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# Michigan Child Care Expulsion Prevention Program

## State-Level Training and Technical Assistance

Survey Summary No. 9 • August 2008

### Introduction

In February and March 2008, 29 Michigan Child Care Expulsion Prevention Program (CCEP) consultants from 16 CCEP programs across Michigan participated in a survey administered by the Michigan State University evaluation team.

At the state level, administrators direct the CCEP program and provide ongoing training and technical assistance to the consultants through both face-to-face meetings and conference calls. Consultants were asked about how effective they felt various forms of technical assistance were and suggestions for improvement.

#### **This fact sheet provides information on:**

- Consultants' perceptions of state administrators' willingness to collaborate.
- The helpfulness of different forms of technical assistance.
- What is most helpful about the state technical assistance and suggestions for improvement.

### State-level Collaboration

The state-level administrators and staff initiated and designed the CCEP program in collaboration with local CCEP consultants and administrators. In the survey, consultants were asked about their perceptions of the degree to which the state-level administrators collaborated with program-level staff.

Table 2 shows the percent of consultants who indicated that they agreed or disagreed with the statements about state-level administrators and staff.

- The majority of consultants reported that state-level administrators and staff worked collaboratively to identify needs and improvements for the program and make decisions. About half strongly agreed.
- 62% agreed that state-level administrators were open to change and experimentation. About a quarter strongly agreed.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Mildly agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
At the state level, most staff and administrators are open to change and experimentation.	7%	31%	35%	28%
At the state level, staff and administrators of the CCEP program work collaboratively to identify needs and improvements for the program.	7%	14%	28%	52%
At the state level, program administrators collaborate with staff to make decisions.	7%	17%	24%	52%

Note. N for each item = 29 consulttechnical assistancents.

In the experience of the evaluators, perceptions of the willingness of state-level administrators and staff to collaborate with program staff were quite high for a state program.

## Training and Technical Assistance

### *Helpfulness*

The CCEP program offers state-level technical assistance to support the consultants' service through telephone or email consultation, meetings and training, an email group, and on-site visits from the state technical assistance activities were "not very helpful," "somewhat helpful," or "very helpful".

- Nearly all consultants felt the activities were at least somewhat helpful.
- Consultants were most likely to report that the quarterly technical assistance meetings were very helpful, followed by on-site visits and phone consultations.
- The majority of consultants felt that email consultations were very helpful, and about half thought the email group was very helpful.
- Consultants were least likely to think that the monthly training and evaluation meetings were very helpful (38%), but again, most reported that they were at least somewhat helpful.

<i>Technical Assistance Activities</i>	<i>Not very helpful</i>	<i>Somewhat helpful</i>	<i>Very helpful</i>
Quarterly technical assistance meetings	0%	17%	83%
On-site visits	9%	26%	65%
Phone consultations	8%	28%	64%
Email consultations	8%	32%	60%
Email group	3%	45%	52%
Monthly training and evaluation meetings	8%	54%	38%

Note. N for each item = 23 or 29 consultants responding; percent reported is out of those consultants responding.

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All forms of technical assistance were considered least somewhat helpful. Consultants viewed quarterly technical assistance meetings as the most helpful form of technical assistance, followed by on-site visits and phone consultations. These results suggest that consultants found individualized human contact to be the most helpful form of technical assistance. While consultants found monthly training and evaluation meetings helpful, they may have also felt pressures to balance attending technical assistance meetings with provision of services.

### *Most Helpful Things about State-Level Technical Assistance*

The consultants felt that the state-level technical assistance was a good resource, especially when they needed assistance in providing consultation services. They described technical assistance as helpful because:

- **The technical assistance is always available and supportive.** Consultants reported that they felt supported all the time as the technical assistance was always available. They described the technical assistance staff as very supportive and responsible in helping them solve problems, advocating changes in the CCEP program, and sharing the best practices.

*“They are always available to answer questions. They are very patient and understanding.”*

- **The technical assistance is informative.** Consultants reported that they learned how to enhance the consultation process and received information on the program goals and expectations through technical assistance. They felt that the periodic meetings with technical assistance staff for training on related topics were informative and relevant.
- **The state-level administrators are open to suggestions.** Consultants appreciated the openness of state-level administrators to listen to and act upon suggestions.

*“I have noted that so many of the things that consultants value and bring to the centers and families--respectful listening and responding, relationship building--are all evident at the state level and extend outward to the programs. There is a genuine receptivity to our perspectives and a true exchange of ideas.”*

- **The state-level technical assistance links the consultants to other resources.** Consultants stated that they were connected to a wide variety of outside consultants and had the chance to share experiences and ideas via technical assistance. They obtained valuable training provided by knowledgeable and experienced speakers through technical assistance. They also reported that they had been connected to other programs and resources by the state-level technical assistance.
- **The technical assistance offers social work credits for training not otherwise available in the area** (one consultant).

### *Suggestions for State-Level Technical Assistance*

Though the state-level technical assistance was clearly helpful to consultants, a few consultants also had suggestions for improvements.

- **More technical assistance, individualized technical assistance, regional technical assistance.** Several consultants reported the need for more technical assistance “maybe divided by region,” so that consultants would be able to “meet frequently to discuss concerns, ask questions and get more individual input.”

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- **Continued and improved support to consultants.** A few consultants suggested various forms of potential support for technical assistance such as free reflective supervision, better follow-through, better definition for quarterly reports, and “developing a more efficient system for consultants to share resources.”
  - **Decision making.** Two consultants described the issue of realistic demands on consultants. One asked to be engaged in “how to navigate forward with mandated changes” rather than “discussion when the decision has been made;” the other asked for firm decisions across sites.

Overall, consultants were very pleased with the technical assistance provided by the state. They had specific suggestions, with the most common being a desire for more technical assistance and more individualized technical assistance.

## Overall Comments for the CCEP Program

The CCEP program was highly valued by the consultants. They realized that their services make a difference in the lives of children and families and they appreciated the opportunity to work for the community through the CCEP program. Additional comments that single consultants made included:

- **Concern about the requirement for a master’s degree.** The requirement to have a master’s degree for consultants was perceived as devaluing the experience and knowledge base that consultants without such a degree may have.
- **Understand the differences in individual communities.** One consultant wrote:  
*“I would like for state staff to have a better understanding of individual differences among communities. There are so many assumptions that are made, but at the local level, things are different than those initial assumptions.”*
- **More funding.** Individual consultants wanted more state funding to hire more staff, for free reflective supervision, and to be able to make reflective supervision available to child care directors and providers.

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*Copies of this report are available from:*

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