



## Competency Guidelines for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH-E®)

### Early Childhood Family Associate (ECFA) Endorsement® Requirements

Education and/or Work Experience	Any academic degree, including Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate <b>OR</b> Transcript/certificate from Child Development Associate (CDA) <b>OR</b> Transcript from Associate's degree (AD) in related area <b>OR</b> Two years of infant and early childhood-related paid work experience <sup>1</sup>
Training	Applicants will include as many hours of relationship-based training and/or continuing education as necessary to document that competencies (as specified in <i>Competency Guidelines</i> ®) have been met. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For those whose degree is in a field that is unrelated to ECMH, more specialized in-service training may be required to meet the breadth and depth of the competencies</li> <li>• Training content will include the promotion of social-emotional development and the principles of early childhood mental health</li> <li>• Typically, successful ECFA applications include an average of 45 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to ECMH competencies</li> <li>• Minimum 30 clock hours required</li> </ul>
Professional Reference Ratings	Total of three ratings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One must come from a current supervisor</li> <li>2. At least one must come from an individual who meets ECMH-E® requirements OR is familiar with the Competency Guidelines® and vetted by NCIMHA<sup>2</sup></li> <li>3. One can come from a colleague, teacher, CDA mentor, or Board member. The reference rater must be familiar with the applicant's knowledge of early childhood mental health</li> </ol>
Code of Ethics & Endorsement Agreement	Signed
Demonstration of Competencies	Application will document that competencies have been adequately met through course work, paid and/or volunteer work experiences, or in-service training. <b>Written examination not required for applicants seeking Early Childhood Family Associate Endorsement®</b>
Professional Membership	Membership in the North Carolina Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Association (NCIMHA)

<sup>1</sup> Volunteer experience may meet this criterion if it was a) supervised experience with women during pregnancy or with infants, toddlers, & families AND b) included specialized training. Examples include CASA, Doula, Child Life Specialist. Please contact your association's Endorsement® Coordinator to see if your volunteer experience fits.

<sup>2</sup> The vetting of a reference rater who is not Endorsed consists of a phone call with the proposed rater so Endorsement Coordinator can determine if proposed rater has a copy of the Competency Guidelines® and is familiar enough with them to rate the applicant's knowledge and skills as defined in them. The decision to accept the vetted reference rater will be documented by Endorsement Coordinator in the References section of the applicant's EASy application.

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**Continuing Endorsement® Requirements for Early Childhood Family Associate (ECFA)**

Education & Training	Minimum of 15 clock hours per year of relationship-based education and training, pertaining to the promotion of social-emotional development and the principles of early childhood mental health. <i>Beginning in 2024, 1 of these renewal hours will be required to cover diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA)</i> Documentation of training hours submitted with membership renewal via EASy.
Professional Membership	Annual renewal of NCIMHA membership
Reflective Supervision	All Endorsed professionals are encouraged to seek reflective supervision or consultation