

# Introduction to Infant Mental Health

for Medical Professionals

What is infant mental health?

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Infant mental health is a rapidly growing field of interest. Learn what infant mental health is in this introductory brief video (3:28). The term, itself, can be confusing...

## Validity Affect: The Innate and Dynamic Capacity of the Human Brain to Socially Connect

This video (5:22) is a synopsis of early brain development drawn from works of Stern, Markova and Legerstee, Feldman, and Ammaniti and Ferrari.

## Four Pillars of Infant Mental Health

### I. Infant Mental Health Associations

Infant mental health associations are membership-driven, nonprofit organizations that advance infant mental health awareness in their state and support cross-discipline IMH professionals through advocacy, trainings, networking, and IMH endorsement. Membership encompasses the broad spectrum of the infant and early childhood workforce that works with or on behalf of infants, young children and families. Currently, there are 34 states that are affiliates of the national [Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health](#). To find the IMH association in your state, please click [here](#).

### II. Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement

Through a comprehensive and rigorous process, infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) endorsement (IECMH-E) recognizes the highly specialized knowledge and expertise that IECMH professionals have. Not all IECMH professionals are endorsed. However, all endorsed IECMH professionals are highly qualified to provide services for or on behalf of infants, young children, and families that reflect IECMH principles.

### III. Reflective Supervision/Consultation

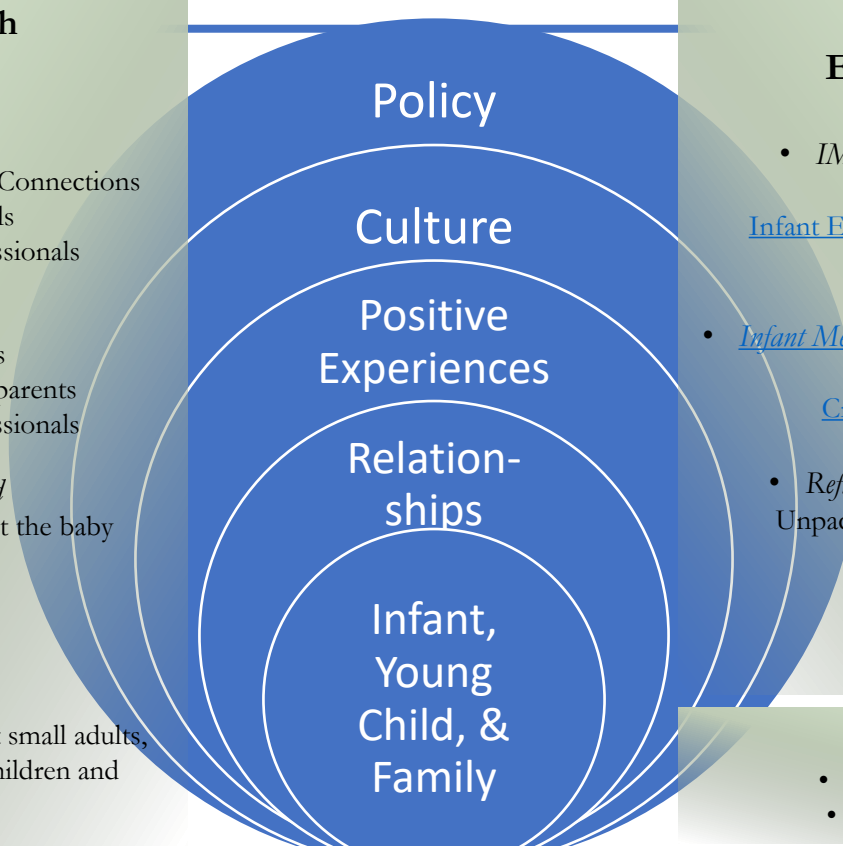
Reflective Supervision/Consultation (RS/C) is a form of mentoring that facilitates providers in developing competencies to manage the complexity of relationships and emotions related to their work by reflecting on their thoughts, feelings, and values that impacted a previous service encounter. RS/C has been shown to improve service quality, staff retention, and family outcomes. When skillfully implemented with a solid understanding of key elements and best practices, RS/C can, as professional growth, also safely and compassionately unveil implicit biases and unintended racist. (see lower righthand insert)

### IV. Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health & Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood (DC:0-5)

The DC:0-5 is designed to assist IECMH practitioners to (1) recognize mental and developmental health challenges in infants and young children, (2) guide the diagnostic process to capture the multidimensional contextual factors contributing to infants' and young children's health, and (3) formulate diagnoses relevant and applicable to infants and young children, effectively leading to appropriate services. Both CMS and SAMHSA have endorsed DC:0-5.

## Infant Mental Health Principles

- *Relationships matter*
  - Infant, Dyad, Triad
  - Family & Community Connections
  - Parents to Professionals
  - Professionals to Professionals
- *Parallel Process*
  - Parents support infants
  - Professionals support parents
  - Policies support professionals
- *Holding the Baby in Mind*
  - Ultimately, it's all about the baby
- *Assume positive intent*
  - Activate empathy
- *Infant Rights*
  - Just as children are not small adults, infants are not small children and have unique needs



## Infant Mental Health Emerging in Medicine

- *IMH Integration in Primary Care*
  - [Positive Parenting Strategies](#)
  - [Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#)
- *Infant Mental Health Diagnostic Criteria*
  - [DC:0-5](#)
  - [Crosswalk to ICD-10 & DSM-5](#)
- *Reflective Supervision/Consultation*
  - Unpacking challenging relationships
  - Exploring implicit bias
  - Processing vicarious trauma
  - Preventing burnout
  - [Facilitated reflective process](#)

## Journals

- [Infant Mental Health Journal](#)
- [ZERO TO THREE Journal](#)