



## YOUR ENDORSEMENT JOURNEY

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WHAT IS INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH ENDORSEMENT®, HOW TO APPLY,  
AND HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR ENDORSEMENT

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# OVERVIEW

Endorsement is an internationally recognized credential used to demonstrate specialization in the infant-early childhood mental health-informed (IECMH) field. Endorsement supports and recognizes the development of professionals who work with or on behalf of pregnant people, infants, young children, and their families. Endorsement was developed by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health in 2002.

The Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health (Alliance) is the global organization that oversees the implementation of Endorsement by AIMHs that have licensed the use of Endorsement. To date, 35 US state IAIMHs and the Western Australia AIMH have licensed the use of the IECMH-E® and 27 of those AIMHs have also licensed the ECMH-E®. There is reciprocity across all AIMHs. If you earn your Endorsement through one AIMH and move to another state that holds the license, your credential is honored there and can be transferred via EASy. As of December 31, 2023, over 5,300 professionals had earned Endorsement worldwide.

## Who can apply?

The Endorsement credential is intended for everyone who applies IECMH principles in their work across the full continuum of promotion, prevention/early intervention, clinical intervention and treatment, and macro scopes of practice. This includes any professional who has experience working with or on behalf of pregnant people, infants, young children, parents, and/or caregivers.

## Why apply for Endorsement?

To grow and develop as a professional in the rapidly expanding infant, young child, and family field. To be recognized by employers and peers for having attained a level of competency in culturally humble, relationship-focused practice that promotes IECMH. To better support the infants, young children, families, students, agencies, and institutions in the promotion of IECMH.

## Steps to Endorsement

1. Identify your scope of work and align that with the category of Endorsement that fits best.
2. Submit your [Endorsement application](#) in order to be considered for VAIMH's next IECMH Cohort.
3. Pay the associated application fees (\$60 VAIMH Membership & \$50 Application Registration).
4. Receive Reflective Supervision/Consultation (if applicable).
5. Successfully complete the two-part exam (Mental Health Mentors).

## The Endorsement Application Includes:

- Specialized education, work, in-service training, leadership, and reflective supervision experiences. (Requirements differ by category.)
- Reference rating forms (submitted electronically via EASy)
- Code of Ethics and Endorsement Agreement (signed electronically via EASy)

# TERMS & DEFINITIONS

**AIMH:** stands for *Association for Infant Mental Health*, also referred to as “association”. Virginia is referred to as the Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health (VAIMH). Each “association” supports the infant and early childhood mental health workforce.

**Competency Guidelines:** lay out the requirements and competencies for Endorsement. They can be found in EASy and are used to help applicants determine which category is the best fit for their scope of practice and are again used when determining which competency areas should be developed while working towards Endorsement.

**EASy:** the online **E**ndorsement **A**pplication **S**ystem. It is a web-based platform used to work in your portfolio to ready it for Endorsement, as well as to maintain your Endorsement.

**ECMH:** early childhood mental health (specific to professionals working with or on behalf of children aged 3 up to 6 years old).

**IMH:** infant mental health (specific to professionals working with or on behalf of pregnant people, infants, and young children aged 0 up to 3 years).

**Scope of Practice:** the categories of Endorsement are defined by the way you work with or on behalf of the I/ECMH population. Most categories include professionals from a variety of work settings, so your job title may not determine which scope of practice fits you best.

## CATEGORIES OF ENDORSEMENT

Identifying your scope of practice can sometimes be challenging, as many roles in the IECMH-informed workforce can tap into different scopes of practice. Consider which scope fits your **primary** role.

### **FAMILY ASSOCIATES**

Work to promote healthy growth, development, and relationships. They use their IECMH expertise to support infants/young children, caregivers, systems, and other IECMH professionals through direct service and/or macro work.

## **FAMILY SPECIALISTS**

Work in prevention/early intervention. They work with the infant/young child and caregiver together using their IECMH expertise to assess social emotional needs, provide preventative support, and connect families to additional services. Family Specialists may be providers of reflective supervision/consultation utilizing the ERS add-on.

## **MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS**

Licensed professionals who provide mental health treatment and/or clinical intervention to the infant/young child and their caregiver (dyadic therapy) when IECMH disorders exist or when a caregiver's mental or behavioral disorder affects their relationship with the infant/young child. They use their IECMH expertise to address identified social-emotional and treatment needs through direct clinical intervention. Mental Health Specialists may be providers of reflective supervision/consultation utilizing the ERS add-on.

## **MENTAL HEALTH MENTOR-CLINICAL**

Professionals who provide treatment/clinical intervention to the infant/young child and their caregiver together when IECMH disorders exist or when a caregiver's mental or behavioral disorder affects their relationship with the infant/young child. They use their IECMH expertise to address identified social-emotional and treatment needs through direct clinical intervention. Mentor-Clinical professionals are also providers of IECMH Reflective Supervision/Consultation.

## **MENTAL HEALTH MENTOR-POLICY**

Professionals who work to promote infant and early childhood-informed policy and program development. They use their IECMH expertise to support macro systems.

## **MENTAL HEALTH MENTOR-RESEARCH/FACULTY**

Professionals who work to promote what we know in the IECMH community through research and academia. They use their IECMH expertise to inform students, professionals, programs, and systems.

# OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS

Reference the [Competency Guidelines](#) to see the full list of requirements and competencies for each category.

Category	FA	FS	MHS	MHM		
	Family Associate	Family Specialist	Mental Health Specialist	Mental Health Mentor		
				C Clinical	P Policy	R/F Research/Faculty
Scope of Work	<b>PROMOTION</b>	<b>PREVENTION</b>	<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b> Clinical Intervention & Treatment	<b>MENTORSHIP &amp; LEADERSHIP</b>		
Typically for someone with:	Experience <b>promoting</b> healthy growth, development, and relationships to support infants/young children, caregivers, systems, and other IECMH professionals through direct service and/or macro work.	Experience with <b>prevention</b> and <b>early intervention</b> through working with the infant/young child and caregiver <b>together</b> using their IECMH expertise to assess social emotional needs, provide preventative support, and connect families/caregivers to additional services.	Experience providing <b>mental health treatment and clinical intervention</b> to the infant/young child and their caregiver <b>together</b> when IECMH disorders exist or when a caregiver's mental or behavioral disorder affects their relationship with the infant/young child.	Practice leaders in infant/early childhood mental health and may provide reflective supervision or consultation to practitioners in the infant and family field ( <b>Clinical</b> ); or  Practice leaders in policies and programs ( <b>Policy</b> ); or  Practice leaders in research, evaluation, and teaching ( <b>Research/Faculty</b> ).		

Education Requirements						
FA	FS	MHS	MHM			
Family Associate	Family Specialist	Mental Health Specialist	Mental Health Mentor			
			Masters or Post-Graduate			
			C Clinical	P Policy	R/F Research/Faculty	
<b>No education experience required.</b>  Transcript required to align coursework with Competencies.	<b>No education experience required.</b>  Transcript required to align coursework with Competencies.	A professional mental health license from a state regulatory agency/  Transcript required to align coursework with Competencies.	MA, MS, MEd, EdD, MSW, MSN, PsyD, PhD, MD, DO, or other degree specific to one's professional focus in IECMH.  Transcript required to align coursework with Competencies.			

## In-Service Training

Any training/PD received that meets IECMH [Competencies](#) may be counted, regardless of how long ago the event took place. Typically, applicants receive ongoing PD while working to meet RSC requirements (if applicable) in order to meet training requirements.

**Training Resources:** [VAIMH monthly PD](#) | [VAIMH PD Archives](#) | [Upcoming Events](#) | Annual virtual IECMH Conference (May)

FA	FS	MHS	IMHM-C	IMHM-P	IMHM-R/F
<p><b>Minimum 33 clock hours required, to include:</b></p> <p><b>30 hours</b> on the promotion of social emotional development of young children (0-3, 3-6).</p> <p><b>3 hours</b> specific to DEI in IECMH.</p> <p>Typically, successful FA applications include <b>40 or more hours of specialized training.</b></p>	<p><b>Minimum 33 clock hours required, to include:</b></p> <p><b>30 hours</b> on the promotion of social emotional development of young children (0-3, 3-6).</p> <p><b>3 hours</b> specific to DEI in IECMH.</p> <p>Typically, successful FS applications include <b>50 or more hours of specialized training.</b></p>	<p><b>Minimum 33 clock hours required, to include:</b></p> <p><b>30 hours</b> on the promotion of social emotional development of young children (0-3, 3-6).</p> <p><b>10 hours</b> specific to parent-infant /child psychotherapy</p> <p><b>3 hours</b> specific to DEI in IECMH.</p> <p>Typically, successful MHS applications include <b>75 or more hours of specialized training.</b></p>	<p style="color: red;">There is an expectation that applicants for this category have the same knowledge related to IECMH principles and practices regardless of designation (clinical, policy, or research/faculty).</p> <p><b>30 hours</b> on the promotion of social emotional development of children 0-3/3-6 and/or other relationship-based principles and practices of infant/early childhood mental health.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MHM-C: <b>15 hours</b> of didactic training about the provision of RSC</p> <p><b>3 hours</b> specific to DEI in IECMH.</p> <p><i>Clinical applicants: an additional 15 hours</i> must be didactic training about the provision of RS/C.</p> <p>Typically, successful MHM applications include <b>75-90 or more hours of specialized training.</b></p>		

## Reflective Supervision/Consultation (RS/C)

Pending renewed annual funding, scholarships may be available to support **all** applicants in receiving 24 hours of group RS/C with a qualified VAIMH RSC Provider.

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
<p><b>Optional but highly recommended</b></p>	<p><b>Minimum 24 clock hours from an endorsed qualified provider.</b></p> <p>Relationship-based RS/C may be received individually or in a group setting <b>while providing services</b> to infants, toddlers, young children (0-3, 3-6), and their caregivers -</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>and/or</b></p> <p>while providing supervision to staff who are providing services to infants, toddlers, young children (0-3, 3-6), and their caregivers.</p>	<p><b>Minimum 50 clock hours from an endorsed qualified provider.</b></p> <p>Relationship focused RS/C may be received individually or in a group setting <b>while providing services</b> to infants/toddlers (birth to 36 mos.), young children (3-6), and their families.</p>	<p><b>Minimum 50 clock hours from an Infant or Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor-Clinical (MHM-C)</b></p> <p>Relationship focused RS/C may be received individually or in a group setting <b>while providing RS/C</b> to infant-family professionals.</p> <p><b>A minimum of 25 hours of the RS received should have a focus on <u>the RSC you provide to others.</u></b></p>	<p><b>Optional but highly recommended</b></p>	<p><b>Optional but highly recommended</b></p>



## Work Experience

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
<p><b>Minimum 2 years paid work experience</b></p> <p>with infants, toddlers, or young children (ages 0-3, 3-6).</p> <p>If no work experience, a CDA credential, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, and/or Doctorate degree.</p>	<p><b>Minimum 2 years paid professional work experience</b></p> <p><b>providing</b> prevention and/or early intervention services that promote IECMH –</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>or</b></p> <p><b>supervising staff</b> who provide services to infants, toddlers, young children, and their caregivers.</p> <p><b>Minimum 10 families served</b> where the target of services is infants, toddlers, and/or young children.</p> <p><b>A primary focus of the services provided is the social-emotional needs</b> of the child and services focus on the promotion of the relationships surrounding them.</p>	<p><b>Minimum 2 years post-graduate supervised paid work experience</b></p> <p>providing dyadic culturally sensitive, relationship-focused, infant and early childhood mental health services through <b>intervention or treatment of the child's primary caregiving relationship(s)</b>.</p> <p>Specialized work experience <b>must be with both</b> the infant, toddler, or young child and their caregiver(s) <b>on behalf of the parent-infant relationship</b>.</p> <p><b>IECMH services include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parent-infant/child relationship-based therapies and practices,</li> <li>- early relationship assessment,</li> <li>- concrete assistance, advocacy, emotional support, and developmental guidance,</li> </ul> <p><b>and are intended to explicitly address issues related to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- attachment, separation, trauma, and unresolved grief and loss,</li> <li>- how "ghosts in the nursery" affect the attachment relations, development, behavior, and care of the child.</li> </ul> <p>The unresolved losses might be from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that occurred during the caregivers' own early childhood or may be more recent.</p>	<p><b>Minimum 2 years post-graduate supervised paid work experience</b></p> <p>providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused, infant and early childhood mental health services through <b>intervention or treatment of the child's primary caregiving relationship(s)</b>.</p> <p>Applicant has served a minimum of 10 families or supervised staff where the target of services is infants, toddlers, young children, and their caregivers,</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p>has 3 years post-graduate experience providing IECMH reflective supervision &amp; consultation (RS/C),</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>demonstrates leadership activities</b> at the regional, state, or national level.</p>	<p><b>Minimum 3 years of post-graduate experience</b></p> <p>as a leader in policy and/or program administration related to the promotion of infant/early childhood mental health principles and practices in the context of family and other caregiving relationships across systems,</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>demonstrates leadership activities</b> at the regional, state, or national level.</p>	<p><b>Minimum 3 years of post-graduate experience</b></p> <p>as a leader in university, teaching, and/or published research related to infant/early childhood mental health principles and practices in the context of family and other caregiving relationships,</p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>demonstrates leadership activities</b> at the regional, state, or national level.</p>

## Annual Membership in the Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health (VAIMH)

<https://www.vaimh.org/vaimh-membership> (renewed each December)

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
Yes <b>\$60 annually</b>	Yes <b>\$60 annually</b>	Yes <b>\$60 annually</b>	Yes <b>\$60 annually</b>	Yes <b>\$60 annually</b>	Yes <b>\$60 annually</b>

## Code of Ethics & Agreement

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
Electronically Signed	Electronically Signed	Electronically Signed	Electronically Signed	Electronically Signed	Electronically Signed

## Leadership

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
No	No	No	Min. 3 yrs. Leadership activities	Min. 3 yrs. Leadership activities	Min. 3 yrs. Leadership activities

## Exam

Taken virtually through an online exam platform with the [Alliance](#) for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
No	No	No	Yes <b>\$200 Exam Fee</b>	Yes <b>\$200 Exam Fee</b>	Yes <b>\$200 Exam Fee</b>

## Reference Ratings

**3 References are required for all categories**

*Reference raters must be familiar with your capacity to implement IECMH principles into practice.*

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
<p><b>Reference 1:</b> Current Program Supervisor</p> <p><b>Reference 2:</b> An endorsed professional who is familiar with the Competency Guidelines®</p> <p><b>Reference 3:</b> Colleague, parent/recipient of services, etc.</p>	<p><b>Reference 1:</b> Current Program Supervisor</p> <p><b>Reference 2:</b> RSC provider</p> <p><b>Reference 3:</b> Colleague, supervisor, etc.</p>	<p><b>Reference 1:</b> Current Program Supervisor</p> <p><b>Reference 2:</b> RSC provider</p> <p><b>Reference 3:</b> Colleague, supervisor, supervisee, etc.</p>	<p><b>Reference 1:</b> Current Program Supervisor</p> <p><b>Reference 2:</b> RSC provider</p> <p><b>Reference 3:</b> Someone receiving RSC from you</p>	<p><b>Reference 1:</b> Current Program Supervisor</p> <p><b>Reference 2:</b> RSC provider (if applicable), or colleague</p> <p><b>Reference 3:</b> Someone familiar with your ability to promote IECMH principles and practices</p>	<p><b>Reference 1:</b> Current Department Supervisor or Chair who is familiar with IECMH</p> <p><b>Reference 2:</b> RSC provider (if applicable), or colleague</p> <p><b>Reference 3:</b> Student taught/supervised by you</p>

## Renewals (Annually by December 31)

**Training:** Focus should be relationship-based PD on the social-emotional development and/or practice of IECMH + DEI in IECMH

**RS/C:** must be received from an approved, endorsed provider

FA	FS	MHS	MHM-C	MHM-P	MHM-R/F
<p><a href="#">VAIMH Membership Renewal</a></p> <p><b>Training:</b> Minimum 15 hours</p> <p><b>Receipt of RSC:</b> N/A</p>	<p><a href="#">VAIMH Membership Renewal</a></p> <p><b>Training:</b> Minimum 15 hours</p> <p><b>Receipt of RSC:</b> Minimum 12 hours</p>	<p><a href="#">VAIMH Membership Renewal</a></p> <p><b>Training:</b> Minimum 15 hours</p> <p><b>Receipt of RSC:</b> Minimum 12 hours</p>	<p><a href="#">VAIMH Membership Renewal</a></p> <p><b>Training:</b> Minimum 15 hours  3 hours on the provision of RSC</p> <p><b>Receipt of RSC:</b> Minimum 12 hours</p>	<p><a href="#">VAIMH Membership Renewal</a></p> <p><b>Training:</b> Minimum 15 hours</p> <p><b>Receipt of RSC:</b> N/A</p>	<p><a href="#">VAIMH Membership Renewal</a></p> <p><b>Training:</b> Minimum 15 hours</p> <p><b>Receipt of RSC:</b> N/A</p>

# Endorsed Reflective Supervisor Add-On

This add-on is a pathway for Infant and Early Childhood Family Specialists and Mental Health Specialists to provide qualifying hours of Reflective Supervision/Consultation to other IECMH professionals.

Endorsed Reflective Supervisor	
Prerequisite	Endorsement as a Family Specialist or Mental Health Specialist
Reflective Supervision /Consultation (RS/C)	<p>1 year of providing RSC to infant-family professionals <b>while</b> receiving 12 hours of RSC from a qualified provider about your provision of RSC to others.</p> <p>*Not required for <b>Emerging</b>.</p>
Training	<p><b>Full</b> 15 hours on the provision of RSC.</p> <p><b>Emerging</b> 5 hours (minimum) on the provision of RSC. To move from <b>Emerging</b> to <b>Endorsed</b>, Applicants will need an additional 15 training hours on the provision of RSC.</p>
References	<p>1 from your RSC Provider 1 from a Supervisee</p>

# Application Instructions

Professionals who are interested in being accepted into a VAIMH IECMH Cohort will submit an application here: <https://airtable.com/apppvYBfzBZsaarO3/shrCXUhCmHUQVB83m>

VAIMH's Endorsement Coordinator will review your application to:

- A. confirm you are applying at the correct category of Endorsement, and
- B. determine whether to accept your application on a "rolling basis" (e.g., you already have received 24 qualifying hours of reflective supervision/consultation (if applicable to your category of endorsement), or you are currently receiving RS/C from an Endorsed provider) or
- C. whether to wait until the November acceptance period based upon available scholarship funding.

Upon acceptance, you will be invoiced for applicable Application Fees (\$60 VAIMH Membership and/or \$50 Application Registration Fee).

An account will then be created for you in the online **Endorsement Application System** ([EASy](#)) and you will receive an email providing you with a temporary password that will allow you to sign into your Portfolio and begin to work in the various sections.

## LOGGING IN

Log in to EASy using your email (doubles as your username) and the temporary password provided to you by EASy once your application has been accepted.

Go to "Profile" in the upper right corner to:

- Update your **password** (the temporary password will only work once);
- Complete the **Demographic Information** section;
- Set your **alerts** (we recommend you receive all email alerts); and, if applicable,
- Indicate your affiliation with Healthy Families America. (*Once you earn Endorsement, your name will appear on the national Registry of Endorsed HFA Providers - <https://www.allianceaimh.org/healthy-families-america-registry/>*).

## ORIENTATION TO EASY

VAIMH's Endorsement Coordinator will meet with you shortly after accepting your application to take you on a walk-through of your EASy Portfolio, provide an overview of VAIMH, and answer any questions you may have.

## TIPS for getting started in EASy:

- If EASy does not sense activity for approximately 5 minutes, you will receive a warning that your session will soon close. After you receive this warning, select “Save” in the bottom right-hand corner to save your work.
- Save frequently.
- Upon logging in, you will land on your Dashboard where you will see your “Application Card”. After Endorsement, you will see your “Endorsement Card”.

## PORTFOLIO SECTIONS

- PROFILE:** Where you will change your temporary password into a permanent one, enter Demographic Information, and confirm notification settings.
- STATUS:** Where you will submit your completed portfolio for an Endorsement decision, or annually for Endorsement Renewal.
- DETAILS:** upload a transcript, if preferred or required. Update contact information, and edit your VAIMH Membership Expiration date (annually).
- COMPETENCIES:** Here you will find an overview of competencies you have selected within the **Training** and **Education** tabs. You will see a sum of your total **Training Hours** and total **Reflective Supervision** hours.
- AGREEMENT:** Read and electronically sign the Endorsement Agreement.
- ETHICS:** Read and electronically sign the Code of Ethics.
- EDUCATION:** upload applicable transcripts if you wish to pair any coursework with competencies.
- WORK:** Document work experience(s) that demonstrate your promotion and/or practice of infant/early childhood mental health.
- TRAINING:** This is the primary section where you will **demonstrate your development of competencies**.
  - a. Training content should primarily focus on the promotion of social-emotional development and/or the principles of IECMH.
  - b. Try to demonstrate a variety of trainings both in length and in style (e.g., webinar, conference, certificate program or workshop (~ 1-2 hours) vs. a lengthier full-day or multiple-day event.
  - c. You are not expected to have every competency covered through training, but you will want to demonstrate competency developed from the majority of the listed competencies, particularly within the two **Key Domains: Theoretical Foundations and Direct Service**. Also pay attention to the competencies in the **Reflection** domain.

- d. **ECMH-E® applicants** are expected to demonstrate competence in areas related to 3-6 year-olds as well as 0-3 year-olds.
- e. **Screening & Assessment Competency:** DC: 0-5 covers a large portion of the disorders of infancy and early childhood (*not required for Family Associate Applicants*). If you have not attended this training, it is important that you have attended other trainings that cover this competency in great detail. (**MHM Applicants: This training is highly encouraged for exam prep.**)

- i. In order for applicants to demonstrate that competency has been met for **Screening & Assessment**, trainings that are specific to tools for children aged 0-3 (IMH-E) and/or aged 3 up to 6 (ECMH-E) should be completed.
- ii. For **Mental Health Specialist** and **Mental Health Mentor-Clinical** applicants, training on an evidence-based intervention modality specific to I/ECMH are highly recommended. These modalities/trainings will most likely align to the work requirements which state, “These therapies and practices are intended to explicitly address issues related to attachment, separation, trauma, and unresolved grief/loss as they affect the attachment relationship, development, behavior, and care of the infant/child.”
- iii. For **Endorsed Reflective Supervisors** and **Mental Health Mentor-Clinical** applicants, training on the **provision of RSC** must be specific to the provision as opposed to a training on RSC in general.

J. **REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION/CONSULTATION:** Required for Family Specialist, Mental Health Specialist, and Mental Health Mentor-Clinical Applicants.

- a. Your Reflective Supervision Provider must be endorsed as I/ECFS-ERS, I/ECMHS-ERS, or I/ECMHM-C. (Mental Health Mentor Clinical applicants/endorsees must receive RSC from another Mental Health Mentor-Clinical endorsee.)
- b. Your RSC experience(s) must align with the required work experience for your category of Endorsement.
- c. Family Specialist applicants are required to receive a minimum of 24 hours of RSC to attain Endorsement.
- d. Mental Health Specialist and Mental Health Mentor-Clinical applicants must receive a minimum of 50 hours of RSC to attain Endorsement.
- e. **Applicants who provide RSC** will document this in the **Work** tab.

K. **REFERENCES:** Request these last.

- a. After entering the contact information for your references, click on “**Save**”.

- b. When it is time to send the reference request, click on “**Submit**” and follow-up with each rater to confirm receipt of the request from EASy.
- c. The rater you select should know you/your work well enough to respond to each question on the Reference Rating Form (found on the [Applicant & Endorsee web page](#)).
- d. Reference forms expire 1 year from the date they are submitted.

## **VAIMH APPLICANT WEB PAGE**

During your orientation with the Endorsement Coordinator, you will be given a link to VAIMH’s IECMH Applicant/Endorsee web page. This is a password protected page that will give you access to resources, samples, templates, and outlines of everything you would need to know to complete your application and ready it for submission. Of most importance is the **Application Checklist**.

# SUBMISSION & REVIEW

VAIMH’s Endorsement Coordinator will serve as your advisor throughout your Endorsement journey. She will provide you with feedback on ways to enhance your portfolio, conduct a review if requested, and will give you the “thumbs up” when your portfolio is ready to submit for review.

## **STEPS TO SUBMIT**

The **Submit** button will not appear in your portfolio until the EASy system recognizes that your application is complete. If you do not see the **Submit** button, reach out to the Endorsement Coordinator to see what is missing.

When ready:

1. Click on **Submit**.
2. You will then be redirected to your online Cart to pay the associated Application Review Fee.
  - a. If you prefer to be invoiced, reach out to the Endorsement Coordinator for instructions.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

Once your Review Fee has been received, you will receive a confirmation email from the Endorsement Coordinator, which will include the expected timeline for your application review.



- Your application will be reviewed by an Endorsed, trained Application Reviewer to determine that you meet both the requirements and competencies (as specified in the Competency Guidelines) specific to the category of Endorsement for which you are applying.
- Information from your portfolio and review will be handled confidentially.
- The Endorsement Coordinator will relay any messages from the reviewer, such as clarifying questions or a request to fill in a gap that is present in your portfolio).
- Upon completion of your review, the Endorsement Coordinator will inform you of the review outcome.
  - If you are approved for Endorsement you will receive a letter of congratulations and an initial Certificate of Endorsement.
    - Your Endorsement will need to be renewed annually.
  - If you are approved to sit for the Exam (Mental Health Mentors), you will be given resources and instructions on how to register through the Alliance’s Exam Package.

## Using Your Credential

Once Endorsed, you can begin using your IMH-E® or ECMH-E® credential in your signature line, your resume, in social media, etc.

### EXAMPLE OF HOW TO USE YOUR CREDENTIAL

John Doe, IMH-E®  
Infant Family Specialist (IFS)

Jane Doe, MSW, ECMH-E®  
Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist (ECMHS)

John Doe, BS, IMH-E®  
Infant Family Specialist-Endorsed Reflective Supervisor (IFS-ERS)

## **ENDORSEMENT REGISTRY**

Once Endorsed, your name will be added to VAIMH's Active Endorsement Registry on the VAIMH website. If you are endorsed at a category that qualifies you to provide Reflective Supervision (i.e., FS-ERS, MHS-ERS, MHM-C), you will also be listed on the RSC Registry as a provider, allowing applicants and endorsees seeking out RSC to contact you.

## **ONGOING REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION**

VAIMH is committed to the understanding and use of RSC, which is distinct due to the shared exploration of the parallel process. That is, attention to all of the relationships is important, including the ones between practitioner and supervisor, between practitioner and parent(s)/caregiver(s), and between parent(s)/caregiver(s) and infant/toddler. It is critical to understand how each of these relationships affects the others. Of additional importance, reflective supervision/consultation relates to professional and personal development within one's discipline by attending to the emotional content of the work and how reactions to the content affect the work. Finally, there is often greater emphasis on the supervisor/consultant's ability to listen and wait, allowing the supervisee to discover solutions, concepts, and perceptions on their own without interruption from the supervisor/consultant.

## **PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF RSC**

- Form a trusting relationship between supervisor and practitioner
- Establish consistent and predictable meetings and times
- Ask questions that encourage details about the infant, parent(s)/caregiver(s), and emerging relationships
- Remain emotionally present
- Teach and guide
- Nurture and support
- Apply the integration of emotion and reason
- Foster the reflective process to be internalized by the supervisee
- Explore the parallel process and allow time for personal reflection
- Attend to how reactions to the content affect the process

## RSC PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

Three categories of Endorsement require reflective supervision for initial Endorsement and for annual Endorsement renewal. They are:

1. Family Specialist (I/ECFS)
2. Mental Health Specialist (I/ECMHS)
3. Mental Health Mentor-Clinical (I/ECMHM-C)

The ERS add-on also requires the receipt and provision of RSC for initial Endorsement and Endorsement Renewal.

Each category has specific requirements, including who is considered a qualified provider for them. The Family Associate (FA), Mental Health Mentor-Policy (MHM-P), and Mental Health Mentor-Research/Faculty (MHM-R/F) do not have an RSC requirement. However, VAIMH believes it is best practice to receive ongoing reflective supervision because of the parallel process associated with its benefits.

## CHOOSING A PROVIDER OF RSC

When selecting a provider, make sure to discuss your Endorsement journey with them so they can verify that the hours they provide to you will count for both your application and your Endorsement renewal requirements.

Check VAIMH's [Reflective Supervision Registry](#) for a list of qualified providers. If one does not meet your needs, you may reference the [Alliance's Registry](#) for a list of providers from other AIMHs.

### Things to Ask a Potential Provider

- Availability
- Hourly fee
- Group discount options
- Language preference
- Work experience background
- Social identifier preferences (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, etc.)
- Style of RSC provided

Finding the right fitting Reflective Supervisor can be a process. Think through, ahead of time, what you want out of your RSC space. Building a trusting, open relationship is essential to the success of RSC. Talk about your experiences receiving to date, what you need and want, and how RSC is going in the beginning, middle, and end of your experience with a provider.

## WHO CAN PROVIDE TO WHOM?



## Annual Renewal

To maintain your Endorsement, you will be required to renew it each year. **Renewal is due by December 31 of each year.** Your first renewal will be due the year after you were endorsed. (If you were endorsed at any point in 2024, your first renewal will be 12/31/2025.)

Annual renewal requirements must have been obtained in the same year that you renew. (If your renewal is due by 12/31/2025, the Training (and RSC requirements, if applicable) must have been met during 2025.)

## **RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Maintain current membership in VAIMH;
- Obtain and document in your EASy portfolio **15 hours of ongoing training** specific to IECMH and social emotional development of children aged 0-3 and/or 3-6.

- 3 of these hours must be specific to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in IECMH.
- Providers of RSC will need to document 3 hours on the **provision** of RSC.
- Family Specialist (FS), Mental Health Specialist (MHS), and Mental Health Mentor-Clinical (MHM-C) endorsees must obtain and document **12 hours of RSC** received within the year.

**Up to 50% of training hours can come from time spent providing training to others (e.g., provided an in-service training, hosted a workshop, taught a college course, etc.) and/or hours spent volunteering to support an AIMH’s Endorsement capacity growth (e.g., application reviewing, committee work, etc.). Reach out to VAIMH’s Endorsement Coordinator with any questions.**

## **DUALLY ENDORSED RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS**

Professionals who hold more than one Endorsement (e.g., IFS & ECFS) will renew only **one** of their endorsements, which one is dependent upon either:

- The most recent endorsement attained, or
- The one capturing the most requirements.

## **LAPSED RENEWAL (REMOVED FROM REGISTRY)**

Endorsees who choose to not renew their Endorsement, do not meet the renewal requirements, or miss the renewal window, will be removed from the Active Endorsement Registry and can no longer use the IMH-E® or ECMH-E® credential or identify themselves as endorsed.

Endorsements that are removed from the active registry will remain in EASy indefinitely.

## **REINSTATEMENT OF ENDORSEMENT**

In order to reinstate a lapsed Endorsement, the portfolio in EASy will need to be updated. This includes:

1. Requesting new reference rating forms,
2. Resubmission of the application in EASy, and
3. Payment of another processing fee.

\*Professionals who previously passed the exam will not need to retake it.

# Adding a Category of Endorsement

Additional endorsement applications are linked to a professional's initial endorsement. This is so that content from the existing endorsement can be applied/transferred to the new application. It is recommended that you consult with the Endorsement Coordinator to receive guidance and support prior to submitting a new application.

## STEPS TO CREATE A NEW APPLICATION

1. Log into EASy with your current username (email) and password.
2. Select "My Apps"
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on **Create New Application**
4. Select the new category you are applying for
5. Verify your demographic information
6. Select the application you want EASy to pull information from (**Transfer Application Data** link)
7. Verify that your VAIMH Membership is current
8. Select **Create**

## WORKING IN A SECOND APPLICATION

The EASy platform is frequently updated. Take some time to familiarize yourself with each section and the wording at the top of each page to make sure the information you have documented appropriately meets the new category requirements.

- Add new **work, education, and/or supervision experiences**
- Request 3 new reference rating forms

## The Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health (VAIMH)

# Code of Ethics

The VAIMH Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-focused Practice Promoting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health® (IECMH-E®) is intended to recognize experiences that lead to competency in the infant, early childhood, and family field. It does not replace licensure or certification but instead is meant as evidence of a specialization in this field. The VAIMH Endorsement is cross-sector and multidisciplinary including professionals from psychology, education, social work, psychiatry, child and/or human development, nursing, and others. Endorsement indicates an individual's efforts to specialize in the promotion/practice of infant and early childhood mental health within their own chosen discipline. Each endorsed professional is bound by their own discipline's ethical standards, as well of those defined here.

### **Value: Importance of Relationships**

- A VAIMH endorsed professional understands the importance of relationship, the primary instrument for growth and change.
  - A VAIMH endorsed professional uses knowledge and skills to promote, support, restore, and sustain nurturing relationships for all infants, young children, and families.
  - A VAIMH endorsed professional works to establish strong, collaborative relationships with community professionals to enhance services to all infants, young children, and families.
  - A VAIMH endorsed professional understands the importance of past relationship experiences to the development of current relationships.

### **Value: Respect for Ethnicity, Race, Culture, Individuality, and Diversity**

- A VAIMH endorsed professional understands and respects the uniqueness of each individual with respect for ethnicity, culture, individuality, and diversity in all aspects of infant, early childhood, and family practice.
- A VAIMH endorsed professional upholds the values of the families they serve by being a curious and responsible learner. This includes proactively engaging in consultation and formal training to learn about the cultures of the families they serve, so as not to burden families with the task of educating the professional.

## **Value: Commitment to Dismantling Inequities through Social & Racial Justice Work**

- A VAIMH endorsed professional honors and respects all of the identities that individuals hold including and not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identities, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, immigration status, and others.
- A VAIMH endorsed professional engages in ongoing deep personal and critical reflection, and participates in anti-racist, anti-bias professional development that commits them to the practice of infant mental health with a social and racial justice stance.
- A VAIMH endorsed professional is committed to dismantling structural inequities through advocacy by identifying and upholding policies and practices from within to create systems that advance social justice and work to dismantle racial and social inequities.

## **Value: Integrity**

- A VAIMH endorsed professional works in ways that are ethical, trustworthy, honest, responsible, and reliable.

## **Value: Confidentiality**

- A VAIMH endorsed professional abides by the ethical standards of the agency or place of work and is guided by the legal and practice standards in human services as well as those of their discipline.

## **Value: Knowledge and Skill Building**

- A VAIMH endorsed professional works continuously to acquire new knowledge and skills to enhance the understanding and application of IECMH principles.

## **Value: Reflective Practice**

- A VAIMH endorsed professional seeks out and uses supervision and consultation, as appropriate, to reflect on professional development and personal growth related to work with or on behalf of infants, young children, and families.

*I commit to upholding these values in my professional work or on behalf of infants, young children, and their families.*