

INfancy
Onward



Supporting First Relationships

**Infant Mental Health Endorsement[®] &
Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement[®]
(I/ECMH-E[®]) 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?

Endorsement is an internationally recognized credential used to demonstrate specialization in the infant-early childhood mental health (IECMH) field. Endorsement supports and recognizes the development of professionals who work with or on behalf of pregnant people, infants, young children, and their families. Endorsement was developed by MI-AIMH in 2002 and is now used by 35 state associations of infant mental health (AIMHs) and two international associations. Each of those AIMHs is a member of the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. Through the Alliance, Endorsement in Indiana is recognized in each of the 37 AIMHs! As of December 31, 2021, over 4,600 professionals had earned Endorsement worldwide!

Who can get it?

The Endorsement credential is intended for everyone who applies IECMH principles in their work across the full continuum of promotion, prevention/early intervention, clinical intervention/treatment, and macro scopes of practice. This includes any professional who has experience working with or on behalf of pregnant people, infants, young children, parents, and/or other caregivers.

Four categories of Endorsement represent the varied disciplines that contribute to the field of IECMH.

I/EC Family Associate - for individuals whose primary focus is **promotion** of I/ECMH. This includes early childhood education, pediatricians, play group leaders, 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/early intervention**. This includes home visitors, family support specialists, First Steps providers, early head start providers, parent educators, inclusion specialists, NICU nurses, and many others.

I/EC Mental Health Specialist - for individuals whose primary focus is **clinical intervention/treatment**. 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 providers of RSC, policy specialists, university faculty, and researchers.

I/ECMH Endorsement®

Why apply?

1. To grow and develop as a professional in the rapidly expanding infant, young child and family field
2. To be recognized by employers and peers for having attained a level of competency in culturally sensitive, relationship-focused practice that promotes IECMH
3. To better support the infants, young children, families, students, agencies, and institutions in the promotion of IECMH

How do I earn it?

The specific requirements for Endorsement vary for each category. Eligibility is based on specialized education, work experiences, in-service training hours, leadership, and RSC experiences. The applicant must also be a member of INfancy Onward.

1. Identify your scope of work and align that with the category of Endorsement that fits best
 - a. Promotion (e.g., early childhood education, pediatricians, child welfare, etc.)
 - b. Prevention/Early Intervention (e.g., home visiting, early head start, IECMH consultation, etc.)
 - c. Clinical Intervention/Treatment (e.g., infant/child parent psychotherapy, Child First, etc.)
 - d. Macro (e.g., researcher, provider of reflective supervision, policy maker, etc.)
2. Register on EASy, INfancy Onward's web-based system for applying for Endorsement. Visit EASy at <https://infancy-onward.myeasy.org/>. The first time you visit EASy, click Register under New Applicant
3. EASy asks you to provide some details about your work, education, and RSC experiences. Complete and submit, including payment of the registration fee and up-to-date INfancy Onward membership
4. Log into EASy and prepare application (minimum 4-weeks to complete). Once completed, submit application along with payment of the processing fee
5. Application review and, for Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist & Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor applicants, successful completion of a written exam
6. Endorsement! Begin using the I/ECMH-E® credential after your name

¹To learn more about the AIMHs who are using the Endorsement credential, visit allianceaimh.org

The Categories of Endorsement Charts on the following two pages will provide basic information about the requirements for earning each category of Endorsement for Infant Mental Health Endorsement® (ages 0-3) and for Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement® (ages 3-6). 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 your Endorsement Coordinator via email: Endorsement@infancyonward.org

Endorsement Fees

	IFA/ECFA	IFS/ECFS	IMHS/ ECMHS	IMHM/ ECMHM	ERS add-on
Annual membership in INfancy Onward:	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
Application Fee:	\$15	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$0
Processing Fee:	\$25	\$50	\$200 (includes exam fees)	\$300 (includes exam fees)	\$50
Total Cost:	\$90	\$125	\$275	\$375	FS/MHS fees + \$50

INfancy Onward's Memberships

- Annual Individual Professional Membership – \$50
- Annual Agency Membership – \$225 for five; additional memberships – \$40 per staff, after initial five (must be paid in full together).

I/ECMH Endorsement® Categories

	SELECT YOUR INFANCY ONWARD ENDORSEMENT (I/ECMH-E®) PATHWAY BASED ON YOUR SCOPE OF WORK ²			
	Infant/Early Childhood Family Associate (I/ECFA) PROMOTION	Infant/Early Childhood Family Specialist (I/ECFS) PREVENTION/EARLY INTERVENTION	Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist (I/ECMHS) CLINICAL INTERVENTION/TREATMENT	Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor (I/ECMHM) MACRO
Education	Any academic degree OR	No degree required	Masters or post-graduate degree	Masters or post-graduate degree
Work Experience	Minimum 2 yrs infant/early childhood-related work or volunteer experience in an applicable role ³	Minimum 2 yrs of prevention and/or early intervention service to 0-36 mo. olds or 3-6 year olds & their families; served a minimum of 10 families	Minimum 2 yrs, post-masters, I/ECMH practice working on behalf of the caregiver-infant/young child relationship (example: infant/young child parent psychotherapy)	Minimum 3 yrs as an I/ECMH practice leader (policy, research/faculty, and/or clinical) <i>Clinical only: also meet the I/ECMHS work requirements</i>
In-Service Training	Minimum 33 hrs, average 40 hrs recommended <i>Minimum of 3-hrs must be about diversity, equity, and inclusion in I/ECMH</i>	Minimum 33 hrs, average 50 hrs recommended <i>Minimum of 3-hrs must be about diversity, equity, and inclusion in I/ECMH</i>	Minimum 33 hrs, average 75 hrs recommended <i>Minimum of 3-hrs must be about diversity, equity, and inclusion in I/ECMH</i>	Minimum 33 hrs, average 75 hrs recommended <i>Minimum of 3-hrs must be about diversity, equity, and inclusion in I/ECMH</i> <i>Clinical only: Minimum 48 hrs</i> <i>Clinical only: Minimum of 15-hrs must be about the provision RSC</i>
Leadership	N/A	N/A	N/A	Minimum 3 yrs leadership activities
Reflective Supervision/ Consultation (RSC)	N/A	Minimum 24 hrs while providing I/ECFS services to infants/toddlers/young children & families and/or while providing supervision to staff who are providing services to infants/toddlers/young children and their families	Minimum 50 hrs while providing I/ECMHS services to infants/toddlers/young children & families	<i>Clinical only: Minimum 50 hrs while providing I/ECMHS services to infants/toddlers/young children & families. A minimum of 25 hrs of the RSC received should be about the RSC that the applicant provides to others</i>
Reference Ratings	Three (Current program supervisor and two from: teacher, trainer, consultant, or parent/service recipient)	Three 1. Current program supervisor 2. Person providing RSC 3. Another supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant; or a colleague	Three 1. Current program supervisor 2. Person providing RSC 3. Another supervisor, teacher, trainer or consultant; colleague; or supervisee (if applicant is a supervisor)	Three (Please see I/ECMHM requirements for specific guidelines for who should complete reference rating forms for Clinical, Policy, and Research/Faculty applicants)
Written Exam	No	No	Yes	Yes

²This is just a summary; for a full description, please visit: mi-aimh.org/endorsement/requirements/

³For IFA applicants, volunteer experience may meet the work criterion if it was a) supervised experience with people during pregnancy or with infants, toddlers, & families AND b) included specialized training. Examples include CASA, Doula, or Child Life Specialist

⁴For IFRS applicants who have not yet provided RSC for 1+ year, there is an emerging status option that allows you to begin providing qualifying hrs of RSC to IFS endorsees and applicants while you obtain necessary experiences and support

⁵It is possible that these hrs were received as part of fulfilling Part 1, but it is not required, meaning these hrs may have been received in addition to the 24 hrs of RSC about your direct service work

Reflective Supervision/Consultation

Reflective Supervision/Consultation (RSC) is recommended for all applicants, however, only Family Specialists, Mental Health Specialists, Mental Health Mentor- Clinicals, and those with an Endorsed Reflective Supervisor add-on are required to receive it.

RSC involves regular meetings between individuals or groups and a reflective supervisor/consultant, 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 caregiver, between caregiver and infant/toddler/young child, 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.

All Infancy Onward memberships include a spot in one of our virtual RSC groups run by an endorsed provider. RSC can be used for Endorsement or to enhance professional and personal development within one's discipline.

Endorsed Reflective Supervisor add-on

Prerequisite: must be endorsed as Family Specialist or Mental Health Specialist

Requirements:

Work: Minimum 1 year experience providing RSC to others

RSC: 12 hrs received from a qualifying provider specifically about the RSC they provide to others

Training: Minimum of 15 training hours specifically about the provision of RSC

References: one from a reflective supervisor/consultant and one from a reflective supervisee/consultee

For those who do not yet meet the requirements for the ERS add-on, they can apply for emerging and take 2 years to earn those requirements while still offering qualifying hours of RSC for others.

Approved Providers of RSC for Endorsement

Endorsement®		
Category	Can receive from:	Can provide to:
Family Specialist (FS)	ERS & MHM-C	N/A
Family Specialist/Mental Health Specialist + Endorsed Reflective Supervisor (ERS)	ERS & MHM-C	FS, MHS, & ERS
Mental Health Specialist (MHS)	ERS & MHM-C	N/A
Mental Health Mentor-Clinical (MHM-C)	MHM-C	FS, MHS, ERS & MHM-C

Endorsement Process Overview

1. Complete a Preliminary Application on the Endorsement Application System (EASy): <https://infancy-onward.myeasy.org/> based on your scope of work. If you are unsure which category is best for you, please contact the Director of Endorsement via email: **Endorsement@infancyonward.org**
2. Join INfancy Onward as a Professional Member - this is completed during the registration 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.
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 several other documents that will guide you as you work to complete your full application.
6. Complete the full online application on EASy (on average 1 year to complete). Everything is completed electronically.
7. When everything is complete, email the Director of Endorsement to determine if you are ready to submit. Do not submit until you have spoken to the Director of Endorsement.
8. Pay the processing fee that coincides with the category for which you are applying.
9. Your application will be reviewed by 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, including at least 1 hour about diversity, equity, and inclusion in I/ECMH. For I/ECMHM-Clinical endorsees and those with an ERS add-on, 3 out of the 15 training hours must be about the provision of RSC. In addition to training hours, 12 clock hours annually of RSC are required for I/ECFS, I/ECMHS, and I/ECMHM-Clinical endorsees. Renewal of both the Endorsement and membership are due on **December 31st** of each year. Providers can renew both by logging into their EASy account.

*New endorsees 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 2023, you are not required to renew until December 31, 2024.

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

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