## Infant Mental Health Endorsement Requirements Overview
*(Initial Endorsement)*

Applications for initial Endorsement are accepted annually between January 1st and April 15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Infant Family Associate (Category I)</th>
<th>Infant Family Specialist (Category II)</th>
<th>Infant Mental Health Specialist (Category III)</th>
<th>Infant Mental Health Mentor (IMHM) (3 designations) (Category IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Official transcripts from any academic coursework including Associate’s, Bachelor’s, Master’s and/or Doctorate degrees OR Official transcript/certificate from Child Development Associate (CDA) program OR 2 years of paid work experience with infants birth to 36 months.</td>
<td>The minimum requirement is a BA, BS, BSW, BSN. Other accepted degrees include a MA, MS, MSW, MED, MSN, MAS, PhD, EdD, or PsyD.</td>
<td>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; University certificate program; &amp;/or course work in areas such as infant development (antenatal up to 36 months), family centered practice, cultural sensitivity, family relationships &amp; dynamics, assessment &amp; intervention.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Experience</td>
<td>Minimum 2 years of paid work experience with infants birth to 36 months.</td>
<td>Minimum 2 years of paid, post-Bachelor’s, professional work experience providing prevention and/or early intervention services that promote infant mental health. Work experience meets this criterion as long as the applicant has: Serve a minimum of 10 families where the target of services is an infant/toddler (birth to 36 months) or supervise staff who provide services to infants, young children (birth to 36 months) and families, AND A primary focus of the services provided is the social-emotional needs of the infant/toddler, AND Services focus on the promotion of the relationships surrounding the infant/toddler.</td>
<td>Minimum 2 years of postgraduate, supervised paid work experiences providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused, infant mental health services. This specialized work experience must be with both the infant/toddler (birth to 36 months) and his/her biological, foster, or adoptive parent(s) or guardian(s) on behalf of the parent-infant relationship. 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. These therapies and practices are intended to explicitly address issues related to attachment, Meets specialized work experience criteria as specified for prevention and/or early intervention services that promote infant mental health. Work experience meets this criterion as long as the applicant has: Serve a minimum of 10 families where the target of services is an infant/toddler (birth to 36 months) or supervise staff who provide services to infants, young children (birth to 36 months) and families, AND</td>
<td>Minimum 3 years of postgraduate experience as a leader in university, teaching &amp;/or published research related to early childhood mental health principles &amp; practice, in the context of family &amp; other caregiving relationships and other leadership activities at the regional or state level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typically, for someone whose work experiences come from programs that provide education/support/consultation to early care and education providers or whose intent is primarily to educate parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Typically, for someone with licensure as a Mental Health Clinician &amp;/or whose role includes intervention or treatment of the child’s primary caregiver relationship (i.e. biological, foster, or adoptive parent or guardian).</td>
<td>A primary focus of the services provided is the social emotional needs of the infant/ toddler. AND Services focus on the promotion of the relationships surrounding the infant/toddler.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Activities at the Regional or State Level</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes Yes Yes</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>In-Service Training</td>
<td>Minimum 30 clock hours required. Typically, successful applications include 40 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to the Competency Guidelines®.</td>
<td>Minimum 30 clock hours required. Typically, successful applications include 50 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to the Competency Guidelines®.</td>
<td>Minimum 30 clock hours required. 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®.</td>
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<td>Membership in State Association for Infant Mental Health</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SIGNED</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Code of Ethics</td>
<td>Signed</td>
<td>Signed</td>
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<td>Reflective Supervision (RS)</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Required: Minimum 24 clock hours within a minimum 12 month to maximum 24 months.</td>
<td>Required: Minimum 50 clock hours within a 1 to 2 year timeframe. Relationship-</td>
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*Recommended participation in 12 month (24 hours) VAIMH Course & Related Reflective Supervision Training series (begins each October)."
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<td>Typically, for someone with licensure as a Mental Health Clinician &amp;/or whose role includes intervention or treatment of the child’s primary caregiver relationship (i.e. biological, foster, or adoptive parent or guardian).</td>
<td>Month time-frame, post-bachelors, relationship based, reflective supervision/consultation (RSC), individually or in a group while providing services to infants, young children (birth to 36 months) and families and/or while providing supervision to staff who are providing services to infants, young children (birth to 36 months) and families.</td>
<td>Typically for practice leaders in policies and programs (Category IV-Policy) or practice leaders who provide reflective supervision or consultation to practitioners in the infant and family field (Category IV-Clinical) or practice leaders in research, evaluation and teaching (Category IV-Research/Faculty).</td>
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<td>Focused RS, individually or in a group (post-Masters), while providing services to infants/toddlers (birth to 36 months) and families.</td>
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<td>Timeframe: post Master’s degree, individually or in a group while providing RS to infant-family professionals. Applicants’ provider of RS must have earned/maintained or meet criteria for IMHM-Clinical Endorsement. A minimum of 25 hours of the RS received should be about RS that the applicant provides to others.</td>
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<th>Reference Ratings</th>
<th>Three References Required (All Categories)</th>
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<td>Please Note:</td>
<td>All three references must come from someone who has earned Endorsement as IFS, IMHS or IMHM. Reference raters must be familiar with the applicant’s capacity to implement IMH principles into practice.</td>
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<th>Written Exam</th>
<th>No</th>
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**Application Links:**

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

Please contact Pam Booker, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement Coordinator, with any questions. ([vaendorsement@vcu.edu](mailto:vaendorsement@vcu.edu))