

Competency Guidelines for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

INFANT FAMILY SPECIALIST ENDORSEMENT® REQUIREMENTS

Education	No Degree Requirement If applicants would like to use educational experiences to document competencies, they may choose to upload transcripts from any degree(s) earned.
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"> • For those whose degree is in a field that is unrelated to IMH, more specialized in-service training may be required to meet the breadth and depth of the competencies • Training content will include the promotion of social-emotional development and the principles of infant mental health • Typically, successful IFS applications include an average of 60 or more hours of specialized training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to IMH competencies • Minimum 30 clock hours required
Work Experience	Minimum two years of paid, post-Bachelor’s, professional work experience providing prevention and/or early intervention services that promote infant mental health. Work experience meets this criterion as long as the applicant has: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Served a minimum of 10 families of infants/toddlers (birth to 36 months), and 2. A primary focus of the services provided is the social-emotional needs of infant/toddler, and 3. Services include attention to the relationships surrounding the infant/toddler
Reflective Supervision/Consultation	Minimum 24 clock hours within one- to two-year timeframe; post-Bachelor’s, relationship-based, reflective supervision or consultation, individually or in a group while providing services to infants, very young children, and families. Provider of reflective supervision/consultation must have earned IMH-E® at IFS, IMHS or IMHM-Clinical or be “vetted” ¹ by NCIMHA.
Professional Reference Ratings <i>Please note: At least one rating must come from an Endorsed or “vetted”¹ professional familiar with the Competency Guidelines®</i>	Total of three ratings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One from current program supervisor 2. One from person providing reflective supervision/consultation 3. One from another supervisor, teacher, trainer, consultant, colleague. Rater must be familiar with the applicant’s capacity to implement infant mental health principles
Code of Ethics & Endorsement® Agreement	Signed
Demonstration of Competencies	Application will document that competencies have been adequately met through course work, work/volunteer experience, in-service training, and reflective supervision/consultation experiences. Written examination not required for applicants seeking Infant Family Specialist Endorsement®
Professional Membership	Membership in the North Carolina Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Association

¹ “Vetted” professionals are those interviewed by NCIMHA for their familiarity with the Competency Guidelines® and/or their experience providing reflective supervision/consultation (RSC). NCIMHA will utilize vetted professionals as we grow our capacity of Endorsed professionals. NCIMHA will discontinue the use of on or before December 21, 2027.

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CONTINUING ENDORSEMENT® REQUIREMENTS for INFANT FAMILY SPECIALIST

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 and practice of infant mental health. <i>Beginning in 2024, one of these hours will be required to cover diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA).</i> Documentation of training hours submitted with membership renewal
Professional Membership	Annual renewal of membership in an infant mental health association
Reflective Supervision	All professionals Endorsed as Infant Family Specialists receive a minimum of 12 hours of reflective supervision or consultation annually