



**Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc.**  
**Concerned with the Healthy Social Emotional Development**  
**of Infants and Young Children**

**CT-AIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®): Overview**

The intent of the CT-AIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®) is to recognize and document the development of infant and family professionals within an organized system of culturally sensitive, relationship-based, infant mental health learning and work experiences. Endorsement by the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) will verify that an applicant has attained a level of education as specified, participated in specialized in-service trainings, worked with guidance from mentors or supervisors, and acquired knowledge to promote the delivery of high quality, culturally sensitive, relationship-focused services to infants, toddlers, parents, other caregivers and families. The CT-AIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®) will provide information of significant benefit to employers, referral sources, and the courts seeking expert witnesses related to the social and emotional development of infants and young children and their families. Of additional importance, the CT-AIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®) will be useful in developing individual professional development plans.

**Why earn the CT-AIMH Endorsement®?**

"I have the Level I MI-AIMH Endorsement®. As a nursing diploma graduate (1967), I was experience rich and credential poor. I have found that the endorsement has given me greater credibility with my employer and professional colleagues. Further, the credentialing process encouraged me to continue my education to fill the gaps in my practicing knowledge. In 2003, I earned my Associate's Degree and in 2006 I earned my BA. I am in the process of applying for MI-AIMH endorsement at Level II with plans to earn my Master's degree and continue to move up the endorsement ladder."

-Sandy Bump Lownds, IMH-E® (I) Infant Family Associate *moved to Level II in 2007*

"The MI-AIMH Endorsement® has opened a whole new world for me regarding infants and toddlers. The process itself, especially the reflective supervision, has strengthened my personal and professional development. This reflective supervision has given me a stronger base from which to work, allowing me to integrate my expanding knowledge of best practice and research into my growing ability to really see, hear, feel and be with the families I serve as an early intervention teacher."

-Marian Ohriel, IMH-E® (II) Infant Family Specialist *moved to Level III in 2007*

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Website: <http://www.CT-AIMH.org>

"To be endorsed by MI-AIMH is, for me, a commitment to an organization that has nurtured me in my own professional infancy and has had immense influence in the way I am able to be with and connect with the families and professionals with whom I work. MI-AIMH's commitment to infants, toddlers, families and to those who work with them is remarkable and it is a privilege to be endorsed and recognized by such an organization."

-Carla Barron, IMH-E® (III) Infant Family Specialist *moved to Level IV in 2008*

"Endorsement as an Infant Mental Health Mentor, Level IV says to others that knowledgeable support for infant-family work they do can be readily offered by me. I have also had a prosecuting attorney use the Endorsement credential to support my testimony as an expert witness."

-Sheryl Goldberg, IMH-E® (IV) Infant Mental Health Mentor

### **Prerequisite Requirements**

1. Membership in CT-AIMH or another IMH association
2. Training/Education as specified and related to infants, toddlers, parents, other caregivers and families
3. Experience working with infants, toddlers, parents, other caregivers and families.

There are five steps to the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health Endorsement (IMH-E®) process:

1. Inquiry
2. Application\* (download a copy by clicking here)
3. Preparation of a Portfolio
4. Documentation of Competencies
5. Endorsement

\*If you are not already a member of CT-AIMH (or another IMH association), you must join CT-AIMH at the time you submit your preliminary application. To join CT-AIMH by credit card, go to: <http://www.CT-AIMH.org>

CT-AIMH encourages continuing professional growth and development for all members. The Association requires professionals who have successfully completed the CT-AIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®) at all levels to continue membership in CT-AIMH or another IMH association and to participate annually in 15 hours of culturally sensitive, relationship-based training experiences that promote infant mental health. Documentation of annual training is submitted via the E-form for Renewal and submitted by Jan 31 of each year.

## **Application and Portfolio Preparation for CT-AIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®)**

**1. Preliminary Application:** CT-AIMH sends the E-form, Code of Ethics, Agreement, reference rating form, Competency Guidelines, and other resource materials after receipt of the preliminary application and CT-AIMH membership. CT-AIMH also assigns an endorsement advisor to guide the candidate throughout the application process.

**2. Preparation of a Professional Portfolio:** The compilation of a professional portfolio is an important step toward earning the CT-AIMH Endorsement. The professional portfolio reflects the candidate's capabilities within the infant and family field as identified for each level of endorsement in the guidelines.

The professional portfolio includes:

- E-form
- Signed Code of Ethics
- Signed Endorsement Agreement
- Official sealed transcripts for all colleges/universities attended<sup>1, 2</sup>
- Three professional reference ratings<sup>1</sup>
- Check for Endorsement Processing Fee

**3. E-form:** The E-form helps the candidate prepare the part of the portfolio that includes:

- Specialized work experiences with infants, toddlers, young children, and families
- Educational level attained, coursework or degree(s) earned
- Specialized in-service training experiences and conferences attended
- Reflective supervision/consultation experiences (Levels II, III, and IV)

The E-form is a template that allows candidates to copy and paste from other documents or to type directly. It prompts for all required information. Candidates receive the E-form as an email attachment. It is also available for download at [www.CT-AIMH.org](http://www.CT-AIMH.org). Candidates share a draft of the E-form with his/her endorsement advisor via email for review and feedback.

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<sup>1</sup> Candidates request that official transcripts and reference rating forms be returned to themselves to be submitted with the other professional portfolio materials in one packet.

<sup>2</sup> Note for those who have earned a graduate or post-graduate certificate in infant mental health: Candidates with a certificate from either Wayne State University/Merrill Palmer Institute (WSU), the University of Michigan (UM), or Michigan State University (MSU) need only submit a copy of the graduate or post-graduate certificate. CT-AIMH waives the requirement for official transcripts for certificate holders. Also, CT-AIMH assumes that candidates who have completed these certificate programs have met all of the competencies required at Level III. Therefore, certificate holders need only submit the minimum of 30 clock hours of specialized in-service training. However, documentation of reflective supervision hours and 3 reference rating forms may not be waived. CT-AIMH will consider similar exceptions for those who have earned a certificate in infant mental health from a university other than UM or WSU.

**3a. Specialized Work Experiences:** Candidates provide a list of paid work experiences with and/or related to infants, toddlers, young children and their caregivers, as specified at each level. Candidates include a detailed description of the responsibilities as well as the name of the direct supervisor.

**3b. Educational Level Attained:** Candidates list all formal educational programs and/or degrees from both undergraduate and graduate work. Candidate includes sealed official transcripts from each college or university attended in the professional portfolio packet.

**3c. Specialized In-service Training Experiences and Conferences:** A minimum of 30 clock hours of specialized in-service training experiences are required at all four levels of endorsement. Please be aware that in-service training is one of the ways that an applicant can meet required competencies. If an endorsement applicant has not had course work at the undergraduate or graduate level that is specifically related to the competencies, he/she may find that more than 30 hours are necessary to fill in any competency gaps.

Candidates include competencies (knowledge/skill areas) covered at each training event attended, e.g., cultural competence, screening & assessment, developmental guidance. Please list no more than 3 knowledge/skill areas for training events of 1 to 2 hours, no more than 6 knowledge/skill areas for training events of 6 to 8 hours, and so on.

Eligible specialized in-service training meets the following criteria:

- Is culturally sensitive, relationship-focused and promotes infant mental health
- Relates to 1 or more of the knowledge/skill areas in the CT-AIMH Competency Guidelines
- Is specific to the level of endorsement at which candidate is applying

Candidates include all infant mental health-related conference keynote addresses and workshops in the in-service training section of the E-form. Please note that only one conference counts toward the minimum of 30 clock hours of in-service training experiences.

**3d. Reflective Supervision/Consultation Experiences:** Candidates for Level II, III, and IV-Clinical include information about the provider and nature of reflective supervision/consultation experiences. Please refer to the Best Practice Guidelines for Reflective Supervision/Consultation (available at [www.CT-AIMH.org](http://www.CT-AIMH.org)) for additional information about which experiences qualify toward endorsement.

4. **Portfolio Submission**: Candidates submit the portfolio after the endorsement advisor reviews the E-form and both are confident that the portfolio is complete. Candidates mail the entire packet, including check for endorsement fee to:

***CT-AIMH  
230 So. Frontage Rd.  
New Haven, CT 06520***

Endorsement fees are indicated below:

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
\$25	\$50	\$200	\$300

**5. Portfolio Review**: The CT-AIMH Endorsement Committee reviews professional portfolios on a quarterly basis. Level I & Level II candidates receive an endorsement decision after at least two portfolio review committee members examine and approve the portfolio. Level III & Level IV candidates move on to a written exam after at least two portfolio review committee members examine and approve. CT-AIMH offers the written exam periodically throughout the year. Please visit [www.CT-AIMH.org](http://www.CT-AIMH.org) for details related to portfolio submission deadlines and exam dates.

### **Development of the CT-AIMH Endorsement (IMH-E®)**

Valerie Brown, of Triad Performances, did a masterful job of facilitating the development of the competency guidelines. She worked closely with the Endorsement Committee Chair, Endorsement Committee, and CT-AIMH members across the state. The general categories of competency include:

- Theoretical Foundations (including pregnancy & early parenthood; relationship-focused therapeutic practice; family relationships & dynamics; cultural competence)
- Law, Regulation, & Agency Policy
- Systems Expertise
- Direct Service Skills (including observation & listening; screening & assessment)
- Working with Others
- Communicating
- Thinking
- Reflection

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The details of each knowledge/skill area are very specifically described at each level. The *Competency Guidelines*, developed in collaboration with over 100 CT-AIMH members over several years, are designed to support and enhance culturally sensitive, relationship-focused practice within the framework of infant mental health practice.

The *Competency Guidelines* are available to Endorsement applicants after a preliminary application is submitted or they can be purchased.

If you have questions about the Endorsement process, we invite you to visit [www.ct-aimh.org](http://www.ct-aimh.org) or contact CT-AIMH's Endorsement Coordinator, Anne Giordano, at the following address:

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