

CALIFORNIA INFANT MENTAL HEALTH INTEREST GROUP

Who We Are

In the spring of 2005, the Infant Development Association of California moved forward to provide statewide leadership in the promotion of infant mental health with the formation of a California Infant Mental Health Interest Group. The response from individuals, groups and organizations has been very positive. An informational survey and an initial meeting in April were the basis for developing principles and priorities for the group. The focus of the group's guiding principles, priorities and current activities are described below. Any group or individual interested in infant and early mental health is welcome to join the group. See "Get Involved" for information on how to become a part of these efforts.

Guiding Principles

- Adopt Zero to Three's broad operational definition of infant mental health: *"the developing capacity of the child from birth to age three to: experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development"*.
- Promote the full spectrum of infant mental health services, including promotion, preventive intervention and treatment.
- Support the social-emotional well-being of infants in all of California's service systems for children and families.
- Collaborate with other state and local organizations concerned with the well-being of young children and families.

Priorities

- Information and resource sharing
- Networking
- Training
- Support for multidisciplinary perspectives
- Promotion of effective service delivery models in all systems
- Contribution to policy development that supports expansion and improvement of infant mental health services at state and local levels

Current Activities

The immediate focus is on information and resource sharing, networking and training. An IMH Interest Group web-page, currently under development, at the IDA website www.idaofcal.org will provide information and linkages. An on-line IMH resource directory is being developed to identify local interagency IMH groups throughout the state. The directory will also compile and centralize information about IMH training programs, service providers and resource agencies. Training activities include collaboration with Zero to Three on a statewide series on the revised Zero to Three Diagnostic Classification and regional trainings on infant mental health topics.

Get involved!

Agencies interested in being included in the IMH Resource Directory should complete either the IMH Training Program Survey or the IMH Resource Agency Survey form. Interested individuals should complete the IMH Survey for Individuals. For further information go to the IDA Website or contact Delora Slattery, IDA Executive Coordinator, at mail@idaofcal.org or at (916) 453-8801.