



CONSULTATIVE ROLES

IN COLORADO'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

Early Childhood Consultants are an important part of Colorado's Early Childhood network of support for child care providers of children from prenatal to age five. They are comfortable working in early childhood settings. They are certified to provide research-based and credentialed consultation, coaching and some offer technical assistance (services may be provided at no cost).

By collaborating with child care providers, consultants help them build their skills and knowledge, boost their confidence, and expand their tools to help young children grow and thrive. With rapid changes in the field, child care providers cannot do the critical work of fostering child development alone. A quality relationship between consultants and providers improves the providers' success and creates a more nurturing, healthy, and safe environment for children.

OVERVIEW OF EACH CONSULTATIVE ROLE



CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP) SPECIALISTS

CACFP specialists (including sponsors, field representatives, and State consultants) provide coaching and support for participants in the CACFP program. In Colorado, licensed child care providers (both family child care homes and child care centers, including programs outside of school hours and Head Start), and Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) Qualified Exempt (QE) providers are eligible to participate in CACFP and receive reimbursements for serving healthy meals and snacks to children.



CHILD CARE HEALTH CONSULTANTS (CCHC)

CCHCs are licensed health professionals (e.g., registered nurse, pediatric nurse practitioner, family nurse practitioner, or physician) with knowledge and experience in maternal and child health. They are trained to work with providers, including child care centers, family child care homes, camps, and Head Start programs, to address the health, safety, and wellness needs of children in early childhood settings. CCHCs provide services to ensure that children with special health needs are included in child care. They also make sure staff are supported with training and delegation of health procedures and of medications.



EARLY CHILDHOOD COACHES

By providing ongoing strengths-based support, Early Child Coaches build collaborative relationship-based partnerships that are informed by an interactive process of inquiry and reflection with Colorado's Early Childhood workforce. A coach's individualized, strengths-based approach could help you achieve your goals, such as helping with a challenging child or group of children, or achieving a higher Quality rating in the state system. These coaches include Pyramid Model, Incredible Years, Early Learning Ventures, and many more. To engage a coach, visit the Early Childhood Council Leadership Alliance (ECCLA) to find your Early Childhood Council (ECC).



OVERVIEW OF EACH CONSULTATIVE ROLE *continued*



EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH (ECMH) CONSULTANTS

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation is an evidence-based strategy that aims to support the mental health and healthy social and emotional development of young children. ECMH consultants are clinically trained mental health professionals who work closely with adults, providing support and training that empower them to promote children's healthy social-emotional development and effectively respond to behaviors they find challenging. These services are rooted in the philosophy that positive, secure relationships between caregivers, children, and families are essential to healthy child development.



EXPANDING QUALITY (EQ) INFANT TODDLER SPECIALIST NETWORK

The Expanding Quality (EQ) in Infant and Toddler Initiative is focused on increasing the quality and availability of respectful, responsive infant and toddler care across Colorado. Infant Toddler Specialists build relationships with caregivers to help them improve their knowledge about infants, toddlers, and care and their skills in responsive care practices in infant and toddler child care settings.



EARLY INTERVENTION (EI)

Colorado's Early Intervention program provides referral, intake, evaluation, eligibility determination, and supports and services to children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families from birth up until the child's third birthday. By providing services and supports during this time, families are able to help their children develop to their full potential, and may decrease the need for additional services later in life. The Early Intervention Colorado program helps families learn ways to support and promote their child's development within their everyday routines and activities. The foundation of early intervention services in Colorado include a family-centered focus that supports children learning in their natural environment, adult learning and quality teaming.



EARLY LEARNING LICENSING AND ADMINISTRATION

The Division of Early Learning Licensing and Administration (DELLA) is responsible for promulgating comprehensive, minimum health and safety rules and regulations for licensed child care programs. The Licensing Specialist supports licensed programs through the annual inspection and monitoring of child care facilities, providing technical assistance and consultation using a strength-based licensing approach. The Licensing Specialist collaborates with child care associations, early childhood councils, child care health consultants, early childhood mental health consultants, child and adult food programs, coaches, advocates, public health inspectors, county human services and other stakeholders.



PEER MENTORS AND APPRENTICESHIP MENTORS

Mentors build a positive, collaborative relationship with other early childhood professionals who are new to their roles. Peer mentors are trained through their places of work, higher education institutions, or through the current peer mentor pilot program at the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC). Apprenticeship mentors partner with higher education institutions that prepare them to guide and observe their apprentices as part of their educational program. Both peer mentors and apprenticeship mentors are there to support and provide guidance and increase their mentee's personal development through reflective processes.



QUESTIONS FOR EACH ROLE TO ASK THEMSELVES:

As you work with early childhood providers, here are a few questions to consider:



Could the provider benefit from help creating health, safety and illness policies, prevention, documentation, infectious disease management, health and safety trainings, emergency preparedness, infant safe sleep, medication, and delegation and connecting to helpful community resources?

VISIT: [Healthy Child Care Colorado](#), [Child Care Health Consultation](#)



Could the provider benefit from addressing the needs of infants and toddlers?

VISIT: [Colorado Department Early Childhood Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Initiative](#)



Could the provider benefit from financial reimbursement to make serving healthy meals and snacks more affordable?

VISIT: [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#)



Does the provider need resources when they have a question about a child's developmental milestones or for a child that they already know has a developmental delay or disability?

VISIT: [Early Intervention Colorado](#)



Could the provider benefit from increasing the quality of early learning programs and help navigating Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)?

VISIT: [Colorado Shines Program Resources](#) or Connect with an [Early Childhood Council](#)



Could an individual benefit from becoming a licensed provider, having access to comprehensive training, ongoing support and technical assistance to promote safe responsive child care?

VISIT: [Division of Early Learning Licensing and Administration](#)



Could the provider benefit from support and training to promote social-emotional development?

VISIT: [MentalHealthStartsEarly.com](#)



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EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
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