# WELCOME EARLY CARE & EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS!

***Did you know?*** *As an ECE professional in Michigan, you could earn the Infant Mental Health Endorsement® or the Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement® and join the largest and most recognized Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) credentialing system available in the United States!* ***Use this toolkit to learn more about IECMH Endorsement®, the benefits it provides to professionals, and how to apply to obtain this internationally recognized credential.***

What is Endorsement?

**Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health® is an internationally recognized credential that supports and recognizes the development and proficiency of professionals who work with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. It is based on a set of Competencies designed to support and enhance culturally sensitive, relationship focused practice within a framework of infant mental health. An applicant demonstrates acquisition of these competencies through education, work, training, and reflective supervision experiences.**

A person holding a baby

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The Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH) is a statewide organization that strives to promote infant mental health through building awareness, promoting professional capacity, fostering partnerships, and supporting policies which are in the best interest of infants, young children, and their families. MI-AIMH aims for all Michigan infants and young children to reach their fullest potential through nurturing and consistent relationships within the context of family, community, and culture.

MI-AIMH has partnered with [MiRegistry](https://www.miregistry.org/) and Office of Great Start at the MI Department of Education (MDE) to expand training opportunities that align with the recognized IMH competencies, theoretical foundations and learning experiences that will support early care and education professionals as they provide high quality, culturally sensitive and relationship-based care to infants, toddlers and their families within the framework of infant mental health. **On October 1st, MI-AIMH is launching On Demand Webinars to support professionals seeking training, visit** [**https://www.pathlms.com/mi-aimh**](https://www.pathlms.com/mi-aimh) **to view MI-AIMH’s trainings and subscribe to MI-AIMH’s emails on** [**https://mi-aimh.org/**](https://mi-aimh.org/)

***INFANT MENTAL HEALTH (IMH)*** *is the developing capacity of children from birth to 6 to experience, regulate, and express emotions; to form close relationships; and to explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children. IMH is a multidisciplinary field that includes all professionals who support children’s social and emotional development through promotion, prevention, intervention and/or leadership.*

# Why pursue I/ECMH-Endorsement®?

I/ECMH-Endorsement® provides added professional credibility by validating the additional training, work and reflective experiences that make up the full range of specialized knowledge and experiences one needs for IMH informed practice leading to the best outcomes for children, families, and communities. I/ECMH-Endorsement® is:

**Good for You:** Enhances professional credibility and confidence as a specialist in the infant and family field. *Earning the I/ECMH-E®, offers the opportunity to be listed as Professional Level 1 on Michigan’s Career Pathway:* [*https://www.miregistry.org/career-pathway/*](https://www.miregistry.org/career-pathway/)

[**Good for Babies**](https://mi-aimh.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Endorsement-is-Good-for-Babies-MI_FINAL.pdf) **and Families:** Supports infants, toddlers, families, and professionals in a culturally competent, reflective, and relationship-based way.

**Good for Communities:** Provides assurance to families, agencies, employers, and the public at large that the Endorsed professional meets high standards of care.

**Good for Employers:** Verifies professionals have attained a specified level of functioning and understanding about the promotion of IMH and relationship-based approaches to working with this specialized population.

**Good for the Field:** Informs professional development and career planning within an organized framework; creates a competent, high-quality workforce leading to desired child/family outcomes; and uplifts the professional credibility of the IECMH field and the multiple disciplines within the field, including Early Care Education.

Belong to an international network of IMH Professionals!

I/ECMH-Endorsement® is nationally and internationally recognized. When you become endorsed, you will join an international network of over 5,000+ professionals who have earned I/ECMH-E® across the world! Visit allianceaimh.org to learn more.

# What category of Endorsement® is right for me?

I/ECMH-Endorsement®, like Infant Mental Health, is cross-sector and multidisciplinary. I/ECMH-Endorsement® indicates an individual’s efforts to specialize in the promotion and practice of infant or early childhood mental health within their own chosen discipline. For this reason, I/ECMH-Endorsement® has four categories that are tied to an individual’s scope of practice.

* ***Infant Family Associate*** *is the primary category of the* ***IMH-Endorsement®*** *for professionals whose work centers on the* ***promotion of social and emotional development of 0–3-year-old children.***
* ***Early Childhood Family Associate*** *is the primary category of the* ***ECMH-Endorsement®*** *for professionals whose work centers on the* ***promotion of social and emotional development of 3–6-year-old children****. Professionals that earn endorsement as an Infant/Early Childhood Family Associate focus on* ***promotion*** *in their work as Early Care Educators, Family Home Care Providers, Early Childhood Education Directors, Administration, Child Welfare, and more.*

# What is the cost to apply for an Endorsement?

MI-AIMH currently has scholarships to earn IFA or ECFA **at no cost** through 2023 and 2024. (A $110 saving and includes MI-AIMH Membership!) Applicants would still be responsible for Ongoing costs: $100 per year to renew MI-AIMH Membership and Endorsement. MiRegistry offers credit for being a MI-AIMH member as well.

# How do I apply for an Endorsement?

**\*Earning Endorsement is a journey, not a race. Applicants should have two years of experience working with Infants/Toddlers/Preschoolers. In leu of two years, a CDA or other education experience may be used to apply prior to two years.**

# NewspaperStep 1: Get Ready…Preparation to complete an Endorsement® application:

* **Applicants should plan to add approximately 45 hours total to their Endorsement Application on topics such as *Infant/Toddler Development, Infant/Toddler Behavior, Social Emotional Development, Cultural Humility, Reflection, Observation leading to understanding Behavior, Building Relationships with Families, etc.***
* Attend (or gather details of attendance) **continuing education training** in topics related to IMH competencies (i.e. date, duration, facilitator, and topic). Copies of certificates are NOT needed!
* Training never expires- so if you attended something 10 years ago, you can add it to your application!
* Training can be from any organization or program, it does not have to be through MI-AIMH.
  + MI-AIMH does offer training that is open to all professionals to register and attend. MI-AIMH is also able to contract with centers to offer training specific to staff’s needs and schedule.

# ProgrammerStep 2: Completion of an Endorsement® Application:

***Five steps to completion of IMH Endorsement® application:***

1. **Register in the Endorsement Application System (EASy),** a web-based system for completing applications for Endorsement <https://mi-aimh.myeasy.org/> ). The first time you visit Michigan’s EASy, click “Register” under “New Applicant.” Select **both** membership and endorsement.
2. To register, EASy requires you to provide a brief description of your experience to start the process, but you will be able to edit and add additional information so don’t spend a lot of time on this section. **Complete and submit**, including payment for EASy Registration Fee and Membership Fee ($85 total).
3. Prepare application following prompts imbedded within the application, using resources provided in this toolkit and contacting MI-AIMH coordinator with questions; including three electronic references. **Submit completed application** along with payment for the EASy Processing Fee.
4. **Documentation of competencies** and eligibility components reviewed by trained, Endorsed reviewer.
5. Upon recommendation from formal review, **IMH or ECMH-Endorsement® granted! Begin to use credential such as:**

Name, IMH-E® or Name, ECMH-E®

Infant Mental Health Endorsed Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsed

# Diploma rollStep 3: Maintaining your Endorsement

To maintain IMH or ECMH-Endorsement®, every year professionals complete and document 15 hours of continuing education related to the promotion of Infant Mental Health competencies in addition to maintaining membership in MI-AIMH ($70 per year) and paying a $30 Renewal Fee.

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# Celebrate! You did it!

Congratulations on earning this esteemed credential! Your Endorsement® recognizes your specialized knowledge and skill set as well as your commitment to the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health field!

Questions…

Contact MI-AIMH’s Endorsement coordinator with any Endorsement related questions. Email: [miaimh.easy.imhe@gmail.com](mailto:miaimh.easy.imhe@gmail.com)

**MI-AIMH is a professional home. Check out the following resources!**

<https://mi-aimh.org/about/getinvolved/>

<https://mi-aimh.org/for-0-6-professionals/chapters/>

<https://mi-aimh.org/for-0-6-professionals/imh-faculty-directory/> (If your program has professional development funds, consider seeking out Reflective Supervision)

<https://mi-aimh.org/about/impact-results/> (View recent data about impact of Endorsement)

<https://mi-aimh.org/about/celebrate-babies-week/>

Did you know there are Diversity-informed tenets for work with infants, children, and families? Visit [www.diversityinformedtenets.org](http://www.diversityinformedtenets.org).