



What Happens in the Early Years Matters Forever

Infant Mental Health Endorsement® Requirements *An Overview of the Initial Endorsement*

The Infant Mental Health Endorsement® is for providers who live in Virginia and work with children birth to 36 months.

More detailed information may be found in the [Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health®](#) Competency Guidelines located in the Endorsement® section of the [Early Childhood Mental Health VA](#) (ECMHVA) website.

For questions or assistance, please contact:

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[Early Childhood Mental Health VA](#)

	IFA Infant Family Associate	IFS Infant Family Specialist	IMHS Infant Mental Health Specialist	IMHM Infant Mental Health Mentor		
				IV-C Clinical	IV-P Policy	IV-R/F Research/Faculty
	PROMOTION	PREVENTION	MENTAL HEALTH Treatment & Intervention	LEADERSHIP		
	Typically for someone with at least 2 years of experience with infants/toddlers birth-36 months but no degree; or Someone with the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA); or Someone with an Associates, Bachelor’s, Master’s, or Doctorate degree with little (<2 years) or no work experience with children birth-36 months.	Typically for someone whose work experience comes from programs that provide education, support, and/or consultation to early care and education providers, or whose intent is primarily to educate parents.	Typically for someone with licensure as a Mental Health Clinician and/or whose role includes intervention or treatment of the child’s primary caregiver relationship (i.e., biological, foster, or adoptive parent or guardian).	Practice leaders who provide reflective supervision or consultation to practitioners in the infant and family field (IV-Clinical); or Typically for practice leaders in policies and programs (IV-Policy); or Practice leaders in research, evaluation, and teaching (IV-Research/Faculty).		

Education Requirements						
	IFA Infant Family Associate	IFS Infant Family Specialist	IMHS Infant Mental Health Specialist	IMHM Infant Mental Health Mentor		
				IV-C Clinical	IV-P Policy	IV-R/F Research/Faculty
<p><i>Official transcripts are required from any college/university where a degree was earned.</i></p> <p><i>If no degree was earned, but coursework relevant to the competencies were completed, an applicant may want to request those official transcripts.</i></p>	<p>CDA credential; or</p> <p>Associates, Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate degree with little (<2 years) to no work experience with infants/toddlers birth-36 months; or</p> <p>2 years paid work experience with infants/toddlers birth-36 months and no CDA or degree.</p>	<p>The minimum requirement is a BA, BS, BSW, or BSN.</p> <p>Other accepted degrees include: MA, MS, MSW, Med, MSN, MAS, PhD, EdD, or PsyD.</p>	<p>The minimum requirement is a MA, MS, Med, EdD, MSW, MSN, PsyD, PhD, MD, DO, or other degree specific to one's professional focus in IMH;</p> <p>University certificate program; and/or</p> <p>Coursework in areas such as infant development (prenatal up to 36 mos.), family-centered practice, cultural sensitivity, family relationships and dynamics, and assessment and intervention.</p>	<p>The minimum requirement is a MA, MS, Med, EdD, MSW, MSN, PsyD, PhD, MD, DO, or other degree specific to one's professional focus in IMH, postgraduate specialization, or university certificate program.</p>		

Specialized Work Experience					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
<p>Minimum of 2 years of paid work experience with infants/toddlers birth-36 mos.</p> <p>If no work experience, a CDA credential, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, and/or Doctorate degree.</p> <p><i>Volunteer experience may meet this criterion if it was a supervised experience with infants/toddlers birth-36 months and their families and included specialized training.</i></p>	<p>Minimum of 2 years of paid, post-Bachelor's, professional work experience providing prevention and/or early intervention services that promote infant mental health.</p> <p>Applicant has served a minimum of 10 families where the target of services is an infant/toddler (birth - 36 mos.) or the supervision of staff who provide services to infants/toddlers (birth-36 months) and their families.</p> <p>A primary focus of the services provided is the social-emotional needs of the infant/toddler; and</p> <p>Services focus on the promotion of the relationships surrounding the infant/toddler.</p>	<p>Minimum of 2 years of post-graduate, supervised paid work experience providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused, infant mental health services.</p> <p>Specialized work experience must be with both the infant/toddler (birth-36 mos.) and his/her biological, foster, or adoptive parent(s) or guardian(s) on behalf of the parent-infant relationship.</p> <p>Infant mental health services include parent-infant/child relationship-based therapies and practices and early relationship assessment and can include concrete assistance, advocacy, emotional support, and developmental guidance.</p> <p>These therapies and practices are intended to explicitly address issues related to attachment, separation, trauma, and unresolved grief and losses as they affect the attachment relations, development, behavior, and care of the child.</p> <p>The unresolved losses might be from adverse childhood experiences that occurred during the caregivers' own early childhood or may be more recent for the child. Strong feelings, such as grief and loss. could also be associated with diagnosis or manifestations of a chronic illness, delay, or disability.</p>	<p>Meets specialized work experience criteria as specified for prevention and/or early intervention services that promote infant mental health.</p> <p>Applicant has served a minimum of 10 families or supervised staff where the target of services is an infant/toddler (birth-36 mos.) and has 3 years of post-graduate experience providing IMH reflective supervision /consultation (RS/C).</p> <p>Also required are leadership activities at the regional or state level.</p>	<p>Minimum 3 years of post-graduate experience as a leader in policy and/or program administration related to the promotion of early childhood mental health principles and practices in the context of family and other caregiving relationships across systems.</p> <p>Also required are leadership activities at the regional or state level.</p>	<p>Minimum 3 years of post-graduate experience as a leader in university, teaching, and/or published research related to early childhood mental health principles and practices in the context of family and other caregiving relationships.</p> <p>Also required are leadership activities at the regional or state level.</p>

Leadership Activities at the Regional or State Level					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
No	No	No	YES	YES	YES
<p>Please note: Though some of these leadership activities may be demonstrated through paid work experience, there is an expectation that some will be demonstrated in addition to paid work experience.</p>					

In-Service Training					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
<p>Minimum 30 clock hours required.</p> <p><i>Typically, successful applications include 40 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to the Competency Guidelines®.</i></p>	<p>Minimum 30 clock hours required.</p> <p><i>Typically, successful applications include 50 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to the Competency Guidelines®.</i></p>	<p>Minimum 30 clock hours required.</p> <p><i>Typically, successful applications include an average of 75 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to the Competency Guidelines®.</i></p> <p><i>*Recommended participation in the 12-month (24 hours) VAIMH Course & Related Reflective Supervision Training Series that begins each October.</i></p>	<p>Minimum 30 clock hours required.</p> <p><i>Typically, successful applications include an average of 75 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to the Competency Guidelines®.</i></p> <p>For those whose degree is in a field that is unrelated to infant and early childhood, more specialized in-service training may be required to meet the breadth and depth of the competencies.</p> <p>There is an expectation that applicants for this category have the same knowledge related to IMH principles and practices regardless of designation (clinical, policy, or research/faculty).</p> <p><i>*Recommended participation in the 12-month (24 hours) VAIMH Course & Related Reflective Supervision Training Series that begins each October.</i></p>		

Membership in State Association for Infant Mental Health (VAIMH)					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Code of Ethics & Agreement					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
SIGNED	SIGNED	SIGNED	SIGNED	SIGNED	SIGNED

Written Exam					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
No	No	YES	YES	YES	YES

Reflective Supervision (RS)					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
Optional, but encouraged.	<p>Minimum 24 clock hours within a 1-to-2- year timeframe post-bachelors.</p> <p>Relationship-based reflective supervision/ consultation (RSC), individually or in a group while providing services to infants/toddlers (birth-36 mos.) and their families and/or while providing supervision to staff who are providing services to infants/ toddlers (birth-36 mos.) and their families.</p>	<p>Minimum 50 clock hours within a 1-to-2-year timeframe post-Master's degree.</p> <p>Relationship focused reflective supervision/consultation (RSC) individually or in a group while providing services to infants/toddlers (birth to 36 mos.) and their families.</p>	<p>Minimum 50 clock hours within a 1-to-2-year timeframe post-Master's degree.</p> <p>Relationship focused reflective supervision/ consultation (RSC) individually or in a group while providing RS to infant-family professionals.</p> <p>Applicants' provider of RS must have earned/maintained or meet criteria for IMHM-Clinical Endorsement.</p> <p>A minimum of 25 hours of the RS received should be about RS that the applicant provides to others.</p>		

Reference Ratings					
3 References are required for all categories.					
<i>At least 1 reference rating must come from someone who has earned Endorsement as an IFS, IMHS, or IMHM. Reference raters must be familiar with the applicant's capacity to implement IMH principles into practice.</i>					
IFA	IFS	IMHS	IMHM (IV-C)	IMHM (IV-P)	IMHM (IV-R/F)
<p>Reference 1: Current Program Supervisor</p> <p>Reference 2: An Endorsed Professional (IFS, IMHS, or IMHM), someone who meets Endorsement requirements, or is familiar with the Competency Guidelines®</p> <p>Reference 3: Colleague, parent/recipient of services (paid or volunteer), teacher, CDA mentor, or Board Member</p>	<p>Reference 1: Current Program Supervisor</p> <p>Reference 2: Person providing Reflective Supervision to the applicant</p> <p>Reference 3: Another supervisor, trainer, consultant, or colleague</p>	<p>Reference 1: Current Program Supervisor</p> <p>Reference 2: Person providing Reflective Supervision to the applicant</p> <p>Reference 3: Another supervisor, trainer, consultant, colleague, or supervisee (if applicant is a supervisor)</p>	<p>Reference 1: Current Program Supervisor</p> <p>Reference 2: Person providing Reflective Supervision to the applicant</p> <p>Reference 3: Someone receiving Reflective Supervision from the applicant</p>	<p>Reference 1: Current Program Supervisor</p> <p>Reference 2: Person providing Reflective Supervision to the applicant (if applicable)</p> <p>Reference 3: If no one available from the first 2 categories, applicant may ask 3 colleagues</p>	<p>Reference 1: Current Department Supervisor/Chair who is familiar with IMH</p> <p>Reference 2: Person providing Reflective Supervision to the applicant (if applicable)</p> <p>Reference 3: From student taught/supervised by the applicant</p> <p><i>If no one available from the first 2 categories, applicant may ask 2 colleagues</i></p>

Application Links:

- [Join VAIMH](#)
- [Submit Endorsement Application](#)