

What You Should Know about Infant Mental Health



1) **What is infant mental health?**

Infant mental health is the capacity of the child from birth to three to experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn.

Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development.

2) **Why does it matter?**

A child who is not secure in relating to others, does not trust adults, is not motivated to learn, or who cannot calm him/herself or be calmed enough to attend to teaching will not benefit from early education experiences.

3) **Can problems be identified in young children?**

Yes, young children who are at high risk for disorders likely to emerge later can be identified through screening and skilled observation. Services usually focus on both the child and parents or caregivers and are provided by skilled practitioners in a variety of settings including child care, Early Head Start, programs for pregnant and parenting women, Birth to 3, Child Guidance clinics, and home visitation.

4) **What are the some of the goals of the CT Association for Infant Mental Health?**

- To facilitate statewide cooperation and collaboration among individuals concerned with promoting conditions that will bring about the optimal development of infants and young children and their relationships with their caregivers.
- To encourage the realization that infancy lays a critical foundation in the ongoing social-emotional development of individuals.
- To provide information to the general public, that will enhance awareness and bring to public attention the social-emotional needs of children in the first years of life.

Early Childhood References: www.ct-aimh.org
www.zerotothree.org;
www.infant institute.com/tenth.htm;