



Australian Association
for Infant Mental Health
West Australian Branch

AAIMH

Competency Guidelines[®]
and
Endorsement[®] Requirements

INFANT FAMILY PRACTITIONER

Copyright notice

The Infant Family Worker Competency Guidelines[®], licensed to AAIMH (2017), were developed by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, and adapted for the West Australian context by AAIMH WA, to clearly describe the areas of expertise, responsibilities, and behaviours that demonstrate competency at this level. Endorsement[®] licensed to AAIMH WA (2015). These materials are copyrighted by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH).

Individuals are allowed to print out or make ONE copy of copyrighted material for personal, non-commercial purposes only.

None of the copyrighted Endorsement[®] documents included here may be reproduced, displayed, distributed, or otherwise used in any format, including electronically, without the express written consent of MI-AIMH.

Infant Mental Health associations who have purchased a licence to use the Competency Guidelines[®] and Endorsement[®] honour reciprocity of Endorsement[®] status. If your Infant Mental Health association is interested in purchasing a licence to use the Competency Guidelines[®] and Endorsement[®], please visit allianceaimh.org

INFANT FAMILY PRACTITIONER Competency Detail

Area of Expertise	As Demonstrated by
<p style="text-align: center;">Theoretical Foundations <u>Knowledge Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>pregnancy & early parenthood</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>infant/young child development & behaviour</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>infant/very young child & family-centred practice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>relationship-focused, therapeutic practice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>family relationships & dynamics</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>attachment, separation, trauma, grief, & loss</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>disorders of infancy/early childhood</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>cultural competence</i></p>	<p><i>For infants, young children (pregnancy, conception to 36 months), and families referred and enrolled for services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During observations and assessments, identifies emerging competencies of the infant and very young child within a relationship context • Supports and reinforces parent’s capacity to seek appropriate care during pregnancy • Supports and reinforces each parent’s strengths, emerging parenting competencies, and positive parent-infant/very young child interactions and relationships • Helps parents to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "See" the infant/very young child as a person, as well as all the factors (playing, holding, teaching, etc.) that constitute effective parenting of that child ○ Derive pleasure from daily activities with their children • Shares with families realistic expectations for the development of their infants/young children and strategies that support those expectations • Demonstrates familiarity with conditions that optimise early infant brain development • Recognises risks and disorders of infancy/early childhood conditions that require the assistance of other professionals from health, mental health, education, and child welfare systems • Shares with families an understanding and appreciation of family relationship development • Applies understanding of cultural competence to communicate effectively, establish positive relationships with families, and demonstrate respect for the uniqueness of each client family’s culture • Applies understanding of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island ¹cultures to communicate effectively, establish positive relationships with families, and demonstrate respect
<p style="text-align: center;">Law, Regulation & Agency Policy <u>Knowledge Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>ethical practice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>government, law, & regulation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>agency policy</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchanges complete and unbiased information in a supportive manner with families and other team members • Practises confidentiality of each family’s information in all contexts with exception only when making necessary reports to protect the safety of a family member (e.g., child protection services, duty of care, and mandatory reporting) • Maintains appropriate personal boundaries with infants/very young children and families served, as established by the employing agency • Promptly and appropriately reports harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare to child protection services • Accurately and clearly explains the provisions and requirements of federal, state, and local laws affecting infants/very young children and families (e.g., child protection, childcare licensing rules and regulations) to families and other service providers working with the family • Collaborates with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities in order to respond ethically and respectfully • Shares information with refugee and migrant families, and service agencies about the rights of children under Australian law • Personally works within the requirements of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commonwealth and State or Territory laws ○ Agency policies and practices ○ Agency code of conduct ○ Professional code of conduct and ethics

¹ Terminology for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples may differ across the nation

INFANT FAMILY PRACTITIONER
Competency Detail

<u>Area of Expertise</u>	<u>As Demonstrated by</u>
<p style="text-align: center;">Systems Expertise</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Knowledge Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>service delivery systems</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>community resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists families to anticipate, obtain, and advocate for concrete needs and other services from government and nongovernment agencies and community resources • Actively seeks resources to address infant/young child and family needs • Works collaboratively with and makes referrals to other service agencies to ensure that the child(ren) and family receives services for which they are eligible and that the services are coordinated • Helps parents build the skills they need to access social support from extended family, neighbours, and friends needed and as available in the community • Makes families and service providers/agencies aware of community resources available to families • Collaborates and consults with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and elders to ensure that appropriate resources are accessed and/or are accessible
<p style="text-align: center;">Direct Service Skills</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Knowledge Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>observation & listening</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>screening & assessment</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>responding with empathy</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>advocacy</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>life skills</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>safety</i></p>	<p><i>For infants, very young children (conception to 36 months) and families referred and enrolled for services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes trusting relationship that supports the parent(s) and infant/very young child in their relationship with each other, and that facilitates needed change • Collaborates and communicates with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples to establish meaningful and trusting relationships for families in their communities • Provides services to children and families with multiple, complex risk factors • Formally and informally observes the parent(s) or caregiver(s) and infant/very young child to understand the nature of their relationship, developmental strengths, and capacities for change • Conducts formal and informal assessments of infant/very young child development, in accordance with established practice • Effectively implements relationship-focused, therapeutic parent-infant/very young child interventions that enhance the capacities of parents and infants/very young children • Provides information and assistance to parents/or caregivers to help them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand their role in the social and emotional development of infants/very young children ○ Understand what they can do to promote health, language, and cognitive development in infancy and early childhood ○ Find pleasure in caring for their infants/very young children • Nurtures the parents' relationship with each other, if one exists; alternatively, helps the custodial parent manage appropriate contact with the non-custodial parent • Promotes parental or caregiver competence in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facing challenges ○ Advocating on behalf of themselves and their children ○ Resolving crises and reducing the likelihood of future crises ○ Solving problems of basic needs and familial conflict • Advocates for services needed by children and families with the supervisor, agencies, and programs • Recognises environmental and caregiving risks to the health and safety of the infant/very young child and parents, and takes appropriate action

INFANT FAMILY PRACTITIONER
Competency Detail

Area of Expertise	As Demonstrated by
<p style="text-align: center;">Working with Others</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Skill Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>building & maintaining relationships</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>supporting others/mentoring</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>collaborating</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>resolving conflict</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>empathy & compassion</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds and maintains effective interpersonal relationships with families and professional colleagues by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Respecting and promoting the decision-making authority of families ○ Understanding and respecting the beliefs and practices of the family's culture ○ Following the parents' lead ○ Following through consistently on commitments and promises ○ Providing regular communications and updates • Works with and responds to families and colleagues in a tactful and understanding manner • Provides positive, specific feedback to encourage and reinforce desired behaviours and interactions in families • Assists families to develop the skills they need to become their own advocates • Models appropriate behaviour and interventions for new staff as they observe home visits • Encourages parents to share with other parents (e.g., through nurturing programs, parent-child interaction groups) • Collaborates and shares information with staff of childcare, foster care, community-based programs, and other service agencies to ensure effective, coordinated services • Works constructively to find "win-win" solutions to conflicts with colleagues (e.g., interagency, peer-peer, and/or supervisor-supervisee conflicts) • Provides emotional support to parents/caregivers and children when sad, distressed, etc. • Works in collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and collaborate with elders to maintain respectful and supportive relationships
<p style="text-align: center;">Communicating</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Skill Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>listening</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>speaking</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>writing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively listens to others; asks questions for clarification • Uses appropriate non-verbal behaviour and correctly interprets others' non-verbal behaviour • Communicates honestly, sensitively, and empathically with families, using non-technical language • Obtains interpreter services as necessary to ensure effective communication with families who may experience a communication barrier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates and collaborates with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities in order to better understand each other and work effectively together • Writes clearly, concisely, and with the appropriate style (business, conversational, etc.) in creating notes, reports, and correspondence

INFANT FAMILY PRACTITIONER
Competency Detail

Area of Expertise	As Demonstrated by
<p style="text-align: center;">Thinking <u>Skill Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>analysing information</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>solving problems</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>exercising sound judgment</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>maintaining perspective</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>planning & organising</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees and can explain the “big picture” including cultural awareness when analysing situations • Sees and can explain the interactions of multiple factors & perspectives • Assigns priorities to needs, goals, and actions • Considers difficult situations carefully • Evaluates alternatives prior to making decisions • Integrates all available information, including culturally specific information, and consults with others when making important decisions • Generates new insights and workable solutions to issues related to effective relationship-focused, family-centred care • Defines, creates a sequence for, and prioritises tasks necessary to perform role and meet the needs of families • Employs effective systems for tracking individual progress, ensuring follow up, and monitoring the effectiveness of service delivery as a whole
<p style="text-align: center;">Reflection <u>Skill Areas</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>contemplation</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>self awareness</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>curiosity</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>professional/personal development</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>emotional response</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly examines own thoughts, feelings, strengths, and growth areas; discusses issues, concerns, actions to take with supervisor, consultants, or peers • Consults regularly with reflective supervisor, consultants, and peers to understand own capacities and needs, as well as the capacities and needs of families, and to maintain sensitivity to culture • Seeks a high degree of agreement between self-perceptions and the way others perceive him/her • Remains open and curious • Identifies and participates in learning activities related to the promotion of infant mental health • Keeps up-to-date on current and future trends in child development and relationship-focused practice • Uses reflective practice throughout work with infants/very young children and families to understand own emotional response to infant/family work and recognise areas for professional and/or personal development • Consistently maintains awareness of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures

INFANT FAMILY PRACTITIONER Endorsement[®] Requirements

Requirements

Education	Minimum of Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), Bachelor of Nursing (BSN); and including Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MS), Master of Social Work (MSW), Master of Education (MEd), Master of Nursing (MSN), or equivalent overseas qualifications recognised in Australia; official transcript.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants will include as many hours of training/and or continuing education as necessary to document that competencies (as specified in Competency Guidelines[®]) have been met • For those whose degree is in a field that is unrelated to infancy, more specialised in-service training may be required to meet the breadth and depth of the competencies • Training content will include the promotion of social-emotional development and/or the relationship-based principles of infant mental health • Minimum 30 clock hour required • Typically, successful IFP applications include 50 or more work hours of specialised training unless the applicant has completed coursework specific to the <i>Competency Guidelines</i>[®]
Work Experience	<p>Minimum two years of 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Served a minimum of 10 families of infants/very young children (pregnancy, conception to 36 months), and 2. A primary focus of the services provided is the social-emotional needs of the infant/very young child, and 3. Services focus on the promotion of the relationships surrounding the infant/very young child
Reflective Supervision/Consultation	<p>Minimum 24 clock hours within one- to two-year timeframe; post-Bachelor's, relationship-based, reflective supervision or consultation, individually or in a group while providing services to infants/very young children, and families and/or while providing supervision to staff who are providing services to infants, young children (birth to 36 months) and families. Applicants for Endorsement[®] as an IFP will receive reflective supervision/consultation from someone who is Endorsed as an IMHP or IMHM-C. A Bachelor's prepared IFP applicant should receive reflective supervision/consultation from an IMHP or an IMHM-C and may seek reflective supervision/consultation from a Master's prepared person who has earned IFP Endorsement[®] if there is no one with an IMHP Endorsement[®] or IMHM-C Endorsement[®] available to provide this service. The Master's prepared IFP reflective supervision/consultation provider must receive reflective supervision/consultation while providing supervision to others</p>
Professional References	<p>Total of three references:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One from current program/work supervisor, teacher, trainer, or consultant, and 2. One from person providing reflective supervision/consultation, and 3. One from another supervisor, teacher, trainer, consultant, or colleague. <p><i>Please note: At least one reference must come from someone Endorsed[®] as Infant Family Practitioner, or Infant Mental Health Practitioner or Infant Mental Health Mentor. Referees must be familiar with the applicant's capacity to implement infant mental health principles and practice</i></p>
Code of Ethics & Endorsement [®] Agreement	Signed
Documentation of Competencies	Application will document that competencies have been adequately met through course work, in-service training, and reflective supervision/consultation experiences. Written examination is not required for applicants seeking Infant Family Practitioner Endorsement [®] .
Professional Membership	Membership in AAIMH WA

Continuing Endorsement® Requirements

Education & Training	<p>Minimum of 15 clock hours per year of relationship-based education and training pertaining to the promotion of social-emotional development in the context of family and other caregiving relationships, of children during the prenatal period up to 5 years of age, including the principles and practices of infant mental health (e.g., regional training, related course work at colleges or universities, infant mental health conference attendance, participation in competency-based activities such as professional reading group, community practice, mentorship group). Documentation of training hours submitted with membership renewal.</p> <p>For those who are Masters prepared who earn an IFP Endorsement® and provide reflective supervision/consultation to others, at least three of the hours of specialised training must be about reflective supervision/consultation</p>
Professional Membership	Annual renewal of membership in AAIMH WA
Reflective Supervision	It is required that all professionals endorsed as Infant Family Practitioners receive a minimum of 12 hours of reflective supervision or consultation annually.



Photo © Alamy Stock