

Consultation: Family Tipsheet

What is Consultation with MRTQ PDN Early Childhood Education Program Quality Specialists (shortened to "Quality Specialists" or "QSs")?

Consultation is a collaborative partnership between a child care program and a Quality Specialist who engage in the problem-solving process together. *Both* the QS and the program bring knowledge and skills that merge to create quality environments for children, staff, and families.

The program and the QS work in partnership to improve the quality of the program. Consultation always focuses on the overall program, including policies and procedures, the environment, curricula, and teaching practices. With parental consent, consultation can also focus on identifying and implementing individualized support and accommodation for individual children.

Consultation is **not**:

- An evaluation of your child
- An evaluation of you as a parent
- The same as child care licensing
- Medical, mental health, or developmental therapy services



Programs are saying...

"Changes have occurred in regards to curriculum, environmental reorganization, and parental involvement."

How does consultation work when it involves your child?

- By signing the Release of Information, you are giving permission for your child's program and the QS to discuss what is happening for your child within the program. The QS may reach out directly to connect with you.
- The QS will observe your child and provide a summary of the observation to the program.
- Your child's program will share a copy of the summary with you.
- The program and the QS will decide if ongoing consultation will be helpful.
- You are encouraged to participate to the extent possible for you.
- The QS is also available to meet directly with you one-on-one to review the observation and recommended goals.

What kind of support can a QS offer?

- Professional development resources
- Classroom observation - curriculum, environments, and teaching/administrative practices

- Environment/modifications during transitions



- Individualized teaching strategies to support the inclusion of all children
- Attend and/or facilitate staff/family/board/collaboration meetings
- Facilitate family involvement
- Referral to other educational and or child/family serving agencies
- Access to community-based supports/resources

Programs are saying...

"We have scheduled in 'breaks' to help children who need some time to themselves to adjust to the flow."

What are some of the resources available in the Maine early childhood system to support my child's program and my family?

Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network works with stakeholders across Maine to promote and support professionalism in the early care and education field. <https://mrtq.org>

Rising Stars for ME is a five-star quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) designed to increase awareness of the basic standards of early care and education, recognize and support providers that are providing care above and beyond those standards, and educate the community of the benefits of higher quality care. To learn more about this program: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/qrqs>

Child Development Services is an Intermediate Educational Unit that provides both Early Intervention (birth through two years) and Free Appropriate Public Education (for ages three through five years) under the supervision of the Maine Department of Education. The CDS system ensures the provision of special education rules, federal and state regulations statewide, through a network of regional sites. <http://www.maine.gov/doe/cds/>

University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies (CCIDS) is Maine's [University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities \(UCEDD\)](https://ccids.umaine.edu/). CCIDS is a member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), a national network of congressionally authorized, university-based centers sponsored by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://ccids.umaine.edu/>

ECE Consultation for ME is Maine's statewide Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program that helps children from birth through age 8 by supporting the adults who care for them. <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/ece-consultation-for-me>

Programs are saying...

"Our consultant helped us to work with the parents and come up with a plan that we can work towards together as a team."