



**Infant Mental Health Endorsement® &  
Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement®  
(I/ECMH) Informational Booklet**



**The Internationally Recognized Credential for  
Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice  
Promoting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health**

# I/ECMH Endorsement®

## What is it?

Infant Mental Health Endorsement (IMH-E)® and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement (ECMH-E)® are two separate credentials that can be earned by anyone working with, or on behalf of, very young children and their families. There is a focus on strengthening and supporting early relationships, because of how crucial they are to a child's social and emotional development. The two Endorsements® by Infancy Onward will verify that an applicant has acquired knowledge to promote the delivery of high quality, culturally sensitive, relationship-focused services to infants, young children, parents, other caregivers and families.

## Who can get it?

Four categories of Endorsement® represent the varied disciplines that contribute to the field of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.

**I/EC Family Associate** - for individuals whose primary focus is **promotion** of Infant or Early Childhood Mental Health. This includes child care providers and staff, non-profit coordinators, play group leaders, doulas and midwives, lactation specialists, school counselors, and many others. This category is also available for professionals who may fit into a different category of Endorsement®, but do not yet meet all of the eligibility requirements.

**I/EC Family Specialist** - for individuals whose primary focus is **prevention**. This includes home visitors, family support specialists, First Steps providers, Parent Educators, Inclusion Specialists, NICU nurses, and many others.

**I/EC Mental Health Specialist** - for individuals whose primary focus is therapeutic **Intervention**. This includes mental health clinicians, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical social workers, and others.

**I/EC Mental Health Mentor** - for individuals demonstrating **leadership** in the field. This includes a broad range of professionals under three separate designations: **Policy, Clinical, and Research/Faculty**. Some examples include psychologists, pediatricians, policy specialists, university faculty, and researchers.

## How do I earn it?

The specific requirements for Endorsement® vary for each category. Eligibility is based on the level of education, work experiences, training hours, hours of reflective supervision, received from an eligible provider, and three professional reference ratings. The applicant must also be a member of Infancy Onward.

\*Only one credential can be earned at one time, with at least a one-year waiting period between applying for the other.

## Endorsement® Fees:

	IFA/ECFA (I)	IFS/ECFS (II)	IMHS/ECMHS (III)	IMHM/ECMHM (IV)
Membership in Infancy Onward:	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
Application Fee:	\$15	\$25	\$25	\$25
Processing Fee:	\$25	\$50	\$200	\$300
<b>Total Cost:</b>	<b>\$90</b>	<b>\$125</b>	<b>\$275</b>	<b>\$375</b>

**The Categories of Endorsement® Charts** will provide basic information about the requirements for earning each Category of Endorsement®.

**The Flowchart Tool** may help you in determining which Category is the best fit for you based on your current experiences. You should select the Category that is most representative of your scope of work.

\*If you are unsure which Category is best for you, please contact the Endorsement Coordinator via email: [Endorsement@infancyonward.org](mailto:Endorsement@infancyonward.org)



## IMH Endorsement® Categories

INFANT MENTAL HEALTH ENDORSEMENT (IMH-E®) PATHWAYS <sup>2</sup>				
	Infant Family Associate (IFA) (PROMOTION)	Infant Family Specialist (IFS) (PREVENTION)	Infant Mental Health Specialist (IMHS) (INTERVENTION)	Infant Mental Health Mentor (IMHM) (MACRO)
<b>Education</b>	Any academic <sup>3</sup> degree	Masters or Bachelors degree	Masters or post-graduate degree	Masters or post-graduate degree
<b>Work Experience</b>	OR Minimum 2 years infant/early childhood-related work or volunteer experience in an applicable role <sup>4</sup>	Minimum 2 years of prevention and/or early intervention service to 0-36 mo. old & their families; served a minimum of 10 families	Minimum 2 years, post-masters, IMH practice working on behalf of the caregiver-infant relationship (example: infant parent psychotherapy)	Minimum 3 years as an IMH practice leader (policy, research/faculty, and/or clinical) and provider of RSC for 3+years <sup>5</sup>
<b>In-service Training</b>	Minimum 30 hours, average 40 hours	Minimum 30 hours, average 50 hours	Minimum 30 hours, average 75 hours	Minimum 30 hours, average 75 hours <i>A minimum of 15-hours must be didactic training about the provision RSC<sup>6</sup></i>
<b>Membership in Infancy Onward or WAIMH</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Code of Ethics</b>	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed
<b>Endorsement® Agreement</b>	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed
<b>Reflective Supervision or Consultation (RSC)</b>	N/A	Minimum 24 clock hours within a 12-month to 24-month time period while working with infants, toddlers, & families and/or while providing supervision to staff who are providing services to infants, young children (birth to 36 months) and their families.	Minimum 50 clock hours within a 12-month to 24-month time period while working with infants, toddlers, & families	Clinical only: Minimum 50 clock hours a 12-month to 24-month time period while working with infants, toddlers, & families. A minimum of 25-hours of the RSC received should be about the RSC that the applicant provides to others
<b>Reference Ratings</b>	Three (from current program supervisor, teacher, trainer, consultant, or parent/service recipient)	Three 1. Current program supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant. 2. Person providing RSC 3. Another supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant; or a colleague	Three 1. Current program supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant. 2. Person providing RSC 3. Another supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant; colleague; or supervisee (if applicant is a supervisor)	Three (Please see full IMH-M requirements for specific guidelines for who should complete reference rating forms for Clinical, Policy, and Research/Faculty applicants).
<b>Written Exam</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Application</b>	Applicant will submit an application that demonstrates that they have met both the requirements and the competencies specified for the Endorsement® for which they are applying. Details about competencies can be found in within the <i>Competency Guidelines</i> <sup>®</sup> .			

- 1) This is just a summary; for the full description of the requirements by Endorsement® category, please consult the *Competency Guidelines*<sup>®</sup>.
- 2) IFA applicants need to meet the Education OR the Work requirement. They do not need to meet both.
- 3) For IFA applicants, volunteer experience may meet the work criterion if it was:
  - a) supervised experience, with women during pregnancy, or with infants, toddlers & families AND
  - b) included specialized training. \*Examples include CASA, Doula, or Child Life Specialist.
- 4) Only IMHM-Clinical applicants need to fulfill the requirement of attending didactic training about the provision of RSC.



# ECMH Endorsement® Categories

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH ENDORSEMENT (ECMH-E®) PATHWAYS <sup>7</sup>				
	Early Childhood Family Associate (ECFA) (PROMOTION)	Early Childhood Family Specialist (ECFS) (PREVENTION)	Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist (ECMHS) (INTERVENTION)	Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor (ECMHM) (MACRO)
<b>Education</b>	Any academic <sup>8</sup> degree	Masters or Bachelors degree	Masters or post-graduate degree	Masters or post-graduate degree
<b>Work Experience</b>	OR Minimum 2 years early childhood-related work or volunteer experience in an applicable role <sup>9</sup>	Minimum 2 years of prevention and/or early intervention service to 3- up to 6-year-olds & their families; served a minimum of 10 families	Minimum 2 years, post-masters, ECMH practice working on behalf of the caregiver-child relationship (example: child parent psychotherapy)	Minimum 3 years as an ECMH practice leader (policy, research/faculty, and/or clinical) and provider of RSC for 3+years <sup>10</sup>
<b>In-service Training</b>	Minimum 30 hours, average 45 hours	Minimum 30 hours, average 60 hours	Minimum 30 hours, average 75 hours	Minimum 30 hours, average 75 hours. A minimum of 15-hours must be didactic training about the provision RSC <sup>11</sup>
<b>Membership in Infancy Onward or WAIMH</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Code of Ethics</b>	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed
<b>Endorsement® Agreement</b>	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed
<b>Reflective Supervision or Consultation (RSC)</b>	N/A	Minimum 24 clock hours within a 12-month to 24-month time period while working with 3 up to 6-year olds and families and/or while providing supervision to staff who are providing services to young children (3 to 6 years old) and their families.	Minimum 50 clock hours within a 12-month to 24-month time period while working with 3 up to 6-year olds and families.	Clinical only: Minimum 50 clock hours within a 12-month to 24-month time period while working with 3 up to 6-year olds and families. A minimum of 25-hours of the RSC received should be about the RSC that the applicant provides to others
<b>Reference Ratings</b>	Three (from current program supervisor, teacher, trainer, consultant, or parent/service recipient)	Three 1. Current program supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant. 2. Person providing RSC 3. Another supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant; or a colleague	Three 1. Current program supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant. 2. Person providing RSC 3. Another supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant; colleague; or supervisee (if applicant is a supervisor)	Three (Please see full ECMH-M requirements for specific guidelines for who should complete reference rating forms for Clinical, Policy, and Research/Faculty applicants).
<b>Written Exam</b>	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Application</b>	Applicant will submit an application that demonstrates that they have met both the requirements and the competencies specified for the Endorsement® for which they are applying. Details about competencies can be found in within the <i>Competency Guidelines</i> ®.			

- 1) This is just a summary; for the full description of the requirements by Endorsement® category, please consult the *Competency Guidelines*®.
- 2) ECFA applicants need to meet the Education OR the Work requirement. They do not need to meet both.
- 3) For ECFA applicants, volunteer experience may meet the work criterion if it was:
  - a) supervised experience with young children & families AND
  - b) included specialized training. \*Examples include CASA or Child Life Specialist.
- 4) Only ECMHM-Clinical applicants need to fulfill the requirement of attending didactic training about the provision of RSC.



# Reflective Supervision

Reflective Supervision, or Consultation (RSC), is recommended for all applicants, however, only Family Specialist, Mental Health Specialist, and Mental Health Mentor-Clinical applicants are required to receive it.

Reflective Supervision involves regular meetings between individuals or groups and a reflective supervisor, who facilitates thoughtful discussion focused on the emotional content of work in the infant/early childhood family field. This specialized supervision goes beyond clinical or administrative supervision to shared exploration of the parallel process; attention to all of the relationships, including that between practitioner and parent, between parent and infant/toddler, and between practitioner and supervisor. It is critical to understand how each of these relationships affects the others. Of additional importance, by attending to the emotional content of the work and how reactions to the content affect the work, reflective supervision enhances professional and personal development within one's discipline.

## **Family Specialist (IFS/ECFS) Specific Requirements:**

**Minimum 24 clock hours** within a one- to two-year timeframe of post-Bachelor's, relationship-based reflective supervision/consultation, individually or in a group, **while providing services to infants/toddlers (birth to 36 months for IFS; 3-6 years for ECFS) and families.**

Provider of RSC must have earned and maintained Endorsement® as a Mental Health Specialist or a Mental Health Mentor-Clinical.

\*Bachelor's-prepared IFS or ECFS applicants may seek RSC from a Master's-prepared person who has earned Family Specialist Endorsement® if there is no one with either a Mental Health Specialist or Mental Health Mentor-Clinical Endorsement®. This Master's-prepared Family Specialist provider of RSC must also receive RSC while providing supervision to others.

## **Mental Health Specialist (IMHS/ECMHS) Specific Requirements:**

**Minimum 50 clock hours** within a one- to two-year timeframe of relationship-focused reflective supervision/consultation, individually or in a group, post-Masters, **while providing services to infants/toddlers/young children (birth to 36 months for IMHS; 3-6 years for ECMHS) and families.**

Provider of RSC must have earned and maintained Endorsement® as a Mental Health Specialist or a Mental Health Mentor-Clinical.

# Process Overview

1. Complete a Preliminary Application on the Endorsement Application System (EASy): <https://easy.mi-aimh.org/infancy-onward>
2. Join Infancy Onward as a Professional Member - this is completed during the Preliminary Application process on EASy.
3. Pay the professional membership fee (\$50) as well as the application fee that coincides with the Category for which you are applying.  
\*\*please be certain you are applying for the appropriate Category as Infancy Onward cannot issue a refund for application fees. If you are unsure which Category is best for you, please contact the Endorsement Coordinator via email:  
**Endorsement@infancyonward.org**
4. Infancy Onward will review your preliminary application and will verify you have paid both the application and membership fees.
5. You will receive a username and password to EASy. You will also receive an electronic copy of the *Competency Guidelines*® as well as other documents that will guide you as you work to complete your full application.
6. Complete the full online portfolio on EASy. Everything is completed electronically.
7. When everything is complete, email the Endorsement Coordinator to determine if you are ready to submit. Do not submit until you have spoken to the Endorsement Coordinator.
8. Pay the processing fee that coincides with the Category for which you are applying.
9. Your application will be reviewed by two Endorsed® providers; the review timelines are posted on the login page of EASy. You may inquire with Infancy Onward at any time during the review about the status of your application.
10. If approved, you are finished with the process and have officially earned Endorsement®, with the exception of I/ECMHS and I/ECMHM, who will move on to take the written exam.

# Annual Renewal

In order to keep your place on the Active Endorsement Registry and maintain use of the IMH-E® or ECMH-E® credential, Infancy Onward requires ongoing membership, as well as participation in 15 clock hours annually of training experiences that promote infant and early childhood mental health, and 12 clock hours annually of Reflective Supervision, if required. Renewal of both the Endorsement® and membership are due on **December 1st** of each year. Providers can renew both by logging into their EASy account.

\*New providers are not required to renew until the following year after earning their credential. For example, if you earn your Endorsement® at any time during the year 2020, you are not required to renew until December 1, 2021.

If, for some reason, a provider is unable to meet the training requirement, the provider may apply for Inactive Status. This simply states the provider was unable to earn the required amount of training, but would still like to keep their credential. The provider is still required to renew and maintain membership in Infancy Onward in order to be granted Inactive Status. Please inquire with Infancy Onward for more details.



## Questions?

Any questions about IMH or ECMH Endorsements® may be directed to the Endorsement Coordinator: [Endorsement@infancyonward.org](mailto:Endorsement@infancyonward.org)

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need help!