Tips for Supporting a Positive Beginning to New Relationships With Families

1. Immediately invite the parents into a partnership, conveying respect for the parents as the “ultimate expert” on the child and continually seeking their perspective on the child and the situation.
2. Clarify the purpose of consultation and describe the consultation process as many times as necessary, verbally and in writing, during the initial meeting with the family.
3. Explore the family’s expectations about their role in consultation, clarifying how they might be involved.
4. Carefully explain to families and caregivers that all information gathered is confidential and that families have the right to dissolve ECMHC services per their request at any time.
5. Actively listen to family members’ point of view on what they are feeling, thinking, and observing at this time. Elicit their concerns about their child and help them prioritize goals.
6. Repeatedly convey support of the parents, as well as a willingness to help them work with their child’s care provider to improve the situation for their child. Emphasize the positive effects of consultation to build hope.