**Endorsement Steps to Apply:** (The application is online so you will need access to a computer)

1. **Age of Children You Work With:** This Endorsement is for providers in Virginia working with children birth to 36 months.

2. **Determine the Best Category of Endorsement for You:** Please review the following chart by looking at the education and work requirements for each of the 4 categories of Endorsement and find the category that most closely aligns with your education and work experience. Use that category on your application when requested.

   Please refer to the Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines located on the www.ecmhma.org website in the Endorsement section for more detailed information.

   The following chart is meant to be a quick overview of the information you need to determine the Category of Endorsement needed on your application. It does not include all of the requirements needed for Endorsement. All requirements for Endorsement for each Category are explained in detail in the Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health Competency Guidelines.

   ![Endorsement Chart](chart.png)

**Education**

- Official transcripts from any academic coursework including Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's and/or Doctorate degrees OR Official transcript/certificate from Child Development Associate (CDA) program OR 2 years of paid work experience with infants birth to 36 months

**Category I**

- Infant Family Associate (IFA) OR Official transcripts from all degrees earned and from any college credits earned are required.

**Category II**

- Infant Family Specialist (IFS) Typically, for someone whose work experiences come from programs that provide education/support/consultation to early care and education providers or whose intent is primarily to educate parents.

**Category III**

- Infant Mental Health Specialist (IMHS) Typically, for someone with licensure as a Mental Health Clinician &/or whose role includes intervention or treatment of the child’s primary caregiver relationship (i.e. biological, foster, or adoptive parent or guardian).

**Category IV**

- Infant Mental Health Mentor (IMHM) (3 designations to choose from)

  - IV-C Clinical
  - IV-P Policy
  - IV-R/F Research/Faculty

  Typically for practice leaders in policies and programs (Category IV-Policy) or practice leaders who provide reflective supervision or consultation to practitioners in the infant and family field (Category IV-Clinical) or practice leaders in research, evaluation and teaching (Category IV-Research/Faculty).

- The minimum requirement is a BA, BS, BSW, BSN. Other accepted degrees include a MA, MS, MSW, Med, MSN, MAS, PhD, EdD, or PsyD.

- The minimum requirement is a MA, MS, MEd, EdD, MSW, MSN, PsyD, PhD, MD,DO, or other degree specific to one’s professional focus in IMH, University certificate program; &/or course work in areas such as infant development (prenat al up to 36 months), family –centered practice, cultural sensitivity, family relationships & dynamics, assessment & intervention.

- The minimum requirement is a MA, MS, MEd, EdD, MSW, MSN, PsyD, PhD, MD,DO, or other degree specific to one’s professional focus in IMH, postgraduate specialization, or university certificate program.
### Specialized Work Experience

**2 years of paid work experience with infants birth to 36 months.**

- **Minimum 2 years of paid, post-Bachelor's, professional work experience providing prevention and/or early intervention services that promote infant mental health.** Work experience meets this criterion as long as the applicant has:
  - Served a minimum of 10 families where the target of services is an infant/toddler (birth to 36 months), **AND**
  - A primary focus of the services provided is the social-emotional needs of the infant/toddler, **AND**
  - Services focus on the promotion of the relationships surrounding the infant/toddler.

**Minimum 2 years of postgraduate, supervised paid work experiences providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused, infant mental health services.** This specialized work experience must be with both the infant/toddler (birth to 36 months) and his/her biological, foster, or adoptive parent(s) or guardian(s) on behalf of the parent-infant relationship. Infant mental health services include parent-infant/child relationship-based therapies and practices and early relationship assessment and can include concrete assistance, advocacy, emotional support, and developmental guidance. These therapies and practices are intended to explicitly address issues related to attachment, separation, trauma and unresolved grief and losses as they affect the attachment relations, development, behavior and care of the child. The unresolved losses might be from adverse childhood experiences that occurred during the caregivers’ own early childhood or may be more recent for the child. Strong feelings, such as grief and loss, could also be associated with diagnosis or manifestations of a chronic illness, delay or disability.

**Meets specialized work experience criteria as specified for IMHS (Category III) +3 years of postgraduate experience providing IMH reflective supervision/consultation (RS/C).**

Also required are leadership activities at the regional or state level.

**Minimum 3 years of postgraduate experience as a leader in policy &/or program administration related to the promotion of early childhood mental health principles & practices, in the context of family & other caregiving relationships and other leadership activities at the regional or state level.**

### Join the Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health (VAIMH)

The Endorsement requires you are a member of your state’s Association for Infant Mental Health and that you remain a member as part of the renewal requirements. Renewal requirements can be found on the left side of the Endorsement page of the [www.ecmha.org](http://www.ecmha.org) website. To Join VAIMH:

- Click on VA Association for Infant Mental Health in the yellow strip towards the top of the website home page
- Once on the VAIMH page, look for the following on the left side of the page and click on:
  - [Join the VAIMH](http://www.ecmha.org)
- Print the VAIMH application form, complete it and mail it to the Treasurer (name and address is on the VAIMH application form) along with the membership fee. Membership year is from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.
4. **Print This Document** so you have it available with you at your computer to refer to for the remaining steps.

5. **Revise Your Resume**, if needed, so it is up to date. Be sure to do this before you do step #6 so it is ready in your computer to upload when needed.

6. **Register/Apply Online in EASY** (Endorsement Application System) @ [https://easy.mi-aimh.org/vaimh](https://easy.mi-aimh.org/vaimh)
   a. Go to the ”New Applicant” section of the EASY log-in page. Be sure it says Virginia in the drop down menu.
   
   Click “Register”.  **Here is what it looks like in EASY:**

   ![Registration Section: Fill in requested information. Here is what it looks like in EASY:](image)

   **Registration Section:**  Fill in requested information. Here is what it looks like in EASY:

   1. Fill in your contact information in this section.
   2. Use personal email and phone number. Employer email security walls typically stop EASY emails from entering your work email inbox. Please provide a personal email and phone number for this reason. Also, if you change employers, we have a way to communicate any updates etc.
Education Section: Fill in requested information. Click on the appropriate degree as applicable & type in year highest degree earned and institution.

**EDUCATION KEY:**

- **HS** = High School
- **GED** = General Education Diploma
- **CDA** = Child Development Associate
- **AD** = Associates Degree
- **BA** = Bachelor of Art
- **BS** = Bachelor of Science
- **BSW** = Bachelor of Social Work
- **MA** = Master of Arts
- **MS** = Master of Science
- **MSN** = Master of Nursing
- **MEd** = Master of Education
- **PhD** = Doctor of Philosophy
- **MD** = Medical Doctor
- **PsyD** = Doctor of Psychology
- **JD** = Juris Doctor (Law)
- **IMH** = Infant Mental Health

Work Experience Section: Fill in requested information.

Here is what it looks like in EASy:

**Reflective Supervision Section:** We will assign you a Reflective Supervisor that meets Endorsement requirements. If you have received Reflective Supervision in the past, please fill out the requested information and contact the Endorsement Administrator to verify if it will count toward meeting some or all of the Endorsement requirements.
A resume is required in Virginia. We cannot move forward with your application without a resume.

For how to join VAIMH instructions, please refer to page 2 in “Endorsement Steps to Apply”

For how to identify correct category, please refer to pages 1-2 in “Endorsement Steps to Apply.”

For payment instructions, please refer to page 6 in “Endorsement Steps to Apply.”

Click Here in EASy To Submit
PLEASE NOTE

1. You should receive an email from EASy verifying you have registered/applied in EASy. If you do not receive this within one day of clicking the submit button in EASy, please send an email to Bonnie Grifa, Virginia Endorsement Administrator @ bgrifa@vcu.edu

2. Payment to apply for the Endorsement is needed at the time you register/apply in EASy in order for your Endorsement application to be considered complete and eligible for an Endorsement slot. It is recommended that you send one check covering the cost of both the VAIMH membership fee ($40) and the Endorsement application fee ($50) to the VAIMH Treasurer (name and address can be found on the VAIMH membership application form).

Please fill in the memo section of the check to say: VAIMH membership and Endorsement application fees.

**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Endorsement Application Deadline:** April 15th

**Applicants Notified of Status:** By May 31st

**Assigned Endorsement Advisor Contacts You:** By June 30th

**Assigned Reflective Supervisor Contacts You:** By July 31st

**Endorsement Orientation (Part I, II, III)**

(Monthly 1.5 Hour Webinars)

**Target Date to Submit Endorsement Portfolio:** Typically 1 year for Categories I, II

Typically 2 years for Categories III & IV

*For questions or assistance, please contact the Virginia Endorsement Administrator, Bonnie Grifa, bgrifa@vcu.edu*