



HB 776 “State Department of Education – Infant and Early Childhood  
Mental Health Consultation Project – Study and Report”  
Submitted to the House Ways & Means Committee  
February 12, 2021

Position: Support

We are Carolyn Howe and Ira Tuazon; co-directors of The Children in the Shoe BCC Center in Bethesda and we write in support of HB 776. Our program has received Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services for over ten years and they have been a valuable resource to our program and the families in our care.

Periodically, we see challenging behaviors in our classrooms of 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. Over the years we cared for children who are non-verbal in school, some who struggled to follow classroom directions and get along with others, and some who displayed aggressive physical behaviors. One child exhibiting challenging behaviors can disrupt an entire classroom. In one year, we had three children who needed additional support in one classroom. That can be unmanageable and very stressful.

When we do not have the skills or knowledge to help the children, we rely on the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project’s specialists to support us. Our Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant is a trusted ally who comes into our program and works with us. She observes the classroom and the child. She supports the teachers and helps them develop strategies. She coaches us in how to talk to the parents. Families benefit because the children are able to stay in care and if the child needs to be referred for more intensive services, our Consultant helps us make those connections. We now have a whole protocol to help other kids who are exhibiting challenging behaviors.

Our whole center (directors, teachers, parents, and children) benefit from this partnership. As directors, we became more thoughtful and understanding of each individual teacher and we are more self-aware and conscious of our impact on others. We feel our community was better served because of this support and we highly recommend Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services for others in the State.

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Director of Programs

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Director of Administration