



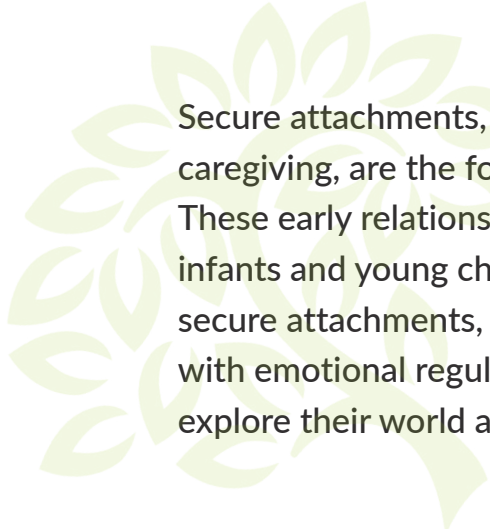
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health is...?

Infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) refers to the ability of young children to experience, self-regulate, and express a wide variety of emotions. By the time children reach their sixth birthday, with support from attuned and emotionally healthy caregiving, they will have navigated many critical developmental milestones. One of these is among the most important for lifelong success: the basic social and emotional capacity for trust in relationships with the people in their lives.

Infant (and Early Childhood) Mental Health is defined as a young child's capacity to experience, regulate, and express emotions, form close and secure relationships, and explore the environment.
(Zero to Three, 2001)

IECMH is not just about young children, it is about our workforce, our communal well-being; it is about us.

Science has illustrated that development is interrelated such that physical-motor, cognitive, and social-emotional development influence each other. In simpler terms, young children develop and learn in the context of relationships. Given the critical nature of early relationships, all caregivers and professionals touching the lives of young children must have the knowledge and skills to promote healthy early development, including infant and early childhood mental health.



Secure attachments, which are formed through sensitive and responsive caregiving, are the foundation for all infant and early childhood development. These early relationships shape infant brain development and influence how infants and young children understand themselves, others, and the world. Through secure attachments, infants and young children learn emotional regulation, and with emotional regulation and trust that adults will care for them, they are able to explore their world and learn.

An IECMH Informed Professional...

- Understands the importance of relationships, as the primary instrument for growth and change.
- Uses knowledge and skills to promote, support, restore and sustain nurturing relationships for all infants, young children, and families.
- Works to establish strong, collaborative relationships with community professionals to enhance services to all infants, young children, and families.
- Understands the importance of past relationship experiences to the development of current relationships.

This capacity carries the child forward for more likely success in future relationships and supports the foundation of a child's capacity for learning across all domains of development. Positive early emotional experiences play a crucial role in brain development. An IECMH informed professional is not only knowledgeable but also empathetic, compassionate, and dedicated to promoting the optimal mental health and well-being of infants, young children, and their families. An IECMH-informed early childhood workforce plays a pivotal role in nurturing the mental health of young children. It helps create a supportive environment that fosters healthy emotional development, identifies potential concerns early, and provides appropriate interventions and support to infants, young children, and their families.



nvaiecmh

Nevada Association for Infant
& Early Childhood Mental Health

nvaiecmh.org

Giving children roots to
grow and wings to fly.