



**Preschool Expulsion Prevention:  
Parent and Practitioner Perspectives on Putting Policy into Practice**  
Grace Schoessow, MS Early Childhood Mental Health Program Coordinator




Fall 2019

**Objectives: To understand...**

2



- How Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation puts policy into practice to promote student wellness and support positive and safe learning environments.
- How ECMHC prevents expulsion from early learning environments, promotes positive preschool climate and builds adult competencies.
- How parent perspectives inform how best to overcome challenges when using ECMHC strategies to address early childhood mental health.



This session is about a **transformation** underway thanks to:

3

- the wisdom of Ohio's decision makers to listen to their communities.
- the **wherewithal of the local community team members to recognize the opportunity for change.**
- the visionary **LEADERSHIP** that has made it a priority to expand the reach ECMHC to prevent expulsion and invest in the mental health of the youngest children in Ohio.

**Opportunity for Improvement**

4

- Expulsions and suspensions occur at high rates in early childhood environments
- Some children are **pre-diagnosis** or **misdiagnosed**, or **unable to access services**
- This raises compliance questions with 504, ADA, IDEA, Civil Rights Act, Title IX
- Help with challenging behavior is the **TOP** professional development request
- BOTH families and early learning professionals **are frustrated**
- As a result, early childhood classrooms are **disrupted** and **unsafe**
- There are **racial and gender disparities**, with boys of color disproportionately being kicked out of early learning programs

**Helping Young Children Beat the Odds**

5

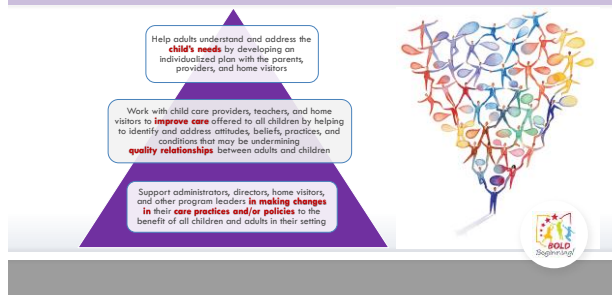
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants help caregivers support healthy growth and development in our young children

It's not about "fixing" children or providing therapy.


- Promote strong relationships and a supportive environment for caregivers, such as home visitors and child care professionals, along with families and communities
- Partner with parents and caregivers to understand what babies and young children are telling us with their behaviors, and co-create solutions
- Equip caregivers with the tools and insights to develop healthy emotional and social behaviors in young children
- Help our children feel safe, supported and valued



**The Role of the Mental Health Consultant**



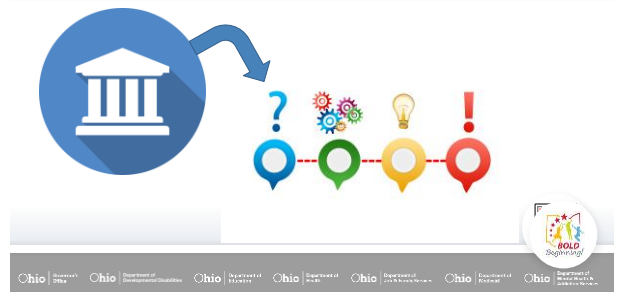
- Help adults understand and address the **child's needs** by developing an individualized plan with the parents, providers, and home visitors
- Work with child care providers, teachers, and home visitors to **improve care** offered to all children by helping to identify and address attitudes, beliefs, practices, and conditions that may be undermining **quality relationships** between adults and children
- Support administrators, directors, home visitors, and other program leaders in **making changes in their care practices and/or policies** to the benefit of all children and adults in their setting



### 4 buckets of Ohio's Core ECMHC components



### Putting Policy to Practice



### Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

This block contains a central yellow folder labeled 'Portfolio of EBPs'. To its left is a document titled 'Ohio Preschool Expulsion Prevention Partnership' with a tree icon. To its right is another document with a photo of children. A 'BOLD Strategizing' logo is in the bottom right corner.

### Expulsion- the quick fix?

The block features a woman in a dark shirt looking thoughtful, with several question marks floating around her head. To the left of the image, the text reads: 'ECMHC supports careful consideration of multiple perspectives.' To the right is a bulleted list of stakeholders.

- Teachers & staff
- Parents
- The other parents
- The child
- The other children
- Community partners
- The Public
- Online reviews

### Challenges from the Parent Perspective

- Parental stress
- Teacher stress, burnout
- Relational disconnect
- Mistrust & Blame
- Emotional intensity, hurt feelings
- Apathy, "not my problem"
- Avoidance
- Professionalism (or lack of)
- Advocacy access
- Shame & stigma

"My heart is broken." "I feel like a failure as a parent"  
 "I know he acts up- do I have to hear about it every day?"  
 "I have to work, what do they expect me to do?" "All day I worry."  
 "I can tell she doesn't like him." "She wants him out." "Nonstop mom shaming me."

### Helpful

- Provide situation specific self regulatory training (coaching and consultation)
- Teach specific executive function skills
- Teach strategies for re-assessing stressful situations and consider alternatives
- Teach strategies for recognizing and interrupting automatic (often emotional) reactions to allow for time for intentional self regulation in stressful situations.
- Strengthen intentional self regulation by building skills that override automatic responses

