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Early connections last a lifetime

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Building Better Brains for Babies

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My Background

Master of Science in Behavioral Disabilities

Direct service work for 10 years

- Last position served as clinical manager of targeted case management program for adults with mental illness

Master of Public Administration

- Wanted to decide who received money rather than begging for dollars

State of Wisconsin

- Community Mental Health
- Medicaid

Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health – Founding Executive Director

ZERO TO THREE – Support states and communities with infant and early childhood mental health policy





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Let's Take a Poll:

Who is here today?

Today's Agenda



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- What is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health?
- Why is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health important?
- How is Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health developed?
- Infant and Early Childhood Continuum
- Diagnosis and Treatment
- Resources to learn more on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

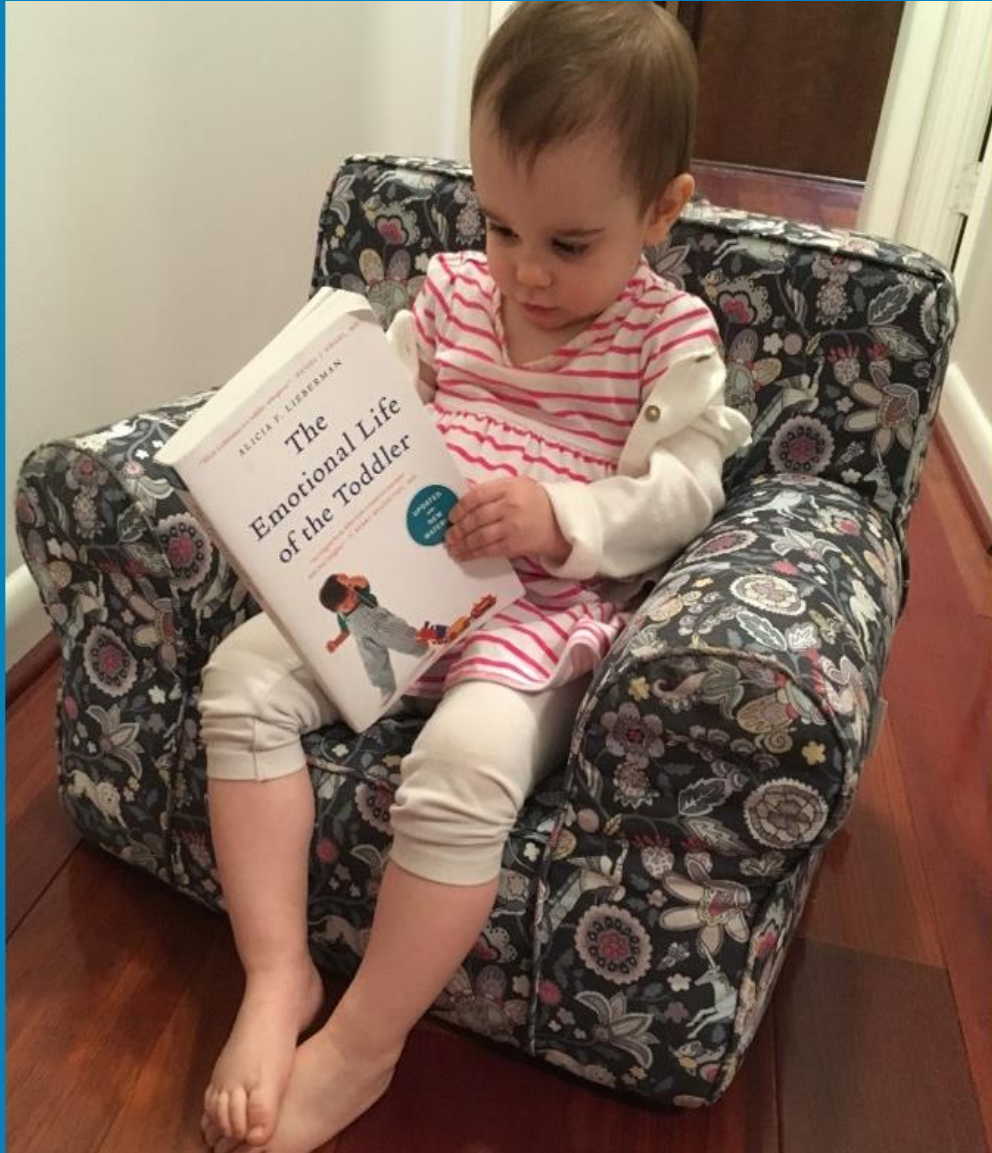


Photo by [Filip Mroz](#) on [Unsplash](#)

What is IECMH?



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The developing capacity of a child from birth to age five to:

- Experience, express and regulate **emotions**;
- Form close, secure interpersonal **relationships**; and
- **Explore** their environment and learn;

All in the context of family, community, and culture¹

Why is IECMH Important?



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- It is the **foundation** for all future development
- ALL experiences make an **impact**
- Involves developing curiosity, persistence, motivation, trust
- Infants and young children **can** and **do** experience mental health problems

How is IECMH Developed?

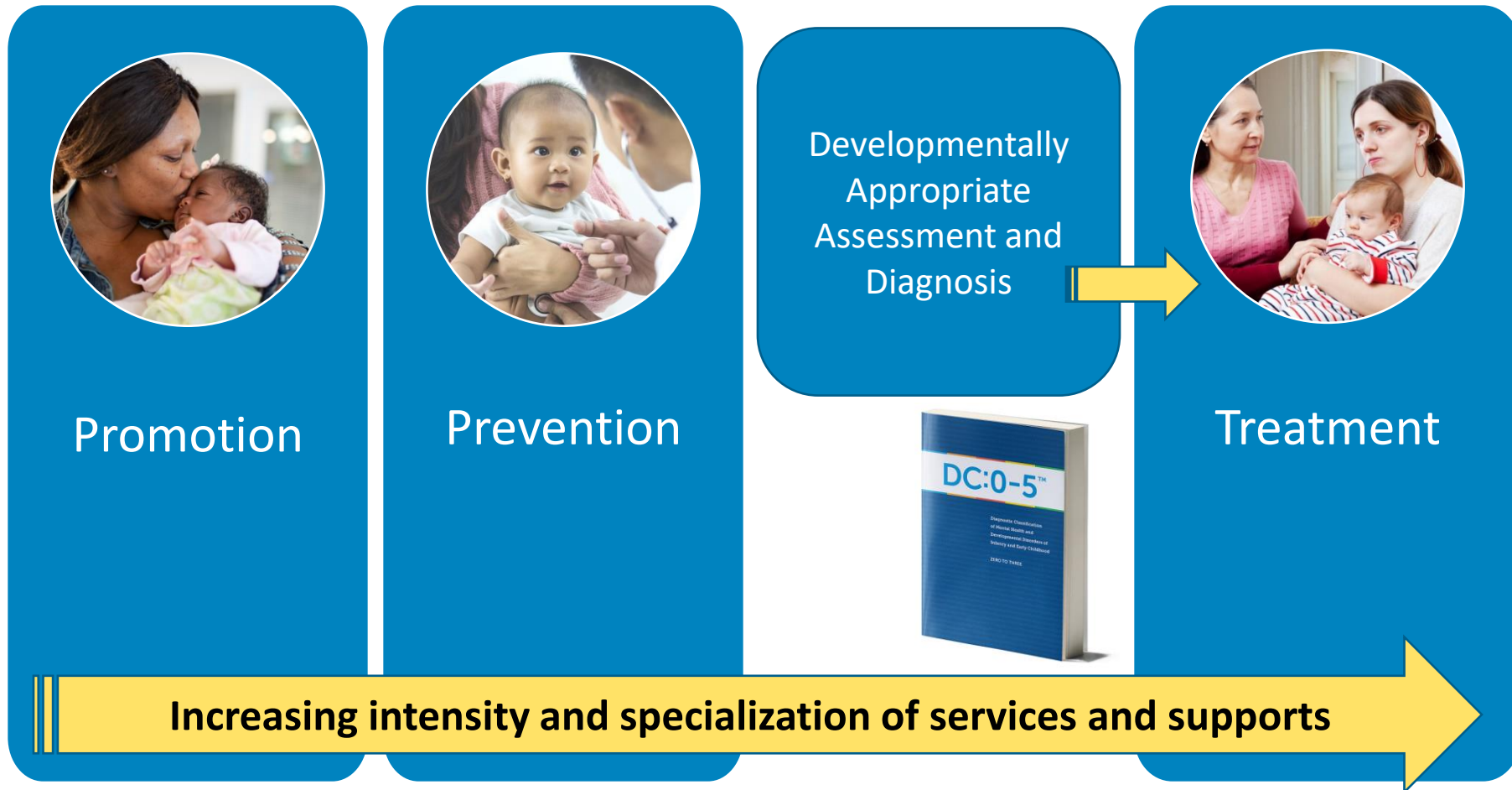


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- **All** early experiences shape the developing brain and can have lifelong impacts
- Brain development is dependent on relationships
- The brain forms **more than a million** neural connections **each second** in the first years of life²
- Baby's mental health is dependent on the mental health and well-being of their primary caregiver(s)



Continuum of IECMH Supports & Services



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

The foundation of all future development

Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being

Social and emotional development, or **infant and early childhood mental health**, is the developing capacity of a child from birth to 5 years old to...



Form close and secure **adult and peer relationships...**



Experience, manage and express a **full range of emotions...**



Explore the environment and learn...

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.



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Early connections



last a lifetime.



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Who is able to promote infant and early childhood mental health?

THE FOUNDATION OF ALL FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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Prevalence and the Importance of Addressing Problems Early



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- Young children experience mental health issues at roughly the same rates as older children, ranging from 10-16%^{3,4,5}
- Young children in childcare are expelled at a rate 13 times higher than all K-12 expulsions *combined*.⁶
 - Black preschoolers are more than 2 times as likely to be expelled than their white peers⁶

Intervening Early can Redirect the Trajectory!



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- Young children, **including infants**, can and do show early warning signs of mental health disorders
- Serious mental health problems can manifest without intervention
- Early identification and treatment can redirect the trajectory from "at risk" to the path for well-being and success

What Do Mental Health Issues in Young Children Look Like?



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Infants

- Failure to gain weight
- Inconsolable crying
- Flat affect
- Sleeping and feeding problems
- Resistance to being touched or comforted

Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Impulsive or aggressive behavior
- Inability to pay attention
- Defiance
- Regression in sleep, toileting or eating routines

Parlakian and Seibel (2002)

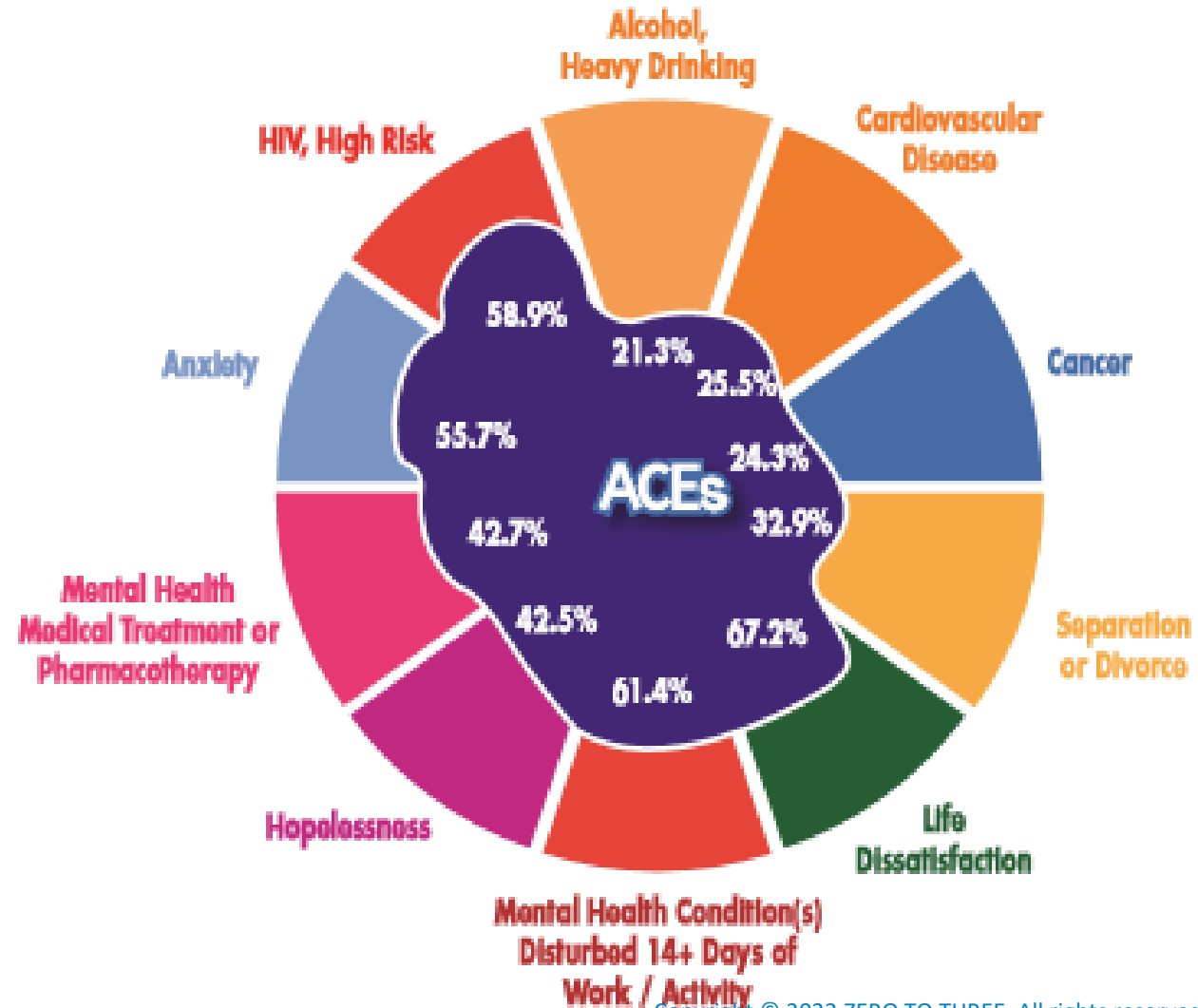


The Cost of Early Adversity



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- The Institute of Medicine estimates that the ensuing indirect and direct costs of ACEs total **\$247 billion annually**⁷, impacting federal and state spending on health care, education, child welfare, criminal justice, child welfare, and economic productivity.⁸





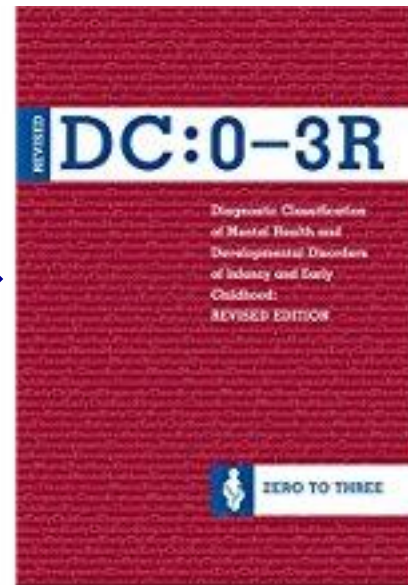
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Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood: An Overview of DC:0-5™

Diagnostic Classification



1994



2005

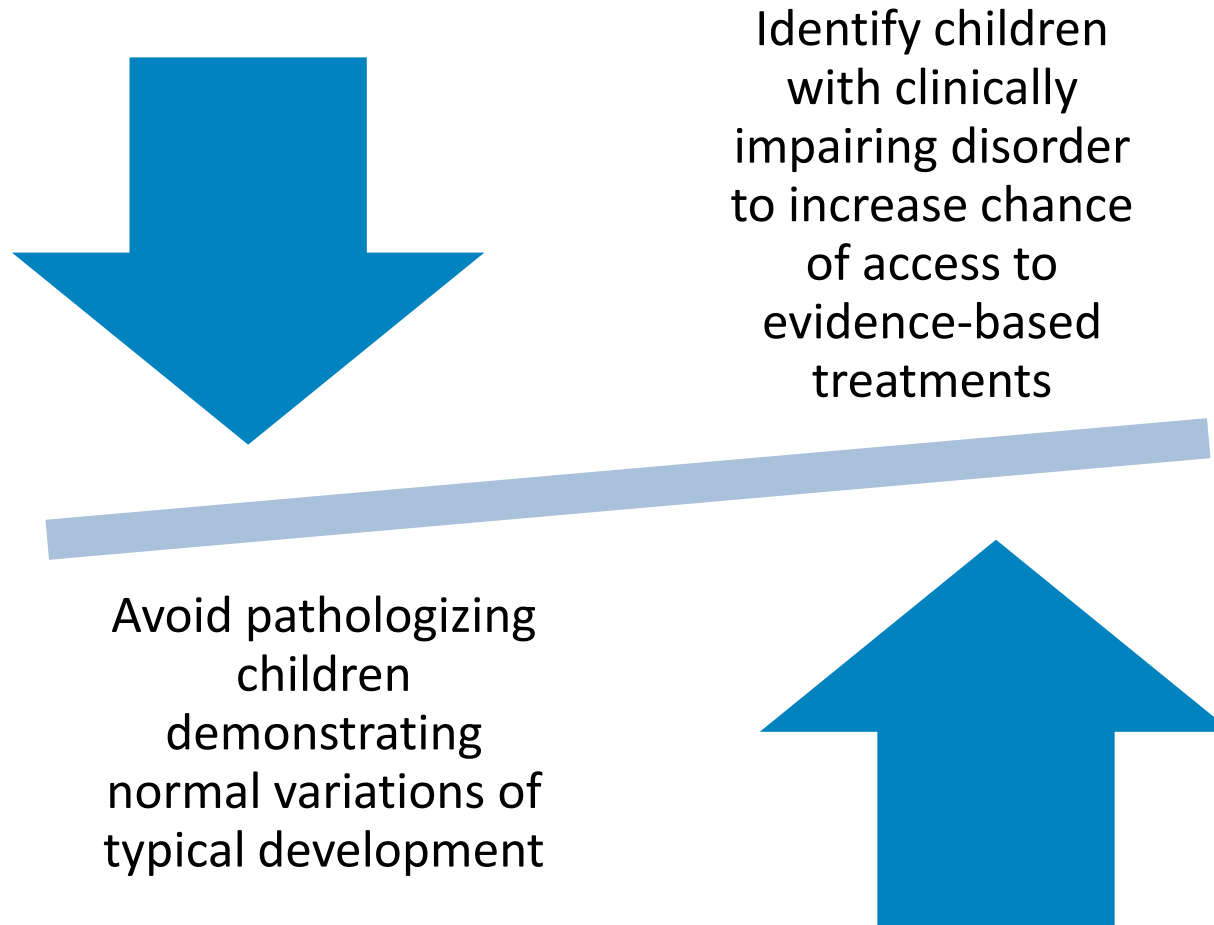


2016

The Balancing Act



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The Benefits of IECMH Investment Dyadic Treatment



- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) showed a **return of investment of \$3.64 per dollar**⁹
 - In families at risk of child maltreatment: reduced child maltreatment potential and lower rates of future referrals to child welfare systems¹⁰
- Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) has shown significant cost-associated impacts including:

Healthcare:

- In children, improvements in child cortisol patterns, PTSD symptoms, comorbid conditions¹¹⁻¹⁹
- In caregivers, decline in maternal psychiatric symptoms¹¹⁻¹⁹

Education:

- Improvements in behavior problems, aggression, and cognitive performance¹¹⁻¹⁹

Child Welfare:

- In families involved with the child welfare system: reduced recidivism rates, reduced placement in foster care²⁰, and fewer placement changes for preschoolers already in foster care²¹

Concluding Remarks

It is all about relationships!

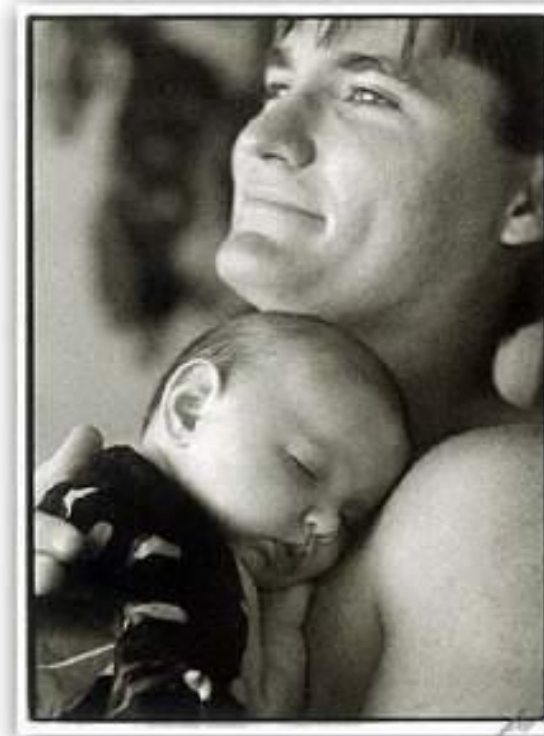
Mental health is a good thing!

We all have mental health, even babies!





*To develop a
child's mind,
we must first
nurture a
child's heart.*





**“THERE IS NO SUCH THING
AS A BABY
THERE IS A BABY AND SOMEONE”**

D.W. Winnicott





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Questions



What are you most curious about?

What will you do in your role to promote infant and early childhood mental health?



- [How to Talk About IECMH Infographic](#)
- [State of Babies Yearbook](#)
- [Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children, and Families](#)
- [The Racial Equity Institute](#)
- [We Are: Working to Extend Anti-Racist Education](#)
- [Exploring State Strategies for Financing Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment](#)
- [Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Policy Series](#)
- [Expanding Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Supports and Services: A Planning Tool for States and Communities](#)
- [Planting Seeds in Fertile Ground: Actions Every Policymaker Should Take to Advance Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#)
- [Join Think Babies!](#)

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