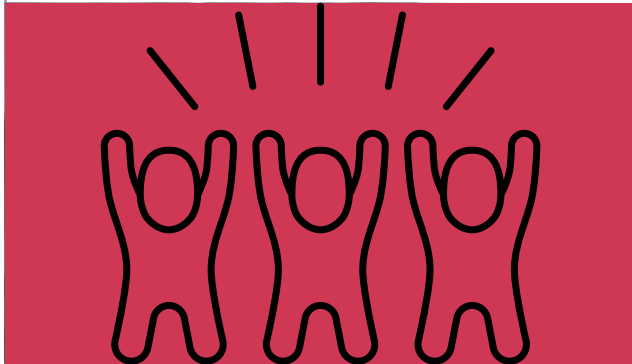




# IECMHC Spotlight Report

July - December 2023



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# What is IECMHC?

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) pairs mental health consultants with early childhood professionals to build their capacity to nurture social and emotional development in infants and young children,<sup>1</sup> reduce challenging behaviors,<sup>2</sup> improve teachers' confidence and knowledge,<sup>1</sup> reduce preschool suspensions and expulsions,<sup>3,4</sup> and reduce racial disparities in teacher-child conflict.<sup>5</sup>



## Glossary of Terms

- **COE** A federally-funded national center providing technical assistance and professional development to increase access to high quality mental health consultation throughout the country.
- **IECMHC** A prevention-based approach that pairs a mental health consultant with adults who work with infants and young children in the different settings where they learn and grow, such as child care, preschool, home visiting, early intervention and their home.
- **IECMH** The developing capacity of the child from birth to 5 years old to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions; and explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture. ZERO TO THREE (2017)



# Maryland's IECMHC Model

The Division of Early Childhood within the Maryland State Department of Education has funded IECMHC services state-wide since 2009. There are 10 funded programs that provide services to all 24 jurisdictions. These services are offered at no cost to the childcare programs or families.

The Parent, Infant, Early Childhood (PIEC) Program at The Institute for Innovation & Implementation supports Maryland's IECMHC model. Since 2009, the PIEC team has provided training, technical assistance, and evaluation for state-funded IECMHC efforts. Their statewide support extends to 10 IECMHC programs, covering program implementation, policy support, subject matter expertise, and workforce development.

Programs Serving the State			
 <p><b>Project Right Steps</b></p>	<p>Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Quenn Anne's, Talbot</p>	 <p><b>Project WIN</b></p>	<p>Prince George's, Anne Arundel</p>
 <p><b>Lower Shore Early Intervention Program</b></p>	<p>Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset</p>	 <p><b>Child Care Choices</b></p>	<p>Frederick, Carroll</p>
 <p><b>The Family Tree</b></p>	<p>Baltimore City</p>	 <p><b>Promise Resource Center</b></p>	<p>Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's</p>
 <p><b>Care Center</b></p>	<p>Howard</p>	 <p><b>Project Act</b></p>	<p>Baltimore County, Harford, Cecil</p>
 <p><b>Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services</b></p>	<p>Montgomery</p>	 <p><b>APPLES for Children, Inc.</b></p>	<p>Allegany, Washington, Garrett</p>

# Creating Internship Pathways

The MD IECMHC Internship Pathway program is a workforce development strategy designed to build a robust and diverse Maryland IECMHC workforce. Through this strategy, we strive to diversify the workforce to better represent the children receiving IECMHC services. Research suggests that children have better outcomes when consultants view students through a culturally relevant lens, underscoring the need for more culturally and linguistically appropriate consultants.<sup>6</sup>



**University Partners:** Salisbury University and University of Maryland, School of Social Work

**Local IECMHC Partners:** Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center Early Intervention Project (Baltimore City), Project WIN (Prince George’s County), and Lower Shore Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program (Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester)



**MSW Student Interns:** Students come from diverse professional backgrounds with or without child care experience. Students participate in the IECMHC onboarding training series to enhance their knowledge and skills.














Interns have engaged in diverse learning experiences over the year, including the following activities:




- Data evaluation activities
- Site visits and classroom observations
- Utilization of assessment tools
- Drafting statewide reports
- Participating in stakeholder meetings and community events

“I learned a lot that I did not know before and was able to interact with people who have different backgrounds doing the same work: teachers, social workers, child psychologists. I enjoyed visiting centers and being a resource. The training was a great opportunity for an intern, I felt like I was given the same opportunities as an employee. It motivated me to think of ways to incorporate this experience into my current work.”

# Year 2 of Onboarding Series

The PIEC team’s mission is to deliver training and technical assistance to Maryland’s IECMHC Programs. This year, the team successfully completed its second IECMHC Onboarding Training Series. The onboarding training courses are aimed at introducing new consultants to the information and tools necessary to deliver consultation services in Maryland, while providing an opportunity for experienced consultants to enhance their skills. The consultants participated in a variety of training courses meant to broaden their knowledge and skill sets. Some of these trainings including post-training monthly coaching. Trainings are categorized below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> IECMHC Foundational Modules and Consultative Stance</li> <li> Videos on Expulsions and Bias</li> <li> Pyramid Model training series</li> <li> *Developmentally Appropriate Practices</li> <li> *Introduction to Consultation in Maryland</li> </ul> <p><b>Foundations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> ASQ-3, ASQ-SE</li> <li> DECA Preschool</li> <li> Preschool Expulsion Risk Measure (PERM)</li> <li> TPOT (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool); TPITOS (Infant-Toddler version)</li> <li> *MD IECMH Outcomes Monitoring System (OMS)</li> </ul> <p><b>Data/ Assessments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> *Consultative Stance, Part I &amp; Part II (led by national IECMHC expert Kadija Johnston)</li> <li> Practice Based Coaching (PBC)</li> <li> Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN)</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflective and Coaching practices</b></p>
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 Georgetown Center of Excellence asynchronous trainings
  Maryland asynchronous trainings
  Live trainings
 \*New as of 2023

## Onboarding Series Feedback

- **81%** believed they enhanced their knowledge in IECMHC skills and practices.
- **75%** felt they could more effectively complete their job.
- **75%** believed they would be able to use what they learned.
- **63%** noticed shifts in their practice.

*“It’s wonderful that having a series for new consultants, creates a community to meet each other as they navigate their new roles in the field.”*

*“It was useful to learn... the benefits of Consultation, and the multidisciplinary systems of the MD IECMHC model.”*

*My favorite part was the ability to make connections across the state.*



# Strengthening IECMHC & PM

IECMHC and the Pyramid Model contribute to the social-emotional well-being of young children, and they each have distinct foci and approaches. In Maryland, we are working to integrate the models in the following ways:

## National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) Innovation TA Cohort

Maryland participated in NCPMI’s Innovation TA Cohort on IECMHC and the Pyramid Model. This national cohort met monthly over six months to enhance state leaders’ understanding of the intersection of IECMHC and the Pyramid Model. In Maryland, we aim to form greater connections between Pyramid Model and IECMHC to better support the behavior needs of children and families and ultimately reduce the use of exclusionary discipline practices such as suspension and expulsion.

## Development of Statewide Website

Maryland’s team is actively working with a marketing firm to develop a statewide website, [www.KidsThriveMaryland.org](http://www.KidsThriveMaryland.org) to streamline information, increase awareness of IECMHC and PM, create quick access to local resources, and build connections among the workforce. Kids Thrive Maryland, scheduled to be launched in June 2024, is a virtual one stop shop of resources, support and research dedicated to supporting Maryland’s implementation of the Pyramid Model and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation.

## PIDS Data System

Maryland’s team funded and initiated the development of a new IECMHC data collection system within the National Pyramid Model Data System. Developing a well-designed data system for IECMHC enhances program effectiveness and supports evidence-based decision-making. This new data system will encourage collaboration with the Pyramid Model, which can lead to shared data, improved referral pathways and better-informed policy decisions. This new data system will be launched in Fall 2024.





# Program Spotlights

IECMHC programs utilize various outreach efforts to maximize program impact within their communities.

## Family Tree (Baltimore City)

The Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center's Early Intervention Project (EIP) made significant impact in the first six months of the grant. Through the IECMHC program, parents received training at Baltimore City Judy Centers, with 44 parents learning valuable strategies for enhancing their children's social and emotional development.

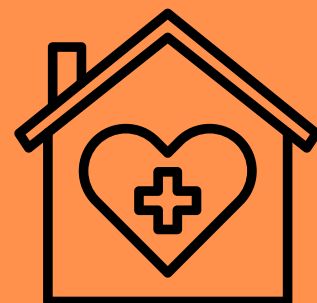
Supporting child care professionals remains a top priority. The Provider Support Group, launched during the COVID pandemic. It offers a safe space for stress relief and networking, serving 77 professionals. Discussions focus on self-compassion and navigating drop-offs for children.



Looking ahead, the Emotional Wellness Conference will empower early childhood professionals to support children and families. It covers essential topics like the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and Child Development.

## PERKS (Frederick and Carroll County)

During the first six months of the grant, the PERKS Program intentionally collaborated with the Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care (GOFCC) team to support newly licensed educators in developing social-emotional skills for their students. As part of this partnership, the PERKS Program created start-up bundles containing social-emotional materials, including techniques for calming down and social stories. The goal was to introduce new educators to the services offered by the PERKS Program and establish early relationships. Through this collaboration, the PERKS Program expanded its reach within the Family Child Care community, providing support to numerous GOFCC graduates.

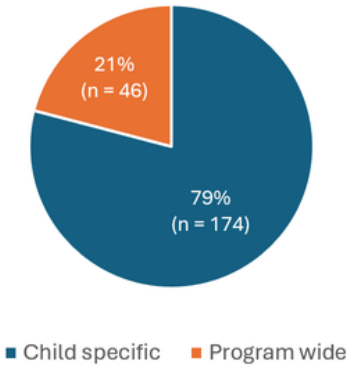




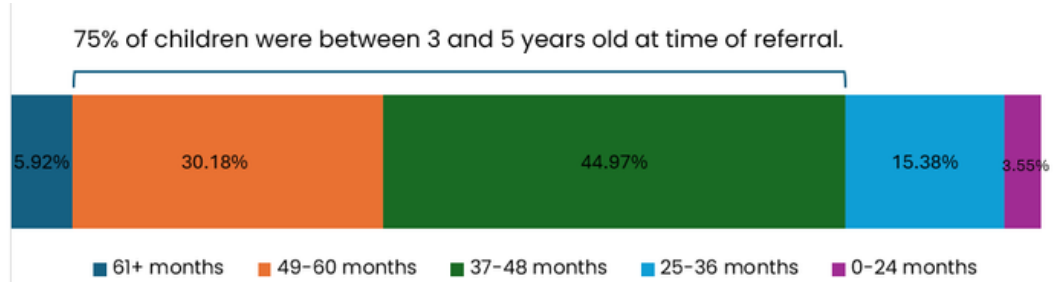
# Program Reach

From July through December 2023, **225** children were referred for exhibiting challenging behaviors. **220** of those referrals were accepted. Demographics for the child-specific cases, whose families consented to data sharing, are reported here.

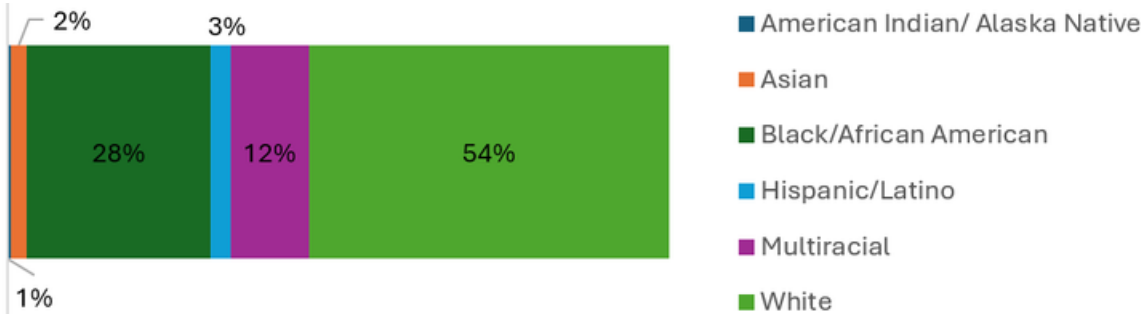
## Accepted cases



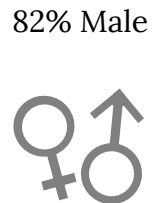
## Age of child at the time of referral



## Race/Ethnicity

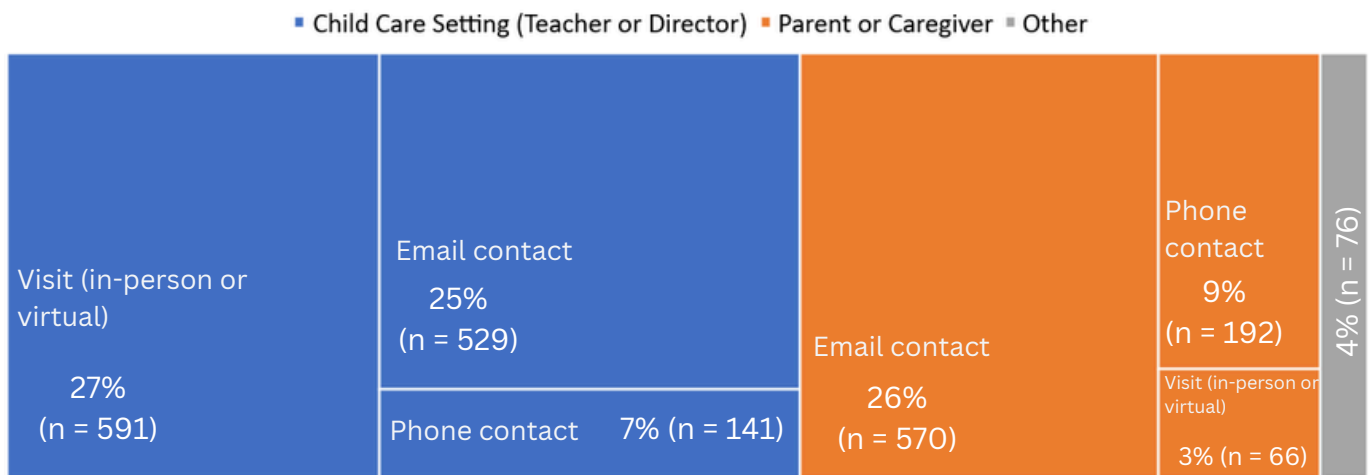


## Gender



## Consultant contacts

IECMHC staff reported making 2,165 contacts with child care staff and/or parents/caregivers.



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# Thank You

Thank you for engaging with our IECMHC efforts to support the social and emotional needs of our state's youngest learners, as well as their families, child care providers, educators, and caregivers.

## Acknowledgements

This statewide work has benefited from dedicated funding and support from the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood and specifically Donald Corbin in his role of guiding and leading this work.

The PIEC team has been honored to serve Maryland for over a decade. We remain committed to seeking opportunities to continue this work in the future. Please direct any inquiries to [earlychildhood.msde@maryland.gov](mailto:earlychildhood.msde@maryland.gov)



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