

INFANT EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH (ICMH)

ICMH 501 Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (3 credits)

This course introduces students to the main issues in the field of Infant Mental Health - an interdisciplinary field concerned with the optimal development of the infant and young child within the context of his/her primary relationships. Students survey the theoretical origins of the field as well as contributions made by various allied disciplines to our understanding of human development. They review historical and contemporary perspectives on the developmental progress of infants, toddlers and young children, and methods by which assessment and intervention occur. Students examine the remarkable competencies of the newborn and infant, the field of interpersonal neurobiology, the nature of human attachment, the psychological dimensions of pregnancy and parenting, including the critical ways in which the infant's arrival alters the family system, and the interpersonal nature of human development. They also understand disruptions and disorders of attachment and the impact on relational development over the lifespan.

ICMH 502 Wonder and Meaning in Assessment and Research in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (3 credits)

Prerequisite(s): ICMH 501 may be taken as prerequisite or corequisite. Students in this course examine methods of observation, assessment and research in the field of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. Students observe infant-parent interactions through visual, verbal, kinesthetic, and tactile cues in order to deepen their observation and "wondering" capacity. They also learn and practice informal methods of assessment as well as discipline-appropriate formal screening and assessment measures that address multiple aspects of development within the context of family, community and socio-cultural systems. Students analyze classification and diagnostic systems such as the DSM-IV, the DC:0-3R (Diagnostic Classifications of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood), and the ICDL DCIM (Diagnostic Manual for Infancy and Early Childhood). Students pay special attention to the assessment of selected clinical concerns in early childhood development, including Autism Spectrum Disorders, childhood anxiety, regulatory difficulties, disrupted parent-child relationships and challenging behaviors.

ICMH 603 Risk and Resiliency in Special Populations in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (3 credits)

This course introduces students to risk and resiliency influences on special populations relevant to the field of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. Students survey current trends in the field, including the changing dynamics of the family structure; physical, emotional, and environmental stressors on the infant/child or on the caregiver; and external and communal stressors on the functioning of the family system. Special populations related to the developmental and emotional health of families include premature babies; adolescent parents; mothers suffering from depression; parents with developmental disabilities, mental illness or substance abuse; families who witness or experience violence; families suffering grief and loss; children in foster care; contemporary families. Students examine the impacts of both risk and resiliency on the relationship of the infant-parent dyad or family of these special populations. Students also analyze their own personal thoughts, reactions and interventions when working with families with these experiences.

ICMH 604 Practicum: Implications and Applications in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (3 credits)

Prerequisite(s): ICMH 501 and ICMH 502. Students explore methods of intervention and support of infants, young children and families, including developmental interventions, dyadic psychotherapy and family support models. Students specifically investigate predominant therapeutic models in the field, including Child-Parent Psychotherapy, Brazelton Touchpoints model, the DIR/Floortime approach, and various play in family therapy techniques, as they relate to specific disorders of infancy and early childhood or to disruptions in family functioning. Through a fieldwork practicum placement, students apply observation, assessment and intervention skills in practice. They address fieldwork in class through reflective practice models of supervision and case discussion, including discussing the dimensions of the clinical relationship, the self of the worker, transference, counter transference, and socio-cultural factors of working with others.