



Crosswalk Between Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up Infant & Competency Guidelines for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship Focused Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement®



Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up Infant (ABC-Infant) is an evidence-based home visiting program that partners with parents of infants between the ages of 6 and 24 months to support young children exposed to early adversity. ABC-Infant helps parents provide

- nurturing care,
- responsive interactions in which parents follow their children's lead, and
- non-frightening care.

The theoretical basis for the ABC-Infant program is founded on attachment theory and stress neurobiology and includes the following key components

(1) Children who have experienced early adversity especially need nurturing care. ABC-Infant helps parents provide nurturing care even if children do not elicit it and/or when nurturance has been challenging for parents.

(2) Children who have experienced early adversity are often dysregulated behaviorally and biologically. ABC-Infant helps parents behave in sensitive and responsive ways that help children develop optimal regulatory strategies. This includes the parent following their child's lead and showing delight in their child.

(3) Parents may behave in frightening ways that dysregulate children’s behavior. ABC-Infant helps parents reduce behaviors that may be frightening or overwhelming to the child.

ABC-Infant has been rigorously tested through multiple randomized clinical trials and is an effective home visiting program for infants living with their birth parents, foster parents, or adoptive parents. ABC-Infant enhances attachment security, normalizes cortisol production, and improves language abilities, impulse control, and other skills important to school readiness.

Parent coaches implement ABC in the parent’s home during 10 weekly one-hour sessions. The curriculum outlines the focus for each session. See Figure 1 for the focus and goals of each session.

While ABC is a manualized intervention that also incorporates video-feedback, the most crucial ingredient of the intervention is the parent coach’s use of “in-the-

moment” comments that target the parent’s behavior of nurturance, following the lead with delight, and non-frightening behaviors. These are used throughout the home visiting session while working with the parent. ABC-Infant home visitors film sessions for later behavioral coding in order to monitor parent behavior change, “in-the-moment” comments, and for clinical feedback on sessions. During the session, the parent coach and parent view the video of the parent interacting with the child. The parent coach highlights the parent’s strengths, celebrates changes in behavior, and identifies areas for improvement.

There is no educational level or experience requirement for parent coaches. Parent coaches from a wide range of educations and backgrounds, including but not limited to, social workers, mental health providers, educators, early interventionists, and “graduates” of the ABC-Infant program (i.e., parents who were previously enrolled in ABC) have successfully completed the training. All prospective parent

Figure 1

ABC Goals By Session

Sessions 1-2:

Help parents reinterpret children’s behavioral signals, providing nurturance even when it is not elicited.

Sessions 3-4:

Help parents learn to follow their children’s lead.

Sessions 5-6:

Help parents recognize their own overwhelming or frightening behaviors and develop alternative responses.

Sessions 7-8:

Help parents overcome automatic responses to their children that are based on their own experiences and could interfere with providing nurturing, sensitive care.

Sessions 9-10:

Allow time to reinforce knowledge gained during previous sessions.

coaches are required to participate in a screening process that involves a 45-minute video interview that assesses the parent coach candidates' openness to attachment theory and ability to provide in-the-moment comments about parent-child behavior. Candidates must pass the screening prior to enrollment in training.

Training in ABC-Infant involves an initial in-person two day meeting or virtual training across three half-days, followed by 6 months of weekly supervision meetings via videoconferencing. Each week for 6 months, ABC-Infant parent coaches must participate in 2 supervision meetings: General Clinical Supervision (1 hour) and In-the-Moment Commenting Supervision (30 minutes). Parent coaches are considered trainees until they become certified after this 6-month supervision process and assessment of their adherence and fidelity to the model.

For professionals working with families of younger infants and older



children, two adaptations of the model have been developed. ABC-Early Childhood was developed for parents of children between the ages of 24 to 48 months of age and ABC-Newborn was developed for parents of newborns 0 to 5 months of age. Note: The current crosswalk applies directly to the ABC-Infant training.

About Endorsement

Endorsement for Culturally-Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health (Endorsement) is an international credential supported by the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health (Alliance). The credential is built upon multiple knowledge and skill areas that are unique to the infant/early childhood mental health (IECMH) workforce (examples: attachment, relationship-focused practice, infant development & behavior), as identified in the Competency Guidelines (MI-AIMH 2017®).

The Alliance works with associations for infant mental health (AIMH) so that AIMHs can support, grow, diversify, and advocate for their local IECMH-informed workforces. A primary way of doing this is through the Endorsement process. Growing evidence indicates that endorsed professionals are better prepared to support the foundational early development of young children in the context of their relationships.

Figure 2
 Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement Categories

Promotion	Infant Family Associate and Early Childhood Family Associate
Prevention/ Early Intervention	Infant Family Specialist & Early Childhood Family Specialist
Treatment/ Intervention	Infant Mental Health Specialist and Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist
Leadership	Infant Mental Health Mentor-Clinical, Policy & Research Faculty and Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor-Clinical, Policy, & Research/Faculty
Reflective Supervision	Endorsed Reflective Supervisor Add On (ERS)

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement (IMH-E®/ECMH-E®) requires that professionals within this specialized workforce demonstrate knowledge, skills and reflective experiences. As such, Endorsement offers an opportunity to recognize the specialized skill set required to work with pregnant people, infants, young children and families, as well as an acknowledgement that the professional appreciates and implements best practice when working with this population.

Individuals can earn Endorsement [1] in the category that is the best fit for one’s scope of practice. See Figure 2 for a list of the Endorsement categories.

The Crosswalk

With funding from the the North Carolina Infant and Early Childhood

Mental Health Association (NCIMHA) [2], Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up and the Alliance collaborated on this crosswalk to demonstrate how the ABC Infant parenting program training aligns with the knowledge and skill areas of the Endorsement credential across categories.

This document streamlines the process of applying for Endorsement for ABC-Infant certified parent coaches that have successfully completed the ABC-Infant training. The crosswalk identifies the knowledge/skill areas, as identified in the Competency Guidelines, that are addressed or met for each category of Endorsement, across the ABC-Infant training. One knowledge/skill area is listed per clock hour of training. For members of the Alliance: this crosswalk has been approved as a Tier 4 co-branded crosswalk [3].

[1] All member AIMHs of the Alliance have licensed the use of the IMH-E®. The ECMH-E® is relatively new and only a small number of AIMHs have licensed it as of 2019. Please contact your own AIMH to find out whether the AIMH has licensed the ECMH-E®

[2] The creation of this Crosswalk was supported by the Preschool Development Grant, Birth-Five (PDG B-5) number [90TP125-01-02] from the Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[3] Member AIMHs of the Alliance will have access to the Crosswalk Policy which outlines the crosswalk tiers.



The Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up Infant training was reviewed specifically for the purpose of addressing competencies that professionals applying for or renewing Endorsement would require in their training record. Please see the Notes columns of the crosswalk for information about whether the identified knowledge/skill areas were met or partially met and for which Endorsement categories.

For Endorsement Applicants:

Endorsement applicants can utilize this crosswalk to streamline their application process. Crosswalks are uploaded into the Education section of the Endorsement application, as a crosswalk entry. Applicants can review the document and select fully and partially met competencies from this crosswalk to add to their entry, based on the category of Endorsement they are applying for. Please keep in mind that you can select one competency per hour of training attended. Please contact your state's Endorsement Coordinator with questions, as needed, with questions regarding the use of this document within an Endorsement application.

It is important to note that the knowledge/skill areas that make up the Competency Guidelines are the same for both IMH-E® and ECMH-E®; the competencies encompass a range of knowledge and skill areas that drive best practice with or on behalf of pregnant moms, children ages 0 up to 6 years old, and their

caregivers/families. IMH-E® applicants are required to demonstrate competency from prenatal up to 36-months of age. Training experience specific to 3 up to 6-years old can be added to an IMH-E® application, however, the bulk of the training experience must be specific to prenatal up to 36-months of age. ECMH-E® applicants are required to demonstrate competency prenatal up to 6-years of age. This supports our core understanding that the first three years of life are the foundation for all subsequent development. Additionally, we believe that we come to better understand the needs of older children when we more fully understand infancy and toddlerhood.



Attachment & Biobehavioral Catch-up

Key

- Fully Met
- Partially Met
- Not Addressed
- Not required for Endorsed Reflective Supervisor Add On
- Italic* Not required for every I/ECMH category

Infant Mental Health Endorsement

Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement

Endorsed Reflective Supervisor Add On

Domain: Theoretical Foundations			
Pregnancy & Early Parenthood*	—	—	
Infant/Young Child Behavior & Development	●	●	
Infant/Young Child Family Centered Practice	●	●	
Relationship Focused Therapeutic Practice	○	○	
Family Relationships & Dynamics	●	●	
Attachment, Separation, Trauma, Grief & Loss	●	●	
Cultural Humility	●	●	
<i>Disorders of Infancy/Early Childhood</i>	—	—	
<i>Psychotherapeutic & Behavioral Theories of Change</i>	●	●	
<i>Mental & Behavioral Disorders In Adults</i>	—	—	
<i>Adult Learning Theory & Practice</i>	—	—	

* While Pregnancy & Early Parenthood is not covered in ABC-Infant, please note that prenatal and newborn development is covered in ABC-Newborn.

● Fully Met
 ○ Partially Met
 — Not Addressed

**Infant Mental Health
Endorsement**

**Early Childhood Mental
Health Endorsement**

**Endorsed Reflective
Supervisor Add On**

Domain: Law, Government & Regulation			
Ethical Practice	●	●	
Law, Government & Regulation	—	—	
Agency Policy	—	—	
Domain: Systems Expertise			
Service Delivery Systems	○	○	
Community Resources	○	○	
Domain: Direct Service Skills			
Observation & Listening	●	●	
Screening & Assessment	○	○	
Responding With Empathy	●	●	
Advocacy	○	○	
Life Skills	○	○	
Safety	○	○	
<i>Intervention/Treatment Planning</i>	○	○	
<i>Developmental Guidance</i>	●	●	
<i>Supportive Counseling</i>	—	—	

● Fully Met
 ○ Partially Met
 — Not Addressed

	Infant Mental Health Endorsement	Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement	Endorsed Reflective Supervisor Add On
<i>Parent-Infant/Young Child Relationship Based Therapies & Practices</i>	○	○	
<i>Reflective Supervision</i>	—	—	—
Domain: Working With Others			
Building & Maintaining Relationships	●	●	
Supporting Others	●	●	
Collaborating	●	●	
Resolving Conflict	—	—	
Empathy & Compassion	●	●	
<i>Crisis Management</i>	—	—	
<i>Coaching & Mentoring</i>	○	○	
<i>Consulting</i>	—	—	
Domain: Leading People			
<i>Motivating</i>	—	—	
<i>Advocacy</i>	—	—	
<i>Developing Talent</i>	—	—	
Domain: Communicating			
Listening	●	●	

 Fully Met
  Partially Met
  Not Addressed

Infant Mental Health Endorsement

Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement

Endorsed Reflective Supervisor Add On

Speaking			
Writing			
<i>Group Process</i>	—	—	—
Domain: Thinking			
Analyzing Information			
Solving Problems			
Exercising Sound Judgement			
Maintaining Perspective			
Planning & Organizing			
Domain: Reflection			
Contemplation			
Self Awareness			
Curiosity			
Emotional Response			—
Personal/Professional Development			
<i>Parallel Process</i>	—	—	—