



Frequently asked questions about MAIECMH endorsement

Q. What is the value of a Competency-Based System of endorsement?

A. Endorsement is valuable in three ways:

- Endorsement provides a set of competencies for professional development in the infant and family field which demonstrates a commitment to best practice and quality care for all infants, toddlers and families.
- Endorsement assures that persons providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused services promoting infant mental health meet standards that are approved by a highly recognized professional organization for the discipline of infant mental health.
- Endorsement recognizes the importance of continuing education and training for professionals in the infant and family field. Those who earn the endorsement demonstrate their commitment to this principle as they provide services that promote infant mental health with a high level of quality and integrity.

Q. Why should I apply for Endorsement?

A. Consider the following:

- To enhance your professional profile as a specialist in the infant and family field
- To affirm the specialized knowledge and skills you have acquired through formal education experience and in-service training
- To validate the work that you have done under the guidance and supervision of experienced mentors in the infant and family field
- To link your professional growth and development to competency standards that reflect best practice
- To be identified as a competent professional in a system that reflects commitment to best practice and quality care for all infants, toddlers and families

Q. What is required for the Professional Portfolio?

A. Requirements depend on the endorsement level for which you are applying. The following documents are required for all levels:

- Official transcripts in a sealed envelope from all colleges/universities attended. These should be mailed to Emily Richardson at 165 Western Avenue North, Suite 2, St. Paul, MN 55102. They will then be uploaded onto the EASy system.

- A list of specialized in-service trainings related to culturally sensitive, relationship-based practice promoting infant mental health that reflect competencies, paid work experiences with or related to infants, toddlers, and their families, and (for Levels II, III & IV) reflective supervision/consultation experiences while working with infants, toddlers and their families.
- A list of specialized work experiences related to working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers, their families and caregivers.
- Three reference ratings, including one from your reflective supervisor (for Levels II, III, and IV) in sealed envelopes with rater signature across the seal.
- Signed Code of Ethics.
- Signed Endorsement Agreement.
- Proof of membership in MAIECMH or other infant mental health association.
- Endorsement Processing Fee

The Endorsement Process

Q. What is involved in applying for and earning Endorsement?

A. Submit the preliminary application, compile, and submit your Endorsement application on line via the Endorsement Application System (EASy) by going to <https://easy.MAIECMH.org/maiecmh>

Steps to apply for the MAIECMH Endorsement® via EASy (on-line)

1. Registration

To begin your endorsement application, go to <https://easy.MAIECMH.org/maiecmh/> and click on "Register." It is strongly recommended that you register using a personal email address (e.g., gmail, yahoo, hotmail, etc). Employer email servers often block messages sent by the EASy system. Registration requires you to provide brief information about your specialized education, work, and reflective supervision/consultation experiences. You will be asked to pay a registration fee (formerly known as the Preliminary Application Fee) via PayPal using a credit card. Fees can be found in the table below (Endorsement costs).

At the time of registration, applicants must have a current membership with MAIECMH. For those who need to join or renew MAIECMH membership, you can do so by contacting Emily Richardson at erichardson@macmh.org

2. Preparation of a Professional Application

Once the registration information and fee have been received and your MAIECMH membership has been confirmed, EASy will email a username and password. You may then log in, as often as necessary and from any computer with an internet connection, to build your portfolio on-line. The professional application reflects the applicant's capabilities within the infant and family field as identified for each level of endorsement.

EASy will ask you to electronically "sign" the MAIECMH Code of Ethics and Endorsement Agreement. You will list your specialized education, in-service training*, and reflective supervision/consultation experiences**. You will be asked to list the names and email addresses for the 3 individuals who will complete reference rating form on your behalf. EASy sends an email to each reference rater; the whole

process is done electronically. Please ask your reference raters for a personal email address so they will receive the secure link to complete the form on EASy.

If questions come up while using EASy, there is a "Help" button on the top right. Applicants can indicate whether the issue is technical or related to the endorsement process. There are also comment sections on most pages where applicants can ask questions or leave remarks.

EASy replaces the E-form for MAIECMH Endorsement® and all other paper documents that were formally used to create a portfolio.

**30 hours of specialized in-service training are required at all levels. Eligible specialized in-service training meets the following criteria:*

- *Is culturally sensitive, relationship-focused and promotes infant mental health*
- *Relates to 1 or more of the knowledge/skill areas in the MAIECMH Competency Guidelines*
- *Is specific to the level of endorsement at which candidate is applying*

***Applicants for Level II, III, and IV-Clinical include information about the provider and nature of reflective supervision/consultation experiences. Please refer to the Best Practice Guidelines for Reflective Supervision/Consultation for additional information about which experiences qualify toward endorsement.*

3. Submission

Once the application is complete (all sections completed, reference ratings complete, transcripts uploaded by MAIECMH), the applicant may hit the Submit button that appears on his/her EASy dashboard. The Endorsement Processing Fee will be paid via PayPal. Endorsement Processing Fees are indicated below under Endorsement costs.

4. Application Review

MAIECMH reviews applications on a quarterly basis. Level I & Level II applicants receive an endorsement decision after at least two application review committee members examine and approve the application. Level III & Level IV applicants move on to a written exam after at least two application review committee members examine and approve. MAIECMH offers the written exam twice a year, usually in March and September. Please visit <http://MAIECMH.org/events-list?type=endorsement> for details related exam dates

Q. How much does Endorsement cost?

A. Fees vary according to the level of endorsement being sought:

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Registration Fee	\$15	\$15	\$25	\$25
Endorsement Processing Fee	\$25	\$50	\$200	\$300
MAIECMH Membership (1-yr)	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30

The credentialing fees support the overhead costs of the MAIECMH Endorsement (IMH-E®) and allow us to have applications and tests carefully reviewed.

Q. When do portfolio materials have to be submitted?

A. Endorsement candidates may submit finished portfolio materials with the endorsement fee to the MAIECMH office at any time during the year. Each candidate is advised to review the portfolio materials with the assigned endorsement advisor before final submission to the MAIECMH office. Conversation with the assigned endorsement advisor offers the candidate assurance that all information has been included as requested and alerts the applicant to missing pieces or gaps. Levels III and IV candidates must submit finished portfolio materials with the endorsement fee to the MAIECMH office no later than six weeks prior to the exam date in order to assure adequate time for review, approval and test scheduling.

Specialized Work Experience

Q. Is there a difference between the specialized work experiences that meet criteria for Infant Family Specialist (Level II) versus Infant Mental Health Specialist (Level III)?

A. Yes, in general Level II work experience is more broad and encompasses many of the ways that candidates might work with the families of infants and toddlers including case management, Part C service coordination, parent-child play groups, parent education, and family support. Level III work experiences are often (but not always) home-based and include the following interventions: advocacy, developmental guidance, emotional support, concrete assistance, and parent-infant psychotherapy. Competence as an Infant Mental Health Specialist builds with supervised work experience over time with services delivered to the families of infants and toddlers that are relationship-focused and culturally sensitive with an emphasis on examining the role of relationships in reflective supervision.

Q. How many infants or toddlers do I need to work with to meet the specialized work criteria?

A. MAIECMH believes that endorsement applicants should have enough experience with infants/toddlers so that the persons who complete the reference rating forms can confidently answer questions about the applicant's knowledge and skills related to the promotion/practice of infant mental health. The requirements state, "Minimum two years paid, post Bachelor's, professional work experience providing services that promote infant mental health. Work experience meets this criterion as long as the applicant has:

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."

Specialized In-Service Training

Q. I have attended well over 30 hours of in-service training but I'm not sure if all of it will be accepted. Should I submit a list of every in-service training I've ever attended?

A. All in-service training hours that meet criteria toward endorsement must be related to the MI-AIMH Competency Guidelines. Be sure to list which specific knowledge or skill area is covered at each training, e.g., attachment, separation and loss; cultural competence; etc. For a training to count toward endorsement at least one competency must have been covered. It is important to remember that

endorsement reflects training specialization in the promotion of culturally sensitive, relationship-based practice promoting social and emotional well-being in the first years of life or infant mental health.

Although the minimum requirement is 30 hours, we expect endorsement applicants to document that they have achieved competency in all (or almost all) of the categories (as identified at your desired level) via college course work, on-the-job training, in-service opportunities and reflective supervision/consultation. So, if there are still gaps in your competencies with only 30 hours, include as many others as you can to fill those gaps.

Q. How do I know when my EASy application demonstrates enough to show a competency area has been met?

A. This is a question where the answer varies greatly depending on many factors including how long ago you took college courses, how specific the course or training is to infant mental health, number of hours, etc. A minimum of two trained application reviewers carefully examine all the material in your application including college transcripts, in-service training record, and reference rating forms. Application reviewers will be looking most closely at the competency areas under *Theoretical Foundations*, *Direct Service Skills*, and *Reflection*. For the areas of *Theoretical Foundations* (including pregnancy & early parenthood; infant/very young child development & behavior; attachment, separation, trauma, & loss; cultural competence; etc.) and the areas of *Direct Service Skills* (including observation & listening; screening & assessment; etc) competency must be documented by course work and/or in-service training. That is, work experience alone is not enough to document competency in areas such as attachment, separation, trauma, & loss or screening & assessment.

Q. How far back can I go when including trainings that meet criteria for Endorsement?

A. There is no limit on how long ago the training was attended to be counted toward requirements. Some applicants may have been in the field for many years and are encouraged to include all the trainings that have shaped their practice in infant-family work. However, it is not necessary to submit a comprehensive list of every training ever attended. The list should reflect a balance of breadth and depth across the competencies and the promotion of infant mental health.

Q. I heard from a colleague that I could count only one conference in my EASy Application, Is that true?

A. Applicants must list a minimum of 30 hours of relevant in-service training. Applicants are encouraged to include all relevant conferences that they have attended, but only one conference (with many workshops) may be counted toward the 30-hour minimum. MI-AIMH recognizes that conferences are an important way to be exposed to new material, but believes a balance with lengthier, more intense in-services of six hours or more helps to build skills.

Reflective Supervision/Consultation

Q. What are the requirements for reflective supervision/consultation at Level II, Level III and Level IV (Clinical)?

A. In regards to reflective supervision/consultation, applicants applying at Level II must receive a minimum of 24 clock hours in no less than one year and no more than a two-year time frame.

Applicants at Level III must have received a minimum of 50 clock hours of reflective supervision/consultation within the same time 1-2 year time frame. Reflective supervision/consultation (RSC) that meets criteria for endorsement must come from someone who is endorsed (*or is endorsable*) at Level III or Level IV-Clinical. The only exception is for applicants who are pursuing Level II and are Bachelor's prepared; they can receive qualified reflective supervision/consultation from someone who has earned Level II endorsement AND is Master's prepared.

Q. When we are listing reflective supervision received, are we only able to list supervisors who were formally trained in reflective supervision? The reason I ask is that I had former supervisors in other work positions whose styles of supervision were very reflective, but I do not know for sure if they were formally trained in that model of supervision?

A. Reflective supervision/consultation that meets criteria for MAIECMH endorsement should come from an individual who has earned endorsement at Infant Mental Health Mentor - Clinical (Level IV) or Infant Mental Health Specialist (Level III). So, as you said, lots of clinical supervision is reflective, but perhaps not all is from a specialist in infant mental health. For your portfolio, please only include those hours that were provided by an individual who has earned endorsement as an Infant Mental Health Mentor - Clinical (Level IV) or Infant Mental Health Specialist (Level III) or the exceptions described above.

Q. My direct supervisor is not an infant mental health specialist and has not earned endorsement. Our team does present cases to a clinical consultant hired from outside the agency once a month at a two-hour meeting, and the consultant is endorsed as an Infant Mental Health Specialist (Level III). However, there are six on our team, so I only present cases twice a year. Do any of the hours spent in these case presentations count toward endorsement?

A. Yes, if you meet and participate in the case consultations once a month for two hours, you will have 24 hours of reflective consultation that meets criteria for Endorsement.

Q. I have received my reflective supervision and consultation from multiple sources, i.e., former supervisor, current supervisor, program consultant, and reflective practice group. Should I include all of these sources?

A. If all of those sources meet criteria for endorsement (see previous question), you may include them all as long as the majority of the required clock hours were provided by just one or two supervisors/consultants. As in relationship-focused practice with families, reflective supervision/consultation is most effective when it occurs in the context of a relationship that has an opportunity to develop by meeting regularly with the same supervisor/consultant over a period of time. Therefore, MAIECMH expects that endorsement applicants will have received the majority of the hours (24 clock hour minimum for Level II and 50 clock hours for Levels III & IV-Clinical) come from just one source with the balance coming from no more than one other source. The hours for Level II, III, and IV-Clinical applicants need to have occurred in a period of time that is more than one year and less than two years.

Some applicants may have special circumstances, e.g. if the program supervisor changed or if the applicant moved positions. Exceptions regarding the number of reflective supervision/consultation providers should be discussed with the Endorsement Coordinator.

Q. There is a co-worker in my agency who has earned endorsement as an Infant Mental Health Specialist (Level III). Can this co-worker provide the hours of reflective supervision I need for my endorsement application?

A. Peer supervision (defined as colleagues meeting together without an identified supervisor/consultant to guide the reflective process), while valuable for many experienced practitioners, *does not meet the reflective supervision/consultation criteria for endorsement*. The provider of reflective supervision is charged with holding the emotional content of the cases presented. The ability to do so is compromised when the provider is a peer of the presenter. Unnecessary complications can arise when the provider of reflective supervision has concerns about a peer's ability to serve a particular family due to the peer's emotional response AND the provider and peer share office space.

You may find answers to other questions like this in MAIECMH's [Best Practice Guidelines for Reflective Supervision/Consultation](#).

Q. What happens after I submit my professional portfolio?

A. All portfolios are carefully reviewed by two volunteer members who have earned endorsement and/or are members of the Professional Development Committee. Reviews are conducted using an eight-page checklist that includes all the knowledge and skill areas, including reflective supervision or consultation experiences, under the broader competency categories. After examining your official transcripts, the reference rating forms, and your lists of specialized work, in-service training, and reflective supervision/consultation experiences, each reviewer will make recommendations about whether to endorse (Level I and II) or to approve you to sit for the exam (Level III and IV) or may suggest that you pursue further training and/or reflective supervision and then be re-reviewed after a period of time.

Levels 3 and 4 exam

Q. What is the format of the exam?

A. There are two parts to the test: Part 1 consists of multiple choice questions. Part 2 consists of three vignettes or scenarios; you are asked to answer two of the three. You will have three hours to complete the examination (i.e., 90 minutes to complete Part 1 and 90 minutes to complete Part 2). The material covered requires knowledge about pregnancy, early development and clinical practice experiences. Both parts draw on cumulative learning experiences in college or university settings and specialized in-service trainings, as well as self-study (e.g. books and journal articles about infancy, early parenthood and infant mental health). Your supervised work experiences with infants, toddlers and families, and experiences within reflective supervision or consultation groups related to your work with infants and families will also contribute to learning that is reflected in the examination questions.

Q. What primary topics are covered in the multiple-choice portion of the test?

The multiple choice questions are related to the knowledge and skill areas of the competencies as indicated in the MAIECMH Competency Guidelines booklet such as:

- Attachment separation, and loss
- Pregnancy, infant and young child development and behavior
- Relationship-based therapeutic practice
- Infant mental health screening and assessment
- Disorders of infancy/early childhood
- Cultural competence
- Reflective practice.

Q. How should I study for the exam?

A. Studying for the test will vary from person to person. If you are currently engaged in relationship-based practice with infants and their families, receive reflective supervision and have consistently updated your knowledge and skills through specialized in-service training or enrollment in university or college course work specific to infancy, early parenthood and infant mental health, you will most likely be very well prepared. If you have not engaged in clinical practice or attended in-service trainings or university-based coursework specific to the promotion of infant mental health, you will find the test challenging. There is a suggested resource list.

Q. What happens if I do not pass the exam?

A. A passing score on Part 1 (multiple choice) of the exam is 80%. Candidates who receive a score of less than 80% will be invited to take the exam again in one year. In order to carefully protect the exam materials, candidates will not receive specific feedback related to the questions missed on Part 1. Candidates who do not receive a passing score on Part 2 (response to vignettes/scenarios) will be provided specific feedback based on exam reviewers' remarks. Those candidates will be invited to take the exam again in one year. There is no charge to retake Part 1 or Part 2 of the exam.

Q. How do I indicate that I have earned the MAIECMH Endorsement®?

A. The IMH-E® mark indicates that a person has earned endorsement. Use of the registered trademark is important (whenever possible) to distinguish from other systems of "endorsement." The level of endorsement is indicated after the IMH-E® in parentheses and the title can be written under, such as:

Jane Doe, MSW, LICSW, IMH-E® (III)
Infant Mental Health Specialist

Minnesota Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

A Division of the Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health

165 Western Av N, Suite 2, St. Paul, MN 55102

651-644-7333 or 800-528-4511 FAX 651-644-7391

Chairperson: Michele Fallon whataboutthebaby@comcast.net

3/2014