



**Department of
Children & Youth**

Help Me Grow Early Intervention

**Clarifying the Roles of the Infant
Mental Health (IMH) Provider and
the Early Childhood Mental Health
(ECMH) Consultant**

www.ohioearlyintervention.org

What is the difference between the Infant Mental Health Credential (IMH) and the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Credential?

These are two different credentials. The ECMH credential is only for those working in the mental health field and providing early childhood mental health consultative services. The three levels of the IMH are applicable across professions for those working with very young children and their families.

IMH Credential

The IMH credential is a priority of Governor DeWine. Currently, the Infant and Early Childhood Administrator from the Ohio Department of Children and Youth oversees the project with support from Early Intervention, also at the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. The objective of the credential is to support professionals providing services & supports in Ohio to young children and families.

The credential is designed to increase the capacity of Ohio's early childhood professionals to support parents with very young children who have concerns for their child's social emotional development. Training is provided that focuses on the parent-infant dyad and relational practices that support optimal social and emotional development as early as possible.

Ohio uses national infant-mental health core competencies and cross-agency trainings to build upon existing skills of the professional. With this increased knowledge, the professional is better equipped to support parents of infants and toddlers experiencing social and emotional issues.

Each credential level is different based on the practitioner's role, education, and work experience. Each level has a different set of [competencies](#) based on role, education, and expectations of those holding the credential.

In Ohio, there are three different levels:

Level I: Ohio Infant Family Affiliate – Screening & connecting; generally, home visitors and early intervention service coordinators.

Level II: Ohio Infant Family Practitioner – Assessment & early intervention. Conduct social emotional assessment, develop EB strategies to support infants' social and emotional development, recognizing the parent-child dyad as the center of intervention. Family centered practitioner and team expert on infant social and emotional development.

Level III: Infant Mental Health Practitioner – (typically, ECMH consultant, advance practice social workers and counselors) Assessment, treatment and consultation; and mentor (reflective supervision) Levels I or II Credentials.

The purpose is to expand Ohio's capacity to serve families who have children with social emotional development concerns in order to intervene as early as possible either by providing early intervention (EI) and/or ensuring the parent/caregiver has access to needed mental health services.

Frequently Asked Questions about the IMH Credential

Do I have to work for the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction services to apply for an IMH Credential? If so, not many Developmental Specialists can apply.

This is not a requirement for the Infant Mental Health credential, although you must be employed and working with families and children.

How do I apply for the IMH Credential?

Information about how to apply for the IMH credential is found at <https://ocrra.org/ohio-professional-registry/ohio-infant-mental-health/>

Once you have the credential, what can you do with the credential?

The IMH credential is a way to:

- confirm your professional expertise and training focused on Infant Mental Health,
- become experts in the social emotional domain and skilled & knowledgeable in red flags when mental health services are needed,
- become newborn & infant experts, and
- build competency & expertise in social emotional development.

Role of the ECMH Consultant

ODCY provides grant funding to support ECMH Services. ECMH consultants are employed by community mental health agencies certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Service expectations include:

1. Participation in early intervention team meetings at least two times per month with each local early intervention team. This may be in-person or virtually.
2. Provision of information and resources explaining assessment and screening tools that help to identify the social and emotional strengths and needs of children.
3. Contribution of resources and evidence-based strategies to the Primary Service Provider (PSP) and early intervention team to promote social emotional development in daily routines. This may include family/child-based consultation, such as collaborating with a primary service provider to incorporate strategies to support an outcome on an individualized family service plan (IFSP).
4. Provision of expertise about mental health challenges parents may face, (for example, maternal depression, anxiety, mental health or substance use disorder [SUD], attachment/bonding issues, etc.) and how these challenges could influence parenting and the child's social and emotional development.
5. Assistance with determining when it is appropriate to make a referral to mental health and/or ECMH services.
6. Be up to date on available local mental health resources and be able to assist the team with timely access for families who could benefit from these resources.
7. Assistance in understanding trauma and its impact on development and family dynamics.
8. Provision of at least one training annually to enhance understanding of social-emotional development and ways to promote social-emotional development.
9. Provision of qualified personnel, as indicated in Appendix B of Ohio Administrative code 5123-10-02, with expertise in social-emotional development for the purpose of serving as evaluators and assessors. These services are offered virtually to a limited number of early intervention teams as part of a pilot program.

Frequently Asked Questions about the ECMH Credential

Can ECMH consultants do telehealth with families?

See explanation above related to supports provided by ECMH consultants.

Where can I find more information regarding requirements for the credential?

Additional information about the ECMH credential is found at <https://ocrra.org/ohio-professional-registry/ohio-infant-mental-health/>.

How is ECMH Consultation documented on the IFSP?

The consultative services offered by the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant are listed in Section IV in the strategies section (see example below).

Example:

IFSP Outcome: Mom will feed Charli breakfast four out of seven days per week.

Early Intervention Service Coordinator (EISC) will request an application from Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities (FCBDD) to obtain family support dollars to purchase Nanobebe bottles to help decrease Charli's air intake. EISC will purchase a Boppy pillow so caregivers can better support Charli's head during feedings.

Occupational therapist (OT) will teach mom how to position bottle to prevent Charli from choking. OT will teach mom techniques to get Charli to open her mouth for bottle feedings. Mom will respond to Charli's coos and smiles while feeding her.

ECMH consultant will join OT on a home visit to complete a Devereux screening.

ECMH consultant will provide resources to share with mom on the signs and symptoms of post-partum depression.

What happens if a family is linked to mental health services that help achieve the outcome, but the provider is not an EI provider?

If as a result of consultative services provided by the ECMH consultant the family is linked to a mental health service provided by an agency that is not a contracted EI provider, then the service is not placed on the grid.

The EI service would go in the "supports that we currently have available to help us with this outcome" (formal and natural, including services not provided by EI). This section captures resources identified by the parents and team that support an outcome but are not EI services. This can include both formal and informal supports. Family identified resources may include emotional, informational, and material support such as extended family and friends, childcare, toddler programs in libraries, community groups, spiritual groups, recreation and sports programs, and social services.