

## Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: FY18-19



“ This is my first year teaching and being able to talk with (our mental health consultant) every week has **really helped me grow as a teacher** - both in my confidence and in learning how to support my students, families, and staff.

– Staff, Lincoln’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Programs funded under OFCY’s *Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation* strategy provide support to early childhood educators and parents to promote healthy emotional and social development. Licensed mental health professionals consult weekly with educators around the mental health and developmental needs of children in their classroom, deliver parenting workshops, and provide individual consultations to children and parents to help transform challenging behaviors. These programs support Head Start, OUSD Child Development Centers, and a handful of home-based preschools throughout Oakland.

### Programs at a Glance

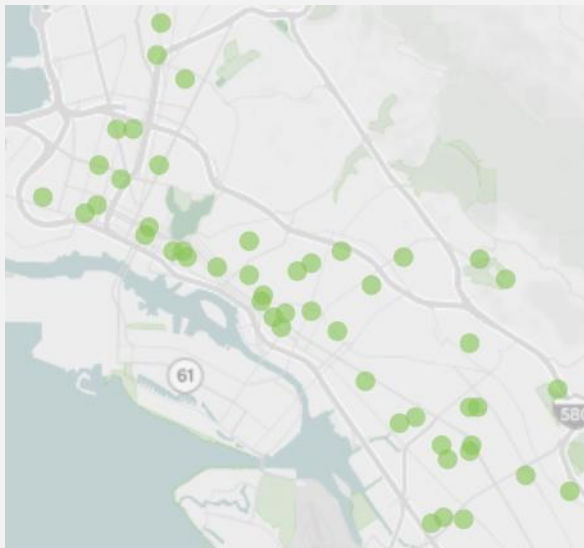


Photo courtesy of Oakland Unified School District

**\$772,500** invested  
**2,048** children served  
**3** programs  
**49** sites

**Programs include**

- Family Paths, Inc. – *Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative*
- Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay – *Integrated Early Childhood Consultation Program*
- Lincoln – *Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation*

## Participants

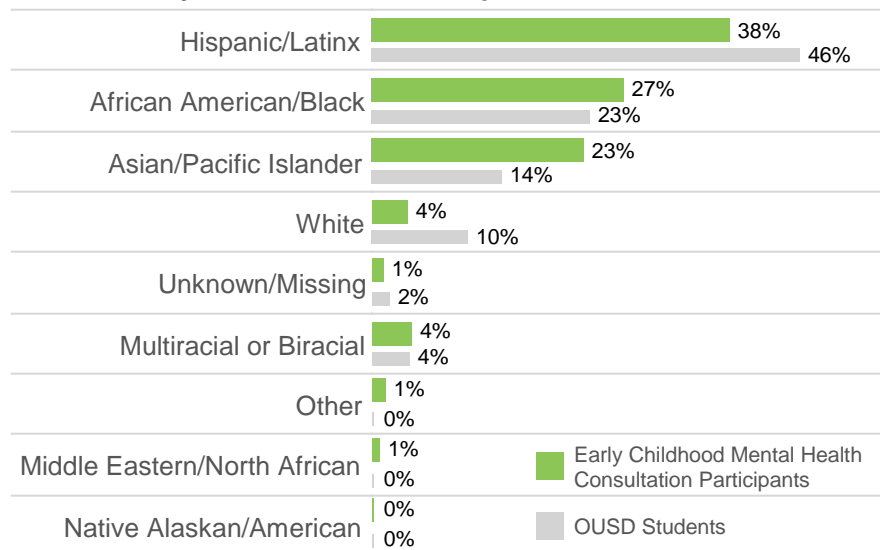
During the program year, 2,048 children participated in early childhood education programs where educators received support from the *Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation* programs. Key demographic information about these children are displayed below.

“Especially with the children with challenging behaviors, they are learning to calm down and ask for things in a more calming way. (They are) learning how to **work more in groups** and have more **empathy towards their friends**.  
 – Staff, Family Path’s Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative

**About two-thirds of children were Hispanic/Latinx or African American/Black, indicating that OFCY is serving its priority populations.**

Compared to OUSD, these programs served a larger proportion of Asian/Pacific Islander youth.

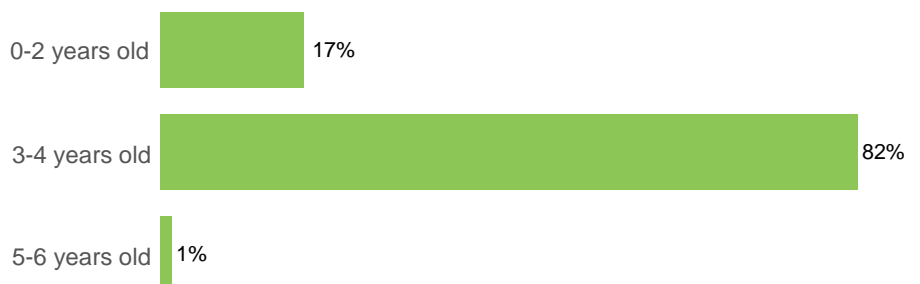
**Race/Ethnicity of OFCY Youth Participants and OUSD Students**



**The vast majority of children were between three and four years old.**

Younger children were served by Early Head Start sites and home-based preschools participating in the consultation program.

**Age of Participants**



## Program Activities

In the *Early Childhood Mental Health* programs, consultants help school staff identify and respond to children and families experiencing trauma. In addition to consulting with school staff around the mental health and developmental needs of children in their classroom, providing individualized mental health services and referrals to children and families, and delivering parenting education workshops, mental health consultants think creatively about how they can promote mental health and wellness, as described by the examples below.

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(The consultant) has provided me with several interventions to use with specific students and has provided keen observations of targeted students that have been **beneficial in meeting the child's needs**.

– Staff, Lincoln’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

At one site, educators and the site director collaborated with consultants from **Jewish Family and Children’s Services-East Bay’s Integrated Early Childhood Consultation Program** to create a playgroup that supports social and emotional support to students. The playgroup is focused on building teacher capacity, creating greater collaboration between parents and teachers, and increasing parent engagement with their children’s development at school.

**Lincoln’s Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation** program hosted an expectant-mothers group, where mothers, grandmothers, and soon-to-be big sisters gathered for activities, crafts, giveaways, and tips for communicating with children about the arrival of a new baby. The gathering aimed to build community, offer self-care, and help mothers connect with one another to share experiences throughout pregnancy and birth. In addition, parents received information on child development and suggestions of activities that promote parent-child attachment.

**Family Paths’ Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative** held mini workshops on trauma-informed care for young children, where educators discussed strategies that promote self-regulation, such as child-friendly breathing exercises and the creation of “calm spaces” where children can go when they are upset.

“

Because of the **communication** among parents, the mental health consultant and me as the teacher, the **children's behavior (has improved)** and the children themselves have become more aware of how they should behave and relate to everyone appropriately and accordingly.

– Staff, Jewish Family & Community Services of the East Bay’s Integrated Early Childhood Consultation Program

## Outcomes

A central goal of this strategy is to increase the child development knowledge of educators that work with young children so that they can better support families and manage children’s behavior. Over two hundred (209) educators completed the OFCY participant surveys that measure progress towards strategy-specific outcomes. The results, illustrated below, indicate that *Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation* programs successfully supported educators in these areas.

### Progress toward Child Development Outcomes (frequency that educators agreed with questions tied to each outcome)

“The consultant has offered me many different **strategies and tools to utilize with my children**. I learned how to modify things I'm already doing to better **meet their needs**.  
– Staff, Jewish Family & Community Services of the East Bay’s Integrated Early Childhood Consultation

“We have more communication with our parents. The **relationships are better**. (We have) more understanding and **more engagement from families**.  
– Staff, Family Path’s Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative

#### Increased knowledge of child development

Since meeting with the mental health consultant, I have a better understanding of why children behave the way they do. 73%

#### Increased access to resources and support

I have a good relationship with the mental health consultant. 90%

The mental health consultant works as a partner with me to meet children's mental health needs. 88%

The mental health consultant is available when I need her/him. 81%

I regularly go to the mental health consultant when I need help with particular children or families. 78%

The mental health consultant works closely with parents to find resources that meet their children's needs. 77%

Working with the consultant has increased my knowledge of available resources that can support children and families. 72%

The consultant connected me with useful resources to help me strengthen my work with children and families. 72%

#### Increased confidence in managing children’s behavior

My work with the mental health consultant has helped me to feel more confident as a teacher. 77%

Since meeting with the mental health consultant, I feel better able to handle children's challenging behaviors. 74%

#### Improved skills to support children’s academic and socio-emotional development

Working with the consultant helped me ensure that more children I work with have the skills they need to succeed in school. 79%

The mental health consultant has helped me to strengthen my relationship with parents and caregivers. 69%