

IMPACT Executive Summary

February 2017

Promoting Children's Health in Early Care and Education Settings by Supporting Health Consultation



CHDI's IMPACT, *Promoting Children's Health in Early Care and Education Settings by Supporting Health Consultation*, summarizes research on the role and benefits of health consultation in early learning settings, and reviews policies, regulations, training, and payment structures used to support health consultation in Connecticut and other states. The IMPACT also provides a framework for Connecticut to better integrate health into early learning systems through health consultation.

Visit www.chdi.org to download a copy of this report or to learn more about integrating health into early learning systems.

Early care and education settings significantly contribute to children's health development. Health consultation is a key strategy for integrating child health into early learning systems and maximizing the contribution of early learning programs to children's healthy development. Policy reforms are needed to support health consultation in this critical role.

In Connecticut:

- A majority of children younger than five spend significant time in early care and education settings with more than 98,000 children enrolled in licensed child care centers, Head Start programs, and family child care homes.
- Licensed early care and education settings are required by the State to have regular visits by a health consultant, usually a nurse, with costs fully borne by early care and education programs.
- Child Care Health Consultants (CCHCs) ensure children's health and safety in child care settings according to child care licensing regulations and may also help programs monitor children's development through developmental surveillance and screening and connecting children to follow up services.
- The expectations and training for CCHCs vary and are not well regulated by licensing requirements nor supported by payment systems.

CHDI's IMPACT: *Promoting Children's Health in Early Care and Education Settings by Supporting Health Consultation*, provides a framework for Connecticut to integrate health into early learning systems by building on the opportunities presented by State health reform efforts. Recommendations for doing this include:

1. Develop infrastructure within the State to support health consultation with training, reimbursement, and quality improvement.
2. Strengthen licensing requirements to collect and report detailed health consultation information for all licensed child care sites.
3. Advocate for inclusion of CCHCs in Connecticut's health reform plans.
4. Use a multi-disciplinary oversight group to develop a system of health consultation services to meet the needs of Connecticut's child care programs.