



Competencies that Guide Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants

Illinois Model for Infant/ Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

The Illinois Model for Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is guided by eight core competencies. Aspects of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are woven into various competencies. As an early childhood professional, leader, or Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant you might be curious how the Illinois Model for I/ECMHC aligns with the national Center of Excellence of I/ECMHC, the Erikson Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Certificate, the Credential, or with Head Start's Program Performance Standards. [Click here](#) to view the crosswalk in the Illinois Model for Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation competencies to learn more.



#1: Knowledge of Infant/Early Childhood Development, Mental Health, and Early Care and Education.

Consultants have foundational knowledge of child development within the context of family, culture, and communities, combined with a solid grounding in children's mental health and experience in working with infants, young children, and their families.



#2: Ability to Build Relationships and Collaboratively Engage with Families, Providers, Programs, and Systems.

Consultants engage families, providers, programs, and systems in genuine and collaborative relationships. Consultants use an approach that is culturally sensitive and strengths-based, emphasizing capacity building and creating partnerships that support the social-emotional health of young children. In the consultation process, the consultant continually works to foster a sense of trust and openness among partners.

Governor's Office of Early
Childhood Development
GOV.OECD@illinois.gov

bit.ly/IL-IECMHC

Scan the QR code

- Open the camera app
- Focus the camera on the QR code by gently tapping the code
- Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the action





#3: Ability to Work Effectively Throughout Diverse Cultures and Communities.

Cultural beliefs can impact the way families and communities approach the sensitive topics of children's mental health and social-emotional skills, and are integral to the formation of trusting, collaborative partnerships. Consultants actively and sensitively seek to understand the culture and climate of the families and programs with whom they work and are aware of their own responses and reactions to any differences.



#4: Ability to Effectively and Sensitively Gather Information.

Consultants are skilled in collecting information through multiple methods including, but not limited to, observation, discussions, and the use of social-emotional screening tools that contribute to a better understanding of the child, family, early childhood professional, program, and system contexts. Consultants strive to be unbiased and objective in their use of methods and in their practice of documenting and reporting of information to accurately reflect the situation in all its dimensions.



#5: Ability to Collaboratively Develop a Plan and Shared Measures of Success.

Consultants work collaboratively to build and support the capacity within early childhood professionals, families, and programs to co-create a consultation plan that align with the agency's program or with plans required by the system. Consultants use various consultation methods such as reflecting, modeling, exploring, problem-solving, and training, to support mutually agreed upon goals. Consultants regularly re-visit goals to assess progress at multiple levels; individual, organizational, and systemic.



#6: Knowledge of Community Systems and Resources and Ability to Develop Partnerships.

Consultants work to build reputations in their communities as reliable professionals who can elevate the voice of infant and early childhood mental health at the table. The results of these partnerships are the sharing of resources, and the linking of services so that consultees can be connected to appropriate services. Consultants pursue opportunities to advocate for policies, practices, and linkages that support infant and early childhood mental health accessibility for communities, programs, and families, where appropriate.



#7: An Understanding of the Impact of Trauma on Early Childhood Development.

Consultants work with programs to understand the underlying factors that influence the interactions and reactions of very young children and staff who may be experiencing trauma while becoming aware of their own biases and triggers. Collaboratively the staff, consultant, and adults in the child's life design safe, responsive, and nurturing environments in which young children can learn and grow to lessen the impact of trauma on child development.



#8: Commitment to Ethical Behavior and Reflective Practice.

The Consultant engages in ethical practices consistent with their discipline's standards of practice and/or code of ethics, while also being able to represent the field of infant and early childhood mental health. By continually using self-assessment and supervision to ensure the use of reflective capacity, and adoption of a consultative stance. The consultant responds with cultural responsiveness, and develops relationships-based on sensitive listening, responding, and the sharing of responsibility and power.