

# Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc.

Affiliates Corner

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The Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc. was formed out of a task force on early childhood development sponsored by our Child Health and Development Institute in 2002. We followed the suggestions from WAIMH for establishing an affiliate and developed By-laws, formed a Board of Directors, established membership dues, and held our first meeting and conference in 2004. We became a 501c3 (US non-profit) organization in 2009 and adopted the Competency Guidelines for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health® in 2009 from Michigan-AIMH. In 2010 we engaged a professional to help us develop a Business Plan following the strategic plan developed by the Board and hired a part time Endorsement Coordinator.

Our membership has grown from 30 to 180 persons from diverse professional and educational fields. Our contact list now numbers 350.

Prior to 2010 we held two professional development activities a year with 80-100 people attending. Since adopting the Competency Guidelines and offering the Endorsement our educational activities have increased. With funding specifically for workforce development we have offered a series of training on infant/toddler and family development related to the Competencies and introductory sessions on reflective supervision. In 2012 with funding from federal, state and local grants we will be offering another training series and will provide four-year-long reflective supervision opportunities for mixed groups of Part C, Early Head Start and child welfare staff.

In addition to membership and conference registration fees, our key funding streams have been federal, state, and private grants. US Department of Health and Human Services funding has come to CT-AIMH a) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration through a local system of care and state work force collaborative, b) from the Office of Head Start through the State Collaboration Office, and c) from the Children's Bureau through our Department of Children and Families. Each of these federally funded efforts includes CT-AIMH in their work plans. Funding from our State Department of Developmental Services was received to support reflective supervision work this year. A private foundation, the Child Health and Development Institute of the Children's Fund, has been a long-time supporter and source of funds. These collaborations have allowed us to move our workforce development initiatives forward, promoting the Competency Guidelines and Endorsement process.

To promote the Competency Guidelines we established a Competency Planning Consortium in 2008. This group has become the Professional Development Advisory Committee and is currently engaged in a visioning process to plan for growing our Competency and Endorsement Activities.

What has worked to get us to our current status? Connecticut Champions who have spoken on our behalf at critical meetings, financial support from federal grants and state agencies as we have been written into their work plans, private foundation support, learning and sharing through connections with other states and the WAIMH, and a growing interest in and evidence for the importance of early relationships and emotional regulation.

Our challenges in moving forward are growing from a Board of passionate volunteers to a paid staff, expanding our Board to include people with affluence and influence, finding ways to infuse the infant mental health Competencies into the policies and practices of those agencies and programs that provide services to infants/toddlers and their families, and finding multi-year funding sources that support the infrastructure of the Board and committees.

For additional information please see our web site: [www.ct-aimh.org](http://www.ct-aimh.org)