

Hello, my name is Connie Grose. I work under the Whole Child Matters Grant and have done this work for the last 13 years. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation allows us to train, teach, and coach early learning professionals and parents to build their capacity to meet the social and emotional needs of young children. Our goal is to support young learners, helping to ensure that they all have positive early learning experiences.

Please consider increasing the funding allocated for this vital program. IECMH Consultation focuses on building the capacity of adult caregivers so that the reach can be much wider than one child who may be struggling but rather as the early learning professional learns new skills, it will impact all the children in their care and future children that come into their care.

Today I called a mom after observing her child in his classroom to gather additional information about this child's behavior and possible needs. Through the course of this conversation the mother explained that she was "all alone" just her and her child and she often felt like she did not know what to do. As we spoke, she said, "I don't have a village like most people. It's just me and I don't know what to do a lot." This mom shared an example of something her son had done last night at a store that had upset her. We spoke about how the brain works and some strategies that may be more effective when going into the store. We spoke about the next step being an evidence-based assessment and then a team meeting with the parent, teacher, and consultant to discuss the findings and review evidence-based strategies. The mom was really excited about this and said she looked forward to hearing some ideas of things she could do at home to help him. Before ending the call, I said, "this service allows me to be a small part of a village for you and your son." The mom immediately said, "I already feel like you are! We have been on the phone for an hour and you have already given me several things I could do today to help him. I really like the way you explain things. I feel like everyone else has told me I need to whoop him but you have given me ideas I feel good about."

This work has already impacted thousands and thousands of children but we are not done. There are many early learning centers and/or caregivers that are in the beginning stages or have yet to be reached. I urge this committee to prioritize funding that makes mental health supports available to our most vulnerable Ohioans, infants and early childhood. Thank you for your time and consideration.