




Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (I/ECMH)

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It's amazing what they absorb before they're five.



Goals

- Provide an overview of Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health (I/ECMH)
- Provide examples of best practices
- Share resources with more in-depth information

What is I/ECMH?



“Lahwaah, buwha buwhaah, gullygah abawaa mey ayeeyaah. Is that normal?”

Not this!



I/ECMH is....

The developing capacity of the infant and toddler to:

- Form close and secure adult and peer relationships
- Experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions
- Explore the environment and learn

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.





I/ECMH is not

- Focused on mental *illness* in young children
- A philosophy that infants and toddlers necessarily *need* MH intervention to develop healthy personalities
- Only focused on young children already identified as having problems or being at risk
- Focused solely on the child
- Synonymous only with social-emotional development and/or self-regulation



1.) Strengths-based perspective: *health, not illness*



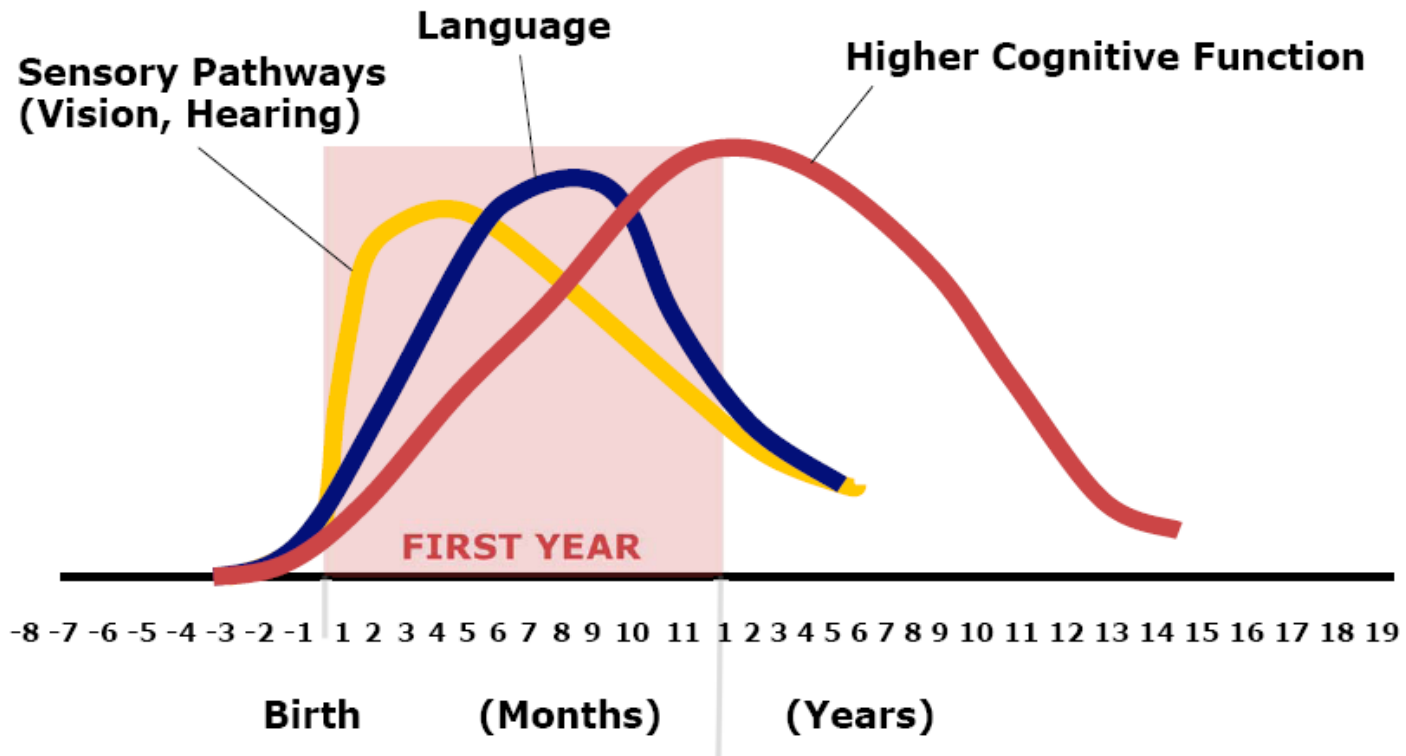
2.) The importance of culture and equity



3.) An infant's development begins and continues within the context of an emotional relationship



4.) The importance of brain science



Source: C. Nelson (2000)



5.) Social-emotional skills provide a foundation for all other domains of development



**6.) Children aren't born with these skills,
but with the potential to develop them**

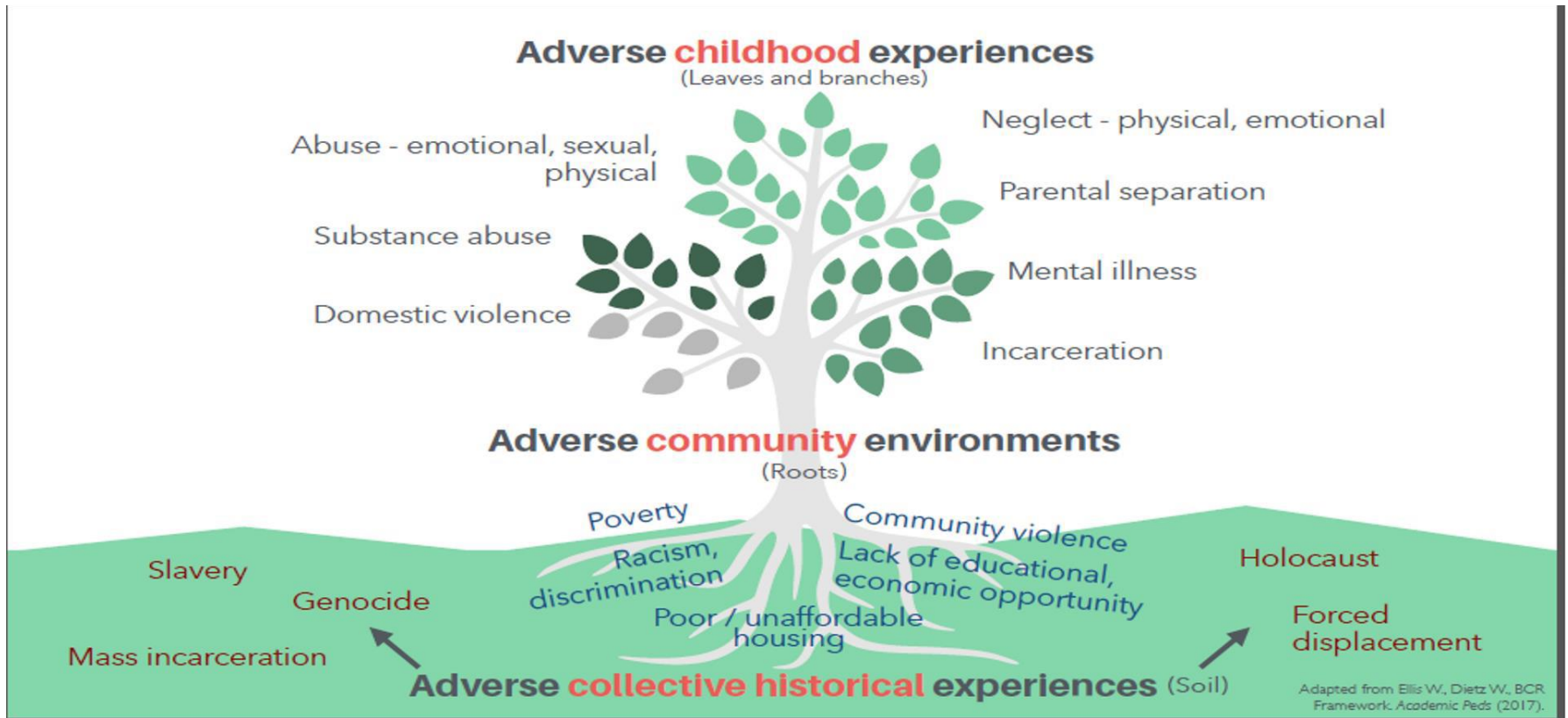


7.) Relationships matter, but so do environments



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

The ACES study is the largest of its kind that looks at the health and social effects of ACES over a lifespan.



How the ACES Work

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Abuse and Neglect (e.g., psychological, physical, sexual)
- Household Dysfunction (e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness)



Impact on Child Development

- Neurobiologic Effects (e.g., brain abnormalities, stress hormone dysregulation)
- Psychosocial Effects (e.g., poor attachment, poor socialization, poor self-efficacy)
- Health Risk Behaviors (e.g., smoking, obesity, substance abuse, promiscuity)



Long-Term Consequences

<u>Disease and Disability</u>	<u>Social Problems</u>
•Major Depression, Suicide, PTSD	•Homelessness
•Drug and Alcohol Abuse	•Prostitution
•Heart Disease	•Criminal Behavior
•Cancer	•Unemployment
•Chronic Lung Disease	•Parenting problems
•Sexually Transmitted Diseases	•High utilization of health and social services
•Intergenerational transmission of abuse	•Shortened Lifespan

CANarratives.org



Childhood Trauma

- “The three Es”: The experience of an event by a child that is emotionally painful or distressful, which often results in lasting mental and physical effects
- 3 levels of Stress Response:
 - Positive
 - Tolerable
 - Toxic
- Historical trauma/intergenerational trauma: passed down by generations



Trauma-Informed Practice

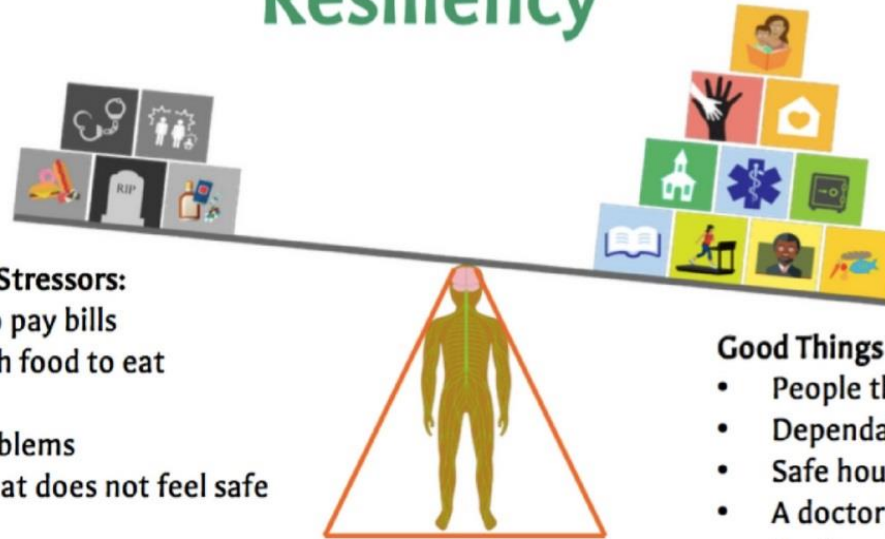
- Involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma
- Emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety for both clients and providers, and helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment
- It's about asking not "what's wrong with this child" but "what happened to this child?"



Adverse experiences and other trauma in childhood,
do not dictate the future of the child!

- Protective factors are characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of negative outcomes or that reduce a risk factor's impact. Protective factors may be seen as positive countering events.
- Risk factors are characteristics at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precede and are associated with a higher likelihood of negative outcomes.

Resiliency



Hard Things & Stressors:

- Not able to pay bills
- Not enough food to eat
- Violence
- Health problems
- Housing that does not feel safe

Good Things & Resources:

- People that you can count on
- Dependable transportation
- Safe housing
- A doctor you trust
- Having enough money

Things about You:

- Genetics and DNA
- Resiliency/ACE score
- Life story
- Personality

Resiliency is when the scale tips toward the good even when there are stressors and hard things.



Early Mental Health Challenges are Real

- 9-14% of children 0 – 5 experience mental health challenges. When they reach 2 – 5 years, the rate is the same that we would find in adolescence
- Infants, toddlers, and young children can experience significant psychological distress
- However, with appropriate interventions, challenges can be addressed and positive outcomes achieved



I/ECMH Red Flags

- Changes in feeding, toileting, and sleeping habits
- Excessive externalizing behavior problems, like crying, biting, tantrums, and aggression
- Internalizing behavior problems, like social withdrawal and fearfulness
- Regressions to earlier stages of development



Addressing I/ECMH

- Mental health promotion is important for all children & families
- Need for multi-pronged, multi-level approach
- Need to address disparities
- Programs, staff, and families need to be equipped with the best tools and support



How the I/ECMH Approach is Different

- A multidisciplinary field
- Promotes and supports the child's healthy development, within the context of relationships, while considering multiple determinants
- Honoring a family's culture with a combination of respect and appreciation.
- Reflection
- Requires a unique set of competencies informing and guiding an I/ECMH approach



Optimal times to utilize an I/ECMH approach

- During pregnancy
- Post-delivery
- Infant/child has special needs, medical issues, or is fussy
- Caregiver/family loss, crisis or trauma
- Caregiver concerns
- Attunement/mismatch
- Child abuse and neglect
- Expulsion and suspension from child care/school



Types of I/ECMH Services

- Consultation
- Emotional support
- Developmental guidance
- Parent-child interaction guidance
- Relationship assessment and support
- Dyadic therapies
- Crisis intervention
- Concrete assistance, linkage, case management
- Advocacy



Best Practices: Ways to Address I/ECMH in Programs

- Comprehensive services provided to children and their families, including mental health
- Champion I/ECMH values from the top down, at all levels
- Focus on social-emotional learning
- Implement a tiered system of supports
- Training, professional development, and supports for staff
- Support developmental screening for all children
- Parental screening and services
- Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation



Best Practices: Ways to Address I/ECMH in Programs

- Qualifications and credentials
- Basic knowledge of I/ECMH (“I/ECMH 101”)
- Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children, and Families
- Trauma and trauma-informed practice
- Access to reflective supervision & reflective practice groups



Building a System of Care

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health The foundation of all future development

Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being

Social and emotional development, or **infant and early childhood mental health**, is the developing capacity of a child from birth to 5 years old to...



Form close and secure **adult and peer relationships...**



Experience, manage and express a **full range of emotions...**



Explore the environment and learn...

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.



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Early connections



last a lifetime.



Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

- Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (MIECHV):
<http://icmhp.org/icmhp-in-action/projects/maternal-infant-early-childhood-home-visiting-miechv-consultation-project/>
- Caregiver Connections (child care):
<https://www.caregiverconnections.org/>
- Action for Children (Cook County):
<https://www.actforchildren.org/for-providers/nutrition-wellness-programs/early-childhood-mental-health-program/>
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies:
<https://www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch>
- Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health (registry of consultants):
<https://www.ilaimh.org/sign-up-for-the-infant-early-childhood-mental-health-consultant-statewide-registry/>
- Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (Head Start/Early Head Start):
<https://www.ecmhc.org/>
- SAMHSA, The Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
<http://www.samhsa.gov/iecmhc>



Mental Health Referrals

- ICMHP Family Help Guide:
<http://icmhp.org/icmhp-help-guide/>
- ICTC Agency Search:
<http://lookthroughtheireyes.org/find-help-nearby/>
- Fussy Baby Network:
<https://www.erikson.edu/fussy-baby-network/>
- Illinois Department of Human Services: Division of Mental Health:
<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=29735>
- Illinois Department of Public Health:
<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/>



Mental Health, Social and Emotional Learning, & Trauma

- Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health
<http://www.ilaimh.org>
- Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership
<http://www.icmhp.org>
- Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition
<http://www.lookthroughtheireyes.org>
- Erikson Institute
<http://www.erikson.edu>
- The Ounce of Prevention Fund
<http://www.theounce.org>
- Zero To Three
<http://www.zerotothree.org>
- The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>
- The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
<http://www.casel.org/>
- Child Trends: *What Works for Reducing Problem Behaviors in Early Childhood: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations*
<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/what-works-for-reducing-problem-behaviors-in-early-childhood>



Reflective Learning/Practice Groups

- Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health
<https://www.ilaimh.org/reflective-practice-groups/>
- Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership
<http://icmhp.org/icmhp-in-action/projects/reflecting-learning-groups/>
- The Ounce of Prevention (for Ounce-funded programs)
<http://www.theounce.org>
(contact Hannah Jones-Lewis: hjoneslewis@ounceofprevention.org)



Training, PD, and Supports for Staff

- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
<https://www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch>
- Early Childhood Center of Professional Development
<http://www.eclearningil.org/>
- Early Choices
www.eclre.org
- Erikson Institute
<http://www.erikson.edu/>
- Gateways to Opportunity
<http://www.ilgateways.com/>
- Illinois Head Start Association
<https://ilheadstart.org>
- Illinois STARnet
www.starnet.org
- Illinois State Board of Education
<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Topics.aspx>
- The Ounce of Prevention Fund
<https://www.theounce.org/what-we-do/professional-development-offerings/>
- Town Square
<http://townsquareil.org>



Coaching and Program Quality

- ExceleRate IL
<http://www.excelerateillinois.com/>
- Infant Toddler Specialists & Quality Specialists at Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
<https://www.inccrra.org/about/sdasearch>
- Lead, Learn, Excel
<https://www.theounce.org/lead-learn-excel/>



Pyramid Model

- Illinois Pyramid Model Partnership
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/Pyramid-Model.aspx>
- National Center on Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)
<http://www.challengingbehavior.org>
- Pyramid Model Consortium
<http://pyramidmodel.org>



Developmental Screening & Inclusion

- ExceleRate Illinois, Child screening guide and tools
<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-standard?id=52>
- ExceleRate Illinois, Inclusion of Children with Special Needs
<http://www.excelerateillinoisproviders.com/resources/resources-by-standard?id=52>
- Illinois Early Intervention
<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=31889>
- Illinois Early Childhood Special Education
<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/early-childhood-special-education-services.aspx>
- Birth to Five, Watch Me Thrive
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive>
- Early Intervention Training Program “Natural Partners” series
<https://eitp.education.illinois.edu/>
- Early Intervention Clearinghouse Resource Guides
<http://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/guides/>
- Early CHOICES
<http://www.eclre.org/>
- Illinois Early Learning Project
<https://illinoisearlylearning.org/>
- Illinois STARnet
<https://www.starnet.org/>

Questions?





Contact Us!

Visit our Advocacy Action Center at:

www.theOunce.org/advocacy

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