



What is Infant and Early Childhood is Mental Health?



Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health is...

The growing capacity of a young child (birth-6) to:

- express and regulate a wide range of emotions,
 - form healthy and secure relationships,
 - and explore the environment to learn,
- which is all done in the context of family, community, and culture.

(ZERO THE THREE, 2011)





NCIMHA

NORTH CAROLINA
INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

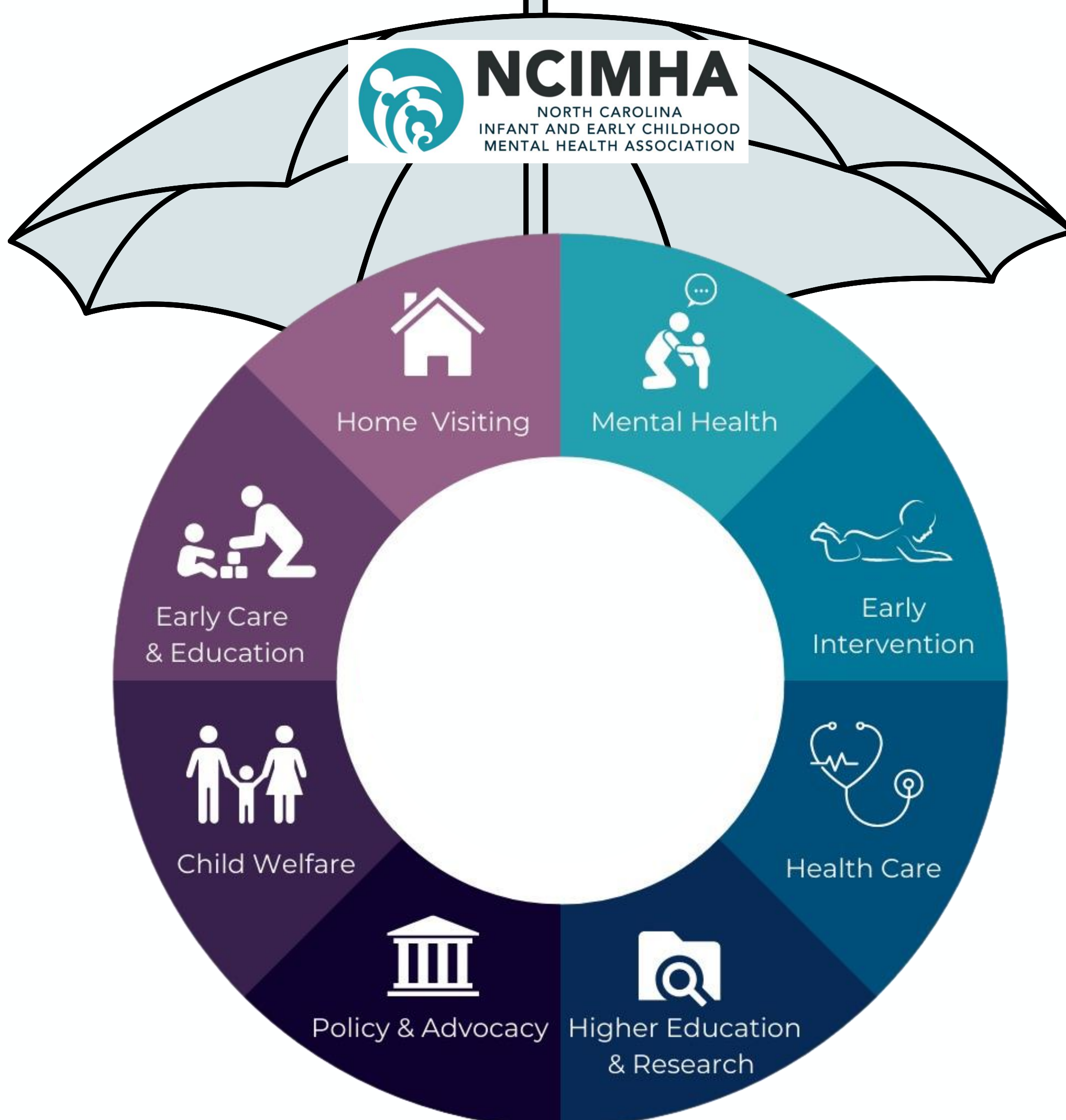
Mission

To promote mental health for children birth through age 5 and expectant parents by collaborating to:

- strengthen early childhood systems and
- developing an effective and supported workforce.

Vision

Every child in North Carolina will grow up in nurturing foundational relationships and supportive environments that provide the basis for emotional, cognitive, and social capacities necessary for a healthy future.



Who Is NCIMHA?

NCIMHA aims to support all professionals across systems in North Carolina who work with, or on behalf of young children ages 0-5 and those who care for them.

Our goal is to train and support professionals to feel competent in their ability to promote healthy infant and early childhood mental health.

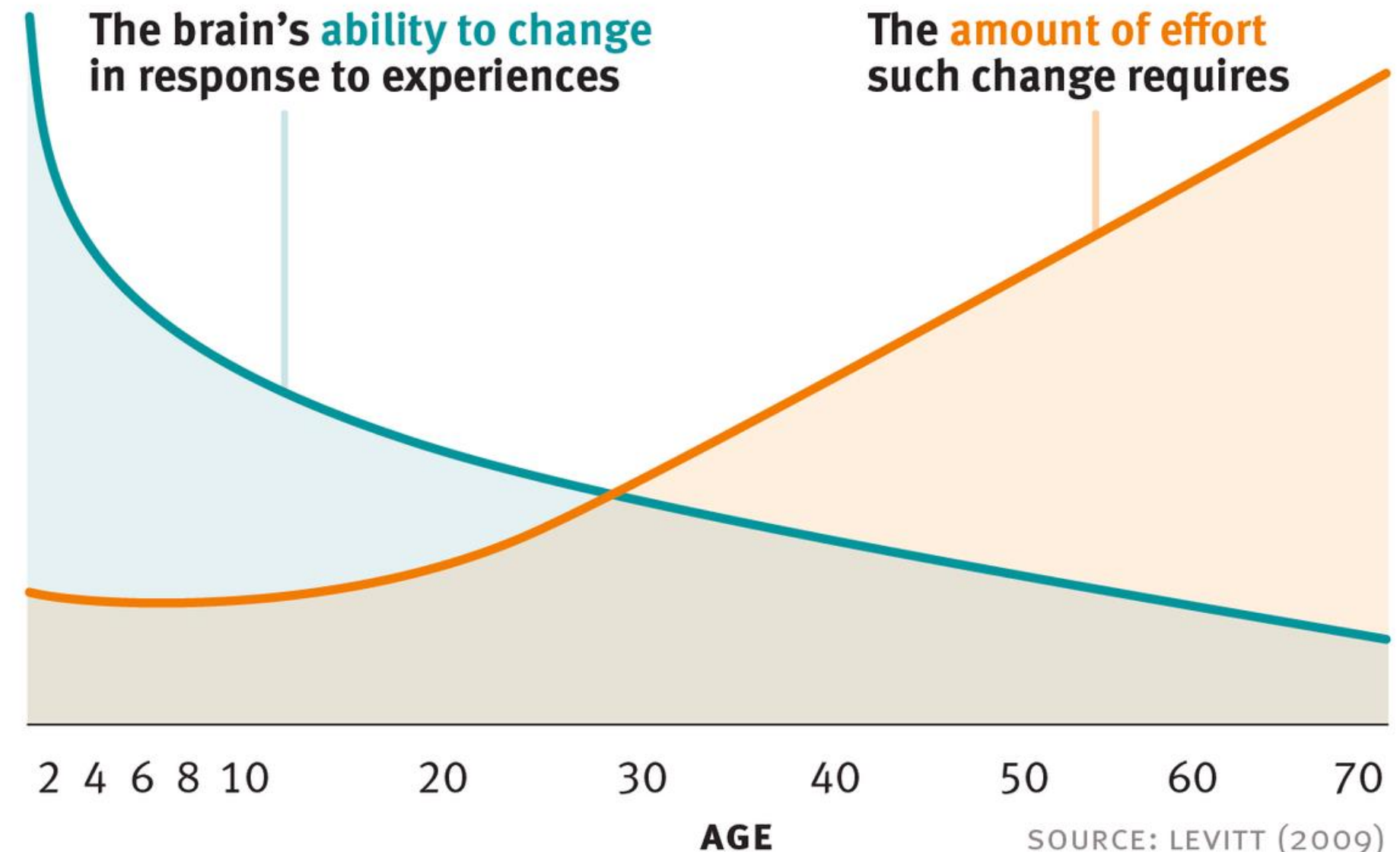
Can we get all these professionals to “speak” the same IEMCH language?

Why does this matter?

40% of children in foster care according to 2021 Child Trends data are ages 0-5. Yet there is currently no training focused on this age group for CPS workers.

- Babies' brains form 1 million+ new neural connections per second.
- Research shows that the first three years of a baby's life are a critical time in which the brain's fundamental architecture is formed.
- This architecture is the foundation for all learning, behavior and health and, if it is disrupted, a child can spend a lifetime catching up.

Just as a weak foundation compromises the quality and strength of a house, adverse experiences early in life can impair brain architecture, with negative effects lasting into adulthood.



SOURCE: LEVITT (2009)

NCIMHA Trains

- Quarterly competency based trainings to support IECMH professionals and can be included when completing an Endorsement application.
- Specialized trainings, for example Infant Mental Health Foundations, can also be offered to local county DSS offices.
- Annual IECMH Conference for cross-sector bridging.
- IECMH Endorsement



What is Endorsement?

The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement® (IECMH-E®) is a credential based on a set of competencies designed to support and enhance culturally sensitive, relationship-focused practice within the framework of infant and early childhood mental health.

One of the first and most comprehensive national efforts to identify best practice competencies at multiple levels, across disciplines.

It offers a pathway to professional development and professional growth opportunities for the infant, early childhood, and family field.



WHY IECMH ENDORSEMENT

Endorsement Benefits

- **For Professionals:** Offers providers a way to demonstrate their expertise in working with this unique population.
- **For Employers:** Signifies that professionals have attained level of understanding and functioning in regards to IMH and IMH practices.
- **For the Field:** Creates a common framework, language, or lens by which all professionals can view and understand the important work being done. Supports the creation of a workforce that is better equipped to create positive outcomes for the pregnant people, infants, toddlers, and families they serve.
- **For Babies & Families:** Endorsement supports the provision of high quality, culturally informed, reflective, and relationship based services.



Who are Endorsement Applicants?

I/ECMH Endorsement is relevant for professionals across disciplines including early care and education, prevention and early intervention, home visitation, medicine, child welfare, mental health, policy, academia, and others.

Endorsement candidates demonstrate their experience in the competency areas documenting the following in a peer reviewed application:

- work experience
- education
- specialized training
- engagement in reflective supervision
- references

In some cases, they may also take a exam.



Upcoming NCIMHA Events

- *4/11/24 11am-1pm Quarterly webinar*
- *2024 Annual Conference Sept 18-19 outside of Asheville at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center*
- *Become a member today!*



*Additional discussion or questions:
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