

# Tools

+ Add Me! Become a member today

What is Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health?

**The developing capacity from birth to 6 “to experience, regulate, and express emotions; to form close relationships; and to explore the environment and learn”<sup>1</sup> — all in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children.**

An infant, toddler and young child’s mental health is every part as important as their physical health. Mental health matters for the growth and maturity of the brain and body and for the social and emotional development of a person — now and for the whole lifetime.

**What do we hope infant and early childhood mental health looks like?**

MI-AIMH hopes to see all infants, toddlers and young children being nurtured and protected by caring adults – most often their parents – in a way that provides the basis for secure parent-child relationships. It is within these special relationships that infants, toddlers and young children build strong (or weak) foundations for all emotional, cognitive, and social development.

Research has also made the link between these strong early relationships and a person’s lifelong physical health.

caregivers in healthy ways.

Infant mental health refers to how well a child develops socially and emotionally from birth to three. The key to preventing and treating mental health problems of very young children and their families is to take an approach informed by infant mental health principles and practices. This approach also supports relational health by guiding the development of healthy social and emotional behaviors. Infant and early childhood mental health is based on the same principles, but expands the reach to include young children of 3-6 years of age and their caregivers.

<sup>1</sup> The Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. Infant Mental Health and Early Care and Education Providers. Vanderbilt University, retrieve from: [http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/rs\\_infant\\_mental\\_health.pdf](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/rs_infant_mental_health.pdf)

## Resources

---

**What is Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health?**

**What About the Baby?**

**Community Mental Health Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Services in Michigan**

**Highlighting IMH Resources**

**Centering Equity**

**I-ECMH Glossary**

**Infant Mental Health Journal**

Share this page: !



13101 Allen Road Southgate, Michigan 48195 tel: 734.785.7705 x7194 fax: 734.287.1680



WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR  
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

MI-AIMH is an affiliate of the World Association for Infant Mental Health.



Alliance for the Advancement of

# Infant Mental Health

MI-AIMH originated and is part of the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health.

[Home](#)

[Store](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

[Contact](#)

[What About the Baby?](#)

[Membership Benefits](#)

[Local Chapters](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

First Name \*

Last Name \*

**Subscribe**

**Find us on Facebook**





Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health © 2023. All Rights Reserved.