



What Happens in the Early Years Matters Forever

VAIMH Strategic Plan
“What Happens in the Early Years Matters Forever”
2024-2026

Vision: Infant mental health supports and strengthens nurturing relationships between infants, young children and their family and caregivers to build healthy social emotional development.

Mission: VAIMH strives to promote social emotional health and wellness in infants and young children through building awareness, promoting professional capacity, fostering partnerships, and supporting policies which are in the best interest of infants, young children and their families.

Value: Importance of Relationships

- Understands the importance of relationship, the primary instrument for growth and change.
- Uses knowledge and skills to provide services that promote, support, restore and sustain nurturing relationships for all infants and families.
- Works to establish strong, collaborative relationships with community professionals to enhance services to all infants and families.
- Understands the importance of past relationship experiences to the development of current relationships.

Value: Respect for Ethnicity, Culture, Individuality and Diversity

- Understands and respects the uniqueness of each individual with respect for ethnicity, culture, individuality, and diversity in all aspects of infant and family practice.

Value: Integrity

- Practices in ways that are ethical, trustworthy, honest, responsible, and reliable.

Value: Confidentiality

- Abides by the ethical standards of the agency or place of work and is guided by the legal and practice standards in human services.

Value: Knowledge and Skill Building

- Works continuously to acquire new knowledge and skills to enhance best practice within the infant and family field.

Value: Reflective Practice

- Seeks out and uses Reflective Supervision and Consultation to reflect on professional development and personal growth related to work with or on behalf of infants and families.

Beliefs:

- Optimal growth and development occur within nurturing relationships.
- The birth and care of a new baby offer a family the possibility of new relationships, growth, and change.
- What happens in the early years affects the course of development across the lifespan.
- Early developing attachment relationships may be distorted or disturbed by parental histories of unresolved losses and traumatic life events.
- The therapeutic presence of an IMH Specialist may reduce the risk of relationship failure and offer the hopefulness of warm and nurturing parental responses.



What Happens in the Early Years Matters Forever

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Expand and reorganize board structure to include needed skills and talents to build organizational capacity.

- A. Update board skills matrix to include diversity metrics. Add bylaws.
- B. Recruit talents consistent with identified recruiting objectives, diversifying the board by race, gender, and age, and professional affiliation.
- C. Create committee structure to include the following Committees: Executive; Membership; Governance (formerly Nominating); Resource Development; Communications, Marketing & Promotion; and Endorsement/Certification. Develop one-pagers for committee charters. Involve more diverse representation in committees.
- D. Define board and committee relationships:
 - a. Board
 - i. Appoint committee chairs and members (board and non-board)
 - ii. Approve all committee programs, proposals, and actions.
 - b. Committees
 - i. Hold regular meetings.
 - ii. Propose committee charter.
 - iii. Develop and propose plans and programs for areas of responsibility.
- E. Define role of regional chapters

Goal 2: Identify funding opportunities to support resources needed to strengthen infrastructure.

- A. Create Fund Development Plan
 - a. Delegate development plan to Resource Development Committee to:
 - i. Create list of all potential funding sources including timelines
 - ii. Research financial operating statements of other IMH organizations.
 - iii. Research public and private grants.
 - iv. Research best practices of IMH organizations and local non-profits.
- B. Identify and submit for additional stream of funding.
 - a. increase public and private grant submissions.
 - b. Develop fundraising initiatives.
 - c. engage in community fundraising events.
 - d. increase visibility with other nonprofits.
 - e. develop community partnerships.
 - f. Develop budgeting timelines and systems of operations.

Goal 3: Expand infant and early childhood mental health professional development opportunities throughout Virginia.

- A. Identify and segment mental health practitioners (Marketing and Promotion Committee)
- B. Identify and catalog all current educational and training programs.
- C. Identify gaps/opportunities and design programs (products/services)
- D. Promote degree offerings at the university level in Virginia and encourage enrollment in online programs offering IMH/ECMH degrees.
- E. Create a system guide for better oversight of reflective supervision. Standardize the process.



What Happens in the Early Years Matters Forever

- F. Develop a system guide for the professional development hub and communities of learning.

Goal 4: Increase visibility among all mental health providers and other professionals impacting the health and welfare of young children in Virginia.

- A. Assign Membership Committee and Marketing Committee the following tasks:
 - a. Survey current and past members to determine professional development needs.
 - b. Survey other state IMH organizations membership policies.
 - c. Create VAIMH value proposition.

Goal 5: Create public awareness of the importance of community health and positive social emotional development in young children.

- A. Research:
 - a. Virginia demographics for high interest groups
 - b. Communication methods to reach high potential groups.
 - c. Expand the scope of outreach.
- B. Community Engagement
 - a. Hold community educational events.
 - b. Create public health campaigns.
 - c. Disseminate information about IECMH on social media platforms.