

Child Care Health Consultation “Dos”

- Find out about the child care provider staff and director before making observations or giving any feedback. Identify and address the norms and values of the organization.
- As much as possible, assume a colleague relationship, respecting early childhood educators as professionals.
- Take time to establish rapport and mutual trust.
- Remain flexible, helpful and willing to compromise on the way you would do things.
- Have materials and thoughts organized before consultations (phone and in-person).
- Develop a list of open-ended questions to move from the declared to the real problem.
- Be prepared for the meeting with information typically needed.
- Be willing to say you do not have the answers. Make referrals to others when appropriate.
- Translate jargon.
- Make a habit of finding and saying something positive about the teachers, the rooms, the children.
- Acknowledge the hard work and accomplishments of others.
- Remain neutral when there are subgroups or people you like more than others.
- If it is not broken, leave it alone.
- Make the first move if the child care provider does not initiate and be willing to endure many false starts to get the process on the right track.
- When the child care provider asks for advice, first ask what the child care provider has already observed and thinks might help. Get the child care provider involved and taking ownership for working collaboratively on the solution. Use “we”, “us” instead of “I” or “you”.
- Involve those who are affected by the problem, those with the authority to implement the solution and those with expertise that is needed for a wise plan of action in formulating priorities and making plans.
- Maintain contact. Set follow-up dates. You may find the child care provider has implemented a change directly related to your work. This will reinforce morale for you and the child care provider.
- Share something about your personal life, but spend little time talking about your personal life, problems and stresses.
- Remember that minds, like parachutes, work best when they are open!

(Adapted by S. Aronson from National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants, University of North Carolina, in turn adapted from Conoley and Conoley, 1992; Dettmyer, Turston and Dyck, 1993; and Schulte and Wesley, 1992)