

The Value of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Support CDHS Supplemental Request S-01, BA-01,

Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists Expansion with Federal Funds

THE ISSUE

More than 1 in 5 children under 18 experience multiple adverse childhood experiences in Colorado.

27% of Colorado's parents have concerns about their child's emotions, concentration or behavior, but only a third of parents with concerns actually access support of any kind.

Less than half of children's social-emotional, developmental or mental health problems are detected before they enter school.

THE CHALLENGE

Colorado only has 17 Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists to support more than 400,000 children under the age of six who live in our state.

As a result, existing specialists can only respond to a mere fraction of the referrals they receive.

Parents and providers often find that they do not have the tools to respond to challenging behavior. This frequently leaves educators with little choice but to suspend or expel children from early care and learning settings.

THE OPPORTUNITY

This funding request would utilize *federal funding* to expand access to early childhood mental health specialists.

Early Childhood Mental Health Specialists can support parents and educators in implementing prevention-oriented strategies.

Mental health consultation models for young children enhance children's healthy development, improve child behavior, reduce suspensions and expulsions, and improve the quality of child care settings. These interventions can save downstream costs to the system and provide relief for families and educators.