff and parents on the Social/Emotional Foundations of Early Learning.

Over the years, the need for early childhood mental health services has been on the rise. The ECMH Consultation Project works to increase public awareness of the importance of a child's social/emotional development, particularly as it relates to school readiness. Regional project sites maintain telephone help lines, distribute publications and resources, and partner with stakeholder agencies to inform child care providers and families about the availability and benefits of early childhood mental health services.

Today, child care providers and parents across the state can access ECMH Consultation Project services free of charge. Services include:

- Observation and assessment of children and the child care environment using research-based tools;
- Partnering with child care providers to deliver training, mentoring, and coaching to help create environments that better support the social and emotional needs of young children;
- Increasing child care staff skills in addressing the social and emotional needs of children to improve readiness for school;
- Working with child care providers to help retain and serve children with behavioral and mental health needs; and
- Forging positive relationships with providers and families.

*"Keep the program — it is an invaluable resource!!! The consultant has been a perfect fit for our center — very professional, approachable, personable. Thank you!"*

**- Director of a Center served by  
ChildLink of Montgomery Co.**

