

# Child Care Health Consultant Hiring Agency Guide



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[For questions about how to use this guide, contact a local CCHC Coach.](#)

## Background

The Child Care Health Consultant Hiring Agency Guide is a manual for appropriate and consistent child care health consultant (CCHC) recruitment and oversight. Successful identification, hiring, orienting, and managing a CCHC helps assure retention and avoid position turnover. Outlined are the prerequisite skills and abilities of a candidate and the skills that must be developed once the health professional is hired.

The [NC CCHC Service Model](#) (available in the [NC CCHC Program Manual](#)) is the guiding document for the CCHC profession in NC. The CCHC Service Model incorporates the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness's [CCHC Competencies](#). The Competencies articulate the key areas of CCHC expertise and demonstrate how CCHCs working in any early childhood setting can apply their specialized knowledge and skills to improve health, safety, and wellness outcomes.

The Hiring Agency Guide was developed collaboratively by the NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center, (NC Resource Center) a program of the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, the North Carolina Partnership for Children, the North Carolina Division of Public Health, and North Carolina Child Care Health Consultant Association and is updated regularly.

## Who are CCHCs?

CCHCs are health professionals with education and experience in child and community health. Knowledge of early care and education (ECE) is beneficial but not required. CCHCs work to increase the capacity of early care and education administrators, facility owners, and early educators to create and maintain healthy and safe child care environments. A CCHC must successfully complete the [NC CCHC Course](#) to work as a Qualified CCHC in North Carolina.

Primary responsibility of CCHCs include:

- Providing consultation and coaching on health and safety practices to help programs prevent and manage injury and infectious disease
- Conducting health and safety assessments and implementing quality improvement strategies
- Developing strategies for inclusion of children with special health care needs
- Supporting adherence to both child care rules, regulations, and best practices
- Providing health and safety technical assistance and training
- Helping facilities develop and review policies and procedures
- Providing referral to community health and social service resources

## Active CCHC Status

CCHCs are considered active for as long as they meet the standards outlined in the [Standards of Practice](#) document. They are asked to confirm that they are meeting these standards via an annual CCHC survey that is available each January.

## Supports for CCHCs

### The NC Resource Center

- The NC CCHC Course including medication administration and CCDF health and safety training topics.
- ITS-SIDS and Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Courses.
- CCHC Learning Collaborative opportunities.
- Access to the NC CCHC Resource Portal which includes training materials on all areas of CCHC competency designed exclusively for CCHCs.
- Guidance and health and safety expertise and regional coaching support from a CCHC Nurse.

- Access to the NC Health and Safety Assessment and Encounter (NC HSAET) tool and technical assistance in conducting assessments and developing quality improvement plans.
- Resources and materials including posters, sample policies, newsletters, and web resources.
- Advocacy for CCHCs with state and regional partners.

### **The NC State Child Care Nurse Consultant**

This position is located in the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child and Family Wellbeing and provides:

- Leadership in public health efforts in early education and promotes child care health consultation by establishing and maintaining links between CCHCs and early childhood stakeholders.
- Guidance and health and safety expertise.
- Leadership with the professional practice of child care health consultation in North Carolina.
- East region coaching support.

### **NC Division of Public Health and Local Health Departments (LHDs)**

- LHDs frequently function as hiring agencies for CCHCs. In addition, many staff at LHDs are critical partners of CCHCs including the immunization, communicable disease, and child health nurses.

### **NC Child Care Health Consultant Association (CCHCA)**

- As a professional membership organization, the CCHCA holds quarterly regional meetings and hosts the annual CCHC conference to provide CCHCs with networking and professional development opportunities. It is highly recommended that CCHCs be required to maintain membership and participate in activities of the association such as attending meetings or serving on a committee.

### **NC Partnership for Children (NCPCL)/Smart Start/Local Partnerships for Children**

- NCPCL and Local Partnerships for Children have historically provided funding and programmatic support for CCHCs and in some counties, is the hiring agency.

### **CCHC Coaches provide:**

- Guidance to funding and hiring agencies in recruitment and selection of candidates for CCHC position
  - Coaches should be contacted **prior to hiring** to ensure that candidate meets the NC CCHC Course eligibility requirements
- Orientation and support for CCHCs throughout the NC CCHC Course
- Support hiring/funding agency and local CCHC in development and implementation of annual goals (including support in developing logic models based on local needs and priorities in the community).
- Ongoing support for established CCHCs including:
  - Understanding and interpreting child care regulations (laws and rules)
  - Understanding best practice standards for child care (Caring for Our Children)
  - Developing strategies for quality improvement
  - Providing training and support for the NC Health and Safety Assessment and Encounter tool
  - Providing coaching through challenging work situations
  - Staying updated on available resources and training

### **Local community supports**

In addition, local community partners provide support including:

- The Division of Child Development and Early Education Child Care (Licensing) Consultants
- Local Health Department Staff including Children’s Environmental Health Specialists (Sanitation)
- Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Local Partnerships for Children

## Resources for CCHCs

### The NC CCHC Resource Portal

The NC Resource Portal, contains training materials on topics including sanitation, caring for children with medication and special health care needs, and many other required and recommended training topics. Access is provided by a CCHC Coach either during orientation or upon completion of the NC CCHC Course. Also included in the portal is news, weekly updates, helpful links, and the ability to book an appointment with a CCHC Coach.

### The North Carolina Health and Safety Assessment and Encounter Tool (NC HSAET)

NC HSAET is a web-based assessment and encounter tool, updated in 2021 by the NC Resource Center for use by active CCHCs in North Carolina. The tool is used by CCHCs to collect and store data on:

- Encounters with child care facilities and community partners including trainings, meetings, and other communication
- Assessments of the health and safety aspects of child care environments and practices
- Quality improvement strategies

The sections of the NC HSAET align with the CCHC National Competencies:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Illness and infectious diseases                 | 7. Child abuse and neglect    |
| 2. Children with special health care needs         | 8. Physical Activity          |
| 3. Medication administration                       | 9. Nutrition                  |
| 4. Safety and injury prevention                    | 10. Oral health               |
| 5. Emergency preparedness, response, and recovery  | 11. Environmental health      |
| 6. Infant and child social and emotional wellbeing | 12. Staff health and wellness |
|  | 13. Policies                  |

CCHCs receive training on the NC HSAET in the NC CCHC Course. CCHC Coaches help with incorporating this tool into the work of CCHCs.

Both the CCHCs and their supervisors must complete a [new user form](#) for the CCHC to gain access to the tool. Both CCHCs and their supervisors may access the NCHSAET demonstration site to view the tool. For questions about the tool, email the NC Resource Center: [NCHSAET@unc.edu](mailto:NCHSAET@unc.edu).

The NC HSAET database is maintained by The UNC SHEPS Center and is stored on a secure server that preserves privacy, confidentiality, and security of all data.

## NC CCHC Course

Prior to employment, the hiring agency should ensure that the candidate is eligible to take the NC CCHC Course. Successful completion of the course is required for an enrolled student/candidate to work as an active CCHC in North Carolina. The course is offered by the NC Resource Center.

Before starting the course, new CCHCs begin preliminary work such as completing the prerequisite tasks for the NC CCHC Course, meeting with their CCHC Coach, becoming familiar with the partners in the community they serve, and reviewing key documents such as the NC CCHC Service Model and the CCHC Competencies. The training course is typically offered in September and January and takes fourteen weeks to complete.

Prerequisite reading and activities required to complete prior to taking the course include:

1. Reading the following documents thoroughly:
  - [NC CCHC Course](#) syllabus
  - [CCHC competencies](#)
  - [CCHCs Make Early Care and Education Programs Healthier and Safer](#)
  - [CCHC Service Model](#) (
2. Corresponding with a CCHC Coach
  - All new NC CCHCs will be contacted by a coach before the course begins.
3. Doing a preliminary review of the following resources:
  - [Caring for Our Children](#) (CFOC4) National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 4th edition
  - [North Carolina Child Care Regulations](#) including General Statutes, Child Care Rules, and Sanitation of Child Care Centers (NC only)
4. Optional – Watching this Introduction to Public Health, [Module 1, Introduction to Public Health in North Carolina](#) (20 minutes)

**Acceptance into the course is based on:**

- Current job responsibilities that include providing child care health consultation services as outlined in the CCHC Program Manual
  - Experience in or knowledge of pediatric health, community health, health education, and early care and education.
- Be one of the following:
  - A licensed health care professional:
    - A registered nurse, physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or paramedic with an active license that is unencumbered in the state where CCHC services are provided.
  - A health educator with either a minimum of:
    - A bachelors degree from a four-year college or university with a major in health education or related field such as community health or health promotion. Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) designation preferred.
    - A bachelors degree from a four-year college or university and at least three years’ experience working in public health education. Experience must include working primarily as a public health educator within the last five years.

**Timeline for the NC CCHC Course**

Activity	Length	Format	Hours
Orientation	Week 1	Live virtual session	2
Lesson 1-8	Week 2-10	Independent learning and live virtual sessions	68
Meeting in Raleigh	Week 11	In person	14
Final project	Week 12-14	Independent learning	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 weeks</b>		<b>104</b>

The NC CCHC Course requires completion of the online course content and assignments, participation in community-based interactions, attending weekly virtual meetings with peers and a two-day in-person meeting, and successful completion of a three-week final project. The final project involves conducting a full health and safety classroom observational assessment, development of a quality improvement plan, and report.

**Course content includes information on:**

- quality child care and regulations
- children with special health care needs and community/professional supports



- health education/health literacy
- consultation and coaching
- health, safety, and wellness practices and policy development/implementation
- introduction to the Environment Rating Scales
- administration of medication in child care
- observation at a child care facility
- training demonstration
- required Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) health and safety training topics:
  - prevention and control of infectious diseases, including immunization
  - prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions
  - building and physical premises safety
  - emergency preparedness and response planning
  - handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of biocontaminants
  - precautions in transporting children
  - prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment
  - prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and use of safe sleeping practices.

## Ongoing Professional Development Opportunities

In addition to the NC CCHC Course requirements, CCHCs should continue to participate in professional development opportunities.

- CCHC specific professional development
  - CCHC Learning Collaboratives
  - CCHC Quarterly Webinars
  - Regional CCHC Association Meetings
  - CCHC Annual Conference
- NC Resource Center Courses (online)
  - Infant-Toddler Safe Sleep and SIDS Prevention (ITS-SIDS)
  - Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)
- [CCHC Certification/Endorsement](#) after one year working as an active CCHC
- Non-Resource Center recommended professional development opportunities
  - DCDEE pre-licensing workshop for child care centers and family child care homes
  - Sanitation State of Practice (SOP) training
  - Go NAPSACC consultant tools training
  - Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care train-the-trainer
  - Playground Safety train-the-trainer
  - Recognizing and Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment, Prevent Child Abuse NC (online)

If a CCHC plans to provide training or technical assistance (TA) on a topic they have not provided training or TA on in the past, they should use this [CCHC Training Flow Chart](#) to determine if they need to work with a partner or obtain additional professional development prior to training.

## Hiring and Orienting the CCHC

### Hiring a Health Professional who has already taken the NC CCHC Course

A former CCHC who **has worked** as a CCHC or taken the NC CCHC Course in the last three years must contact the CCHC Coach in their region to determine how they can regain their active CCHC status.

A former CCHC who **has not worked** as a CCHC nor taken the NC CCHC Course in the last three years will be expected to re-take the NC CCHC Course to be added back to the NC CCHC website and considered active.

## Hiring a Registered Nurse

Any agency that hires a registered nurse (RN) should verify their license with the [NC Board of Nursing](#). Employers should review [§ 90-171.43. License required; rules](#) before employing an RN which states:

“No person shall practice or offer to practice as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse or use the word "nurse" as a title for herself or himself, or use an abbreviation to indicate that the person is a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse, unless the person is currently licensed as a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse.”

CCHC/RNs may be interested in taking the UNC Chapel Hill Course, [Principles and Practices of Public Health Nursing](#) to enhance their knowledge.

## Recommended Steps for Hiring and Orienting a CCHC

1. Work with the funding agency to develop a contract/MOU (if applicable)
2. Develop position description, post, recruit, and hire the CCHC. Coaches can assist with this process
3. Notify the NC Resource Center of the new employee either by emailing [resourcecenter@unc.edu](mailto:resourcecenter@unc.edu), or contacting a CCHC Coach
4. Orient the CCHC to the position and agency requirements; the CCHC Coach will provide orientation to the NC CCHC Service Model and CCHC Competencies
5. CCHC should contact the NC Resource Center to apply for the NC CCHC Course

## Supervising a CCHC

The hiring agency supervisor should set up times to observe the CCHC delivering training and technical assistance to help determine professional development needs. The supervisor should also:

- Schedule regular one-on-one meetings between the supervisor and CCHC
- Engage the CCHC in reflective supervision and joint planning including review of assessment, training, and other data
- Review and use information from satisfaction surveys, co-workers, partners, and assessment tools to inform supervision/coaching
- Work with health department personnel (i.e. immunization nurse) who provide technical assistance
- Build his/her own knowledge of the CCHC job responsibilities and needed resources
- Encourage participation in professional development opportunities and technical assistance offered by the NC Resource Center
- Encourage relationship building with other technical assistance providers, community partners, and CCHCs
- Support membership and active participation in the NC CCHC Association
- Ensures that the CCHC:
  - participates in regular coaching meetings with their CCHC Coach
  - completes the annual CCHC survey administered by the NC Resource Center

## Supervising a Registered Nurse

The [NC Board of Nursing](#) (page 10) states that if an unlicensed person, or person licensed in a discipline other than nursing, manages or supervise a licensed nurse he/she can do so ONLY when the supervised activities:

- are of a non-clinical nature
- do not involve clinical assessment, judgment, or decision-making
- involve any activity included in the [NC Nurse Practice Act's definition of nursing](#)

However, a Registered Nurse (RN) may also practice independently and does not require supervision.

While having a nursing background is beneficial in providing CCHC services, licensed registered nurses who are hired as CCHCs are consultants and do not conduct clinical assessments. Providing direct nursing care to children

is outside of the practices outlined in the NC CCHC Service Model. The nursing knowledge activities that a CCHC might provide include portions of medication administration training and requests for clinical guidance on supporting children with special health care needs. The CCHC Coach/RN is available to support the CCHC (in a non-supervisory role) and the hiring agency in implementing these practices.

### **Annual verification of nursing licensure**

An employer must assure that the nurse has an active license. [Nursys E-Notify](#) is a free way to manage and keep up with nurse employees' licenses for both nurses and their employers.

### **Local Partnerships for Children**

If the CCHC is funded by a Local Partnership for Children, the following are required:

- Contract or MOU between the hiring agency and the Local Partnership for Children.
- CCHC Contract Activity Description (CAD). This is a short description of the CCHC activity in the community.
- Use of the NC Health and Safety Assessment and Encounter Tool for classroom observations and to document quality improvement and encounters with providers and partners.
- Smart Start activity logic model which is designed to show how outcomes impact long-term Smart Start goals. Included on the logic model is:
  - a needs statement (why)
  - a description of the target population (who)
  - program or activity elements (what)
  - outputs (how many)
  - outcomes (success)

Hiring agencies and CCHCs work collaboratively with the Local Partnership for Children to individualize a CCHC logic model based on the local needs and priorities in the community. The logic model guides how CCHCs prioritize their work and how they report their activities and should be reviewed and updated at least annually to assure that it reflects the CCHCs work.