

CROSS AGENCY CHILD COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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Preschool
Development
Grant
Birth through Five

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INTERAGENCY DIRECTORS TEAM, pg. 1

Learn about Georgia's Interagency Directors Team and the strategies they are implementing to support an integrated approach to a child and adolescent System of Care.

GEORGIA ASSOCIATION FOR INFANT MENTAL HEALTH, pg. 2

A brief introduction of the mission and purpose of the GA-IMH along with a highlight of its goals to improve and expand Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health in Georgia.

INTERAGENCY DIRECTORS TEAM

Georgia's Interagency Directors Team (IDT) was convened by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to design, manage, facilitate, and implement an integrated approach to a child and adolescent System of Care (SOC) that informs policy and practice and shares resources and funding. The IDT is made up of over 50 representatives from state agencies and non-governmental organizations that serve children with behavioral health needs. The group works collaboratively to address children's behavioral health needs through monthly meetings, workgroup development, and sharing of resources and information. The IDT provides a platform for partnership building between agency program directors, as well as a forum for leadership to develop and implement shared strategic objectives for the SOC.

Leadership and backbone support for the IDT is provided through the Center of Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health (COE) housed within the Georgia Health Policy Center at Georgia State University. In 2020 the IDT completed a three-year strategic plan which for the first time included the Birth-4 population and strategies supporting Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH). This collaborative and inclusive approach is essential to ensure that services for children and families are supported across the entire continuum of care. To learn more about the work of the IDT and review strategic plan, please visit the [Center of Excellence's](#) website.

ASSOCIATION FOR INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

Earlier this year an Exploratory Board of mental health professionals, chaired by Tracie Topple, LCSW, PhD, and Kathy Bragg, MSW, LCSW, MAC, formed the Georgia Association for Infant Mental Health (GA-AIMH). GA-AIMH's mission is to promote family, infant, and early childhood mental health as foundational to development by

- Raising awareness of young children's social and emotional needs
- Building culturally responsive, preventive and therapeutic professional capacities
- Fostering interdisciplinary and cross-system collaboration by supporting professionals working with and on behalf of infants, young children, and their families
- Advocating for and supporting policies in the best interest of infants, young children, families, and communities.

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) allocated funding for the GA-AIMH, and Laura Lucas, DECAL's Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Director serves as an Exploratory Board Adviser. The GA-AIMH will administer the Infant Mental Health Endorsement® (IMH-E®). Developed by the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health, the IMH-E® has already been adopted in 32 other states. A range of professionals will be eligible to earn the IMH-E®, including early childhood educators, home visitors, early interventionists, DFCS caseworkers, therapists, and others.


The GA-AIMH is also charged with bringing additional training to the state to provide early childhood professionals with opportunities to learn about promoting early childhood social-emotional wellbeing. "This is a big step toward the goal of establishing core competencies for the early childhood workforce in the area of infant early childhood mental health," said Lucas.

GA-AIMH's establishment aligns with the 2019 Georgia House of Representatives Study Committee on infant and toddler social-emotional health, chaired by Representative Katie Dempsey. Recommendations included establishing an agreed-upon set of core competencies for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) and expanding the IECMH workforce.

For more information about GA-AIMH, contact **Mindy Binderman** at mbinderman@gears.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS

**RESCHEDULING:
CACC MEETING**

**11/30/2021
CAFC MEETING**

