

# RELATE: A Model of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

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Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) aims to improve the ability of staff, families, programs and systems to prevent, identify, and reduce the impact of mental health challenges among children birth to age 6 and their families. (Adapted from Cohen & Kaufmann, 2005)



RELATE is a comprehensive model of ECMHC developed by the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS) to support quality inclusive early childhood programs. The overall purpose of RELATE is to enhance the capacity of caregivers to support healthy social-emotional development for all Maine's children. RELATE blends the evidence-based practice of collaborative consultation in early childhood settings with the principles, values and perspective of the infant/early childhood mental health approach.

#### **RELATE GOALS:**

- 1. Prepare mental health practitioners to provide ECMHC within early care and education settings;
- 2. Provide programmatic and child/family-specific mental health consultation in order to promote, sustain, and restore children's healthy social and emotional development; and
- 3. Create and sustain a high quality, cost-effective, accessible statewide system of ECMHC.

RELATE: System Infrastructure

In partnership with the Maine Department of Health and

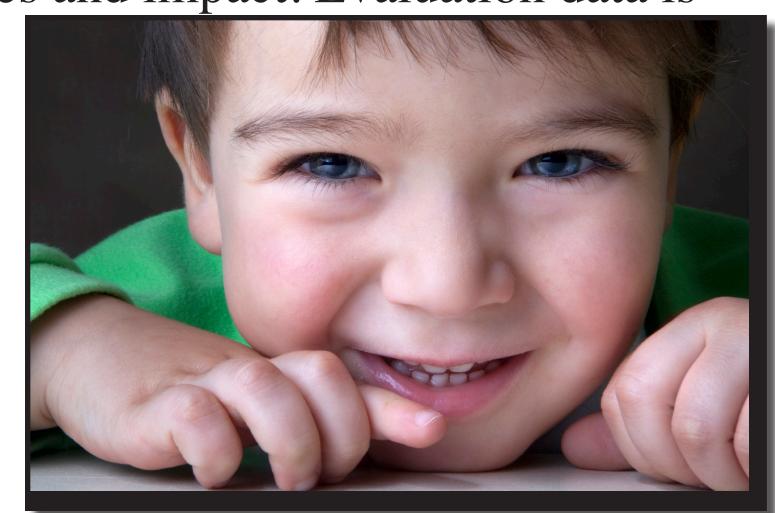
Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services, researchers from the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies develop, assess and contribute to sustainability efforts of the RELATE model.

Within the RELATE model, strategic state and local partnerships combine to accomplish the following:

- Articulate the need for ECMHC;
- Identify, access, and integrate potential resources and opportunities for sustainability of the model; and
- Match the needs, resources, and model design with the current evidence base.

Through field-testing in model demonstration sites and replication efforts, the RELATE model is evaluated in terms of outcomes and impact. Evaluation data is

analyzed and refinements to the model are made through quality improvement processes led by CCIDS staff in collaboration with



system partners and constituent groups within the model.

Duran, F., et al. (2009). What works? A study of effective early childhood mental health consultation programs. Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

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### RELATE: Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Services

**RELATE-Trained Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants** work in collaboration with early care and education (ECE) professionals and families to build the capacity of all caregivers to solve problems and change practices. RELATE consultants provide both programmatic and child/family-specific early childhood mental health consultation.

### Programmatic Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) RELATE Consultants:

- Conduct program/classroom observations and provide feed back to ECE professionals around practices to promote the healthy social-emotional development of all children.
- Deliver professional development on social-emotional topics with follow-up technical assistance to implement strategies and enhance practices.

## <u>Child/Family-Specific Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC)</u> RELATE Consultants:

- Apply clinical knowledge and expertise to support behavioral change for the child, both indirectly through their support to ECE professionals and families and directly through their participation within classroom activities.
- Align mental health interventions/strategies with developmentally appropriate teaching practices to restore healthy social-emotional development for all children.



### **RELATE: Personnel Preparation**

The RELATE model offers qualified mental health practitioners personnel preparation in the area of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation through professional development and mentoring. Through the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies, mental health practitioners participate in a short-term, intensive, interdisciplinary ECMHC professional development institute.



#### RELATE Collaborative Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Curricula

- Foundations of Collaborative Consultation
- Stages of Consultation
- Knowledge, Skills and Disposition of an Effective Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- Early Care and Education Environments
- Role of the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- Responsibilities of the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- Programmatic Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Child/Family-Specific Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Positive Supports
- Application of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Principles within the RELATE Model

Cohen, E., & Kaufmann, R. (2005). Early childhood mental health consultation; Promotion of mental health and prevention of mental and behavioral disorders (Vol. 1). Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.