



First 5 Alabama®
Alabama Association for Infant and
Early Childhood Mental Health



Alliance for the Advancement of
Infant Mental Health

EASy Applicant Instructions Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement®

Welcome to your Endorsement® journey! You are joining an international group of professionals who have chosen to earn the Endorsement® credential as a way to demonstrate specialization in the infant-early childhood mental health (IECMH) field. Endorsement® was developed in Michigan in 2002 and is now used by 31 state infant mental health (IMH) associations and two international associations. Each of those associations is a member of the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health. Through the Alliance, that means that your Endorsement® is recognized in each of those 33 associations! As of December 31, 2019, over 3,000 professionals had earned Endorsement® worldwide!¹ We are excited to support you on your journey through this process.

General Information

- F5A requires that Endorsement® Applicants begin a minimum of 4-weeks* before an intended submission date. This ensures enough time for receipt and upload of transcripts, completion of reference ratings, and thorough entries related to an Applicant's specialized experiences²
- EASy stands for Endorsement Application System and is a web-based tool for Applicants to create a (paperless) professional Application, or portfolio, for Endorsement®
- Most Applicants spend an average of 6-12 months completing their Endorsement® Application once they have met the specialized work and supervision requirements

Register as a New Applicant

- Go to <https://easy.mi-aimh.org/ffa> and click on Register
- When you are asked for your name, please use your formal name that will be listed on other identification documents. The use of nicknames can cause confusion in the transcript process
- When you are asked for an email addresses, please use a personal email address. Many employer email servers block messages from EASy
- Complete required fields about education, work, and reflective supervision/consultation (RSC) history as relevant to the Endorsement® category for which you are applying
- You have the option to upload your resume or CV; this is not required, however, if you are applying as an Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor (IMHM/ECMHM), it is recommended. You can add your resume/CV to your application at a later date if you choose
- You will be asked for the expiration date of your F5A membership
- Membership in F5A (or another IMH association) is required to begin the Endorsement® process. If you are not yet a member, or need to renew, you can do so [here](#)
 - EASy requires you to enter your expiration date in this format: 12/31/2020
- After you select the Endorsement® category for which you are applying, select "Submit"

¹ To learn more about the IMH associations who are using the Endorsement® credential, visit allianceaimh.org

² An Application does not NEED to be completed within 4-weeks; the process needs to begin at least 4-weeks before submission

- You will be directed to your Shopping Cart. From here you will submit payment for the EASy Registration Fee. You will select whether you wish to pay by credit card, alternate payment (check, purchase order, etc.) or scholarship
- If you wish to pay by credit card, you will be directed to PayPal or Stripe. Please note that you do not need to have a PayPal or Stripe account to pay and that PayPal and Stripe accepts both credit and debit cards
- If you select alternate payment, you will be directed to complete the required fields: Payment Type, Payment Number, Paying Organization, Date Mailed, Applicant(s) covered. You will send payment, along with a note indicating the payment is for EASy Registration Fee, to the association
- If you select Scholarship, you will be prompted to complete the required fields: Scholarship Source, Scholarship Name, Scholarship Details, Date Awarded
- Once you have confirmed payment, you will be directed to a page that confirms you have registered and outlines next steps
- If you leave EASy before selecting a payment option, you will need to re-register on EASy OR pay by check and mail it, along with a note indicating the payment is for the EASy Registration Fee, to the association

Next Steps

- The association will 1) look over your preliminary information to ensure you have selected the Endorsement® category that is appropriate for your specialized experiences, 2) confirm your membership status, and 3) confirm payment of the registration fee
- Once those 3 items are confirmed, your EASy status will be updated to Accepted. At that time, you can expect an email from EASy with a username and password
- You can also expect a separate email from the Endorsement Coordinator with instructions about how to proceed; this email will include MANY important documents and links

Logging In and Asking for Help

- Application completion can be done over time. You can log in and out, saving additions until your Application is ready to submit. You may access your Application from any computer with an Internet connection. Your Application will be stored securely on the server indefinitely unless you ask us to delete it or if your application is inactive for over a year
- Using your EASy-issued username and password, you will log in to EASy and go to Edit Profile (upper right corner). Within Edit Profile, you will:
 - Update your password
 - Set your alerts. We strongly recommend that you check the boxes to receive email alerts when transcripts are uploaded and when references are completed. You will see that the box is already checked for you to receive an email alert when a comment is added
 - Indicate Healthy Families America (HFA) affiliation, if appropriate. Once you earn Endorsement®, you will appear on the national Registry of Endorsed HFA Providers (<https://www.allianceaimh.org/healthy-families-america-registry/>)
- **Comments boxes can be found in each section of the Application. You will use these Comments to communicate with the Endorsement Coordinator. You can ask questions or add additional details/clarification about the information you entered in the corresponding section. The Endorsement Coordinator will also use these Comments as the **primary** way to communicate with you; it is essential that you read and reply to comments in a timely manner**

- For more time-sensitive help requests, click on Support in the upper left corner. This will bring you to our Knowledge Base. Look through the FAQ's in the Knowledge Base to see if you can find the answer you are looking for. If you cannot, go to My Support Tickets, select "Create support ticket" and give the details of your question. Keep in mind that EASy is not staffed 24 hours/day. It may take up to 1-2 business days to receive a response
- For assistance during regular business hours email First5AL@apcteam.org
- EASy is built in with security features including a time limit. If you have been inactive (meaning you have not moved from one tab to another or selected "Save") for several minutes, a time-out warning will appear. If you continue to remain inactive, you may be asked to log back in again
- PLEASE SAVE EARLY AND OFTEN USING THE SAVE BUTTON FOUND WITHIN EACH SECTION
- SAVE ONE TAB BEFORE MOVING TO THE NEXT
- SAVE BEFORE CREATING A SUPPORT TICKET OR BEFORE ENTERING A COMMENT

Building your Application

- Your Application is broken into sections: Competencies, Agreement, Ethics, Education, Work, Leadership (Mentor only), Trainings, RSC, and References
- When you log in, you will land on your Dashboard. Sections in green indicate you have entered the minimum required. Sections in yellow indicate they have not yet been completed. **Please note that green does not necessarily indicate completed.** For example, 1 specialized work experience is the minimum required, however, **you** may need to list 2 or 3 relevant work experiences to demonstrate that you meet the requirements
- The requirements for Education, Work, Leadership (Mentor only), Training, Supervision, and References can be found at the top of each section; please read the requirements thoroughly
- **Your Application will be reviewed by at least one trained and endorsed Application Reviewer. They will be checking to ensure the information you input into your Application matches the requirements in addition to confirming that you have illustrated fulfillment, through your experiences, of the competencies (as specified in the *Competency Guidelines*[®]) specific to the category of Endorsement[®] for which you are applying**

Competencies

- This page is intended to be used as a "self-study" to help **you** assess your education and in-service training experiences and determine what additional specialized training might be necessary to meet the competencies and earn Endorsement[®]
- When you enter your Training experiences, you will be prompted to select the competencies that were met through your in-service trainings; the competencies selected within the Training tab will appear here, in the Training column
- When you enter your Education experiences, you will be prompted to select the competencies that were met through your coursework; the competencies selected within the Education tab will appear here, in the Education column
- The self-study grid indicates the competencies *you* have selected as being covered, they are not necessarily those that have been or will be approved by an Application Reviewer
- Within Application Summary, the number of training hours that you entered within the Training tab will appear within Training Hours (submitted)
- Within Application Summary, the number of RSC hours that you entered within the Supervision tab will appear within RSC Hours (submitted)

- The Application Summary indicates the hours you have submitted, not necessarily those that have been or will be approved by an Application Reviewer
- You are encouraged to review this “self-study” with an advisor, endorsed colleague, supervisor, mentor or provider of RSC before submitting your Application as an informal review. Someone who has been through the Endorsement® process themselves will have important and beneficial feedback to share with you!
- An Application Reviewer **will not** review this tab as part of their review

While ALL of the *Competency Guidelines*® domains are important, an Application Reviewer will be looking most closely at: Theoretical Foundations (Ways of Thinking), Direct Service Skills (Ways of Doing) and Reflection (Ways of Being). The table below is meant to paint a picture of where Applicants *most often* achieve competencies based on the sections of the Endorsement® application.

Domains	Most Relevant Application Tabs	Next Most Relevant Tab(s)
Theoretical Foundations	Education & In-Service Training	Reference Rating Forms
Direct Service Skills	Education & In-Service Training	Reference Rating Forms & Work
Reflection	Reference Rating Forms & Supervision	Education & In-Service Training

Agreement

- You will be asked to electronically agree to the Endorsement® Agreement. This is legally the same as a written signature

Ethics

- You will be asked to electronically agree to the Code of Ethics. This is legally the same as a written signature
- Upon earning Endorsement®, you will be asked to sign the Code of Ethics annually as part of your Endorsement® renewal

Education

- Instructions for ordering transcripts are at the top of the Education section. Please order your official transcripts **at least 4-weeks** before you plan to submit your Application as your official transcripts must be uploaded within your Application prior to submission
- **You are required to order official transcripts from each college or university where a degree was earned**
- If you did not earn a degree at an institution, but took coursework relevant to the competencies, you may choose to request those official transcripts to be reviewed as well
- You may have a CDA certificate or a graduate certificate in IECMH uploaded in this section either in place of or in addition to transcripts. If your academic program has been crosswalked to the competencies, the crosswalk may also be uploaded to this page
- Please be sure to add each institution from which you are ordering transcripts. Doing so creates a “space” for the Endorsement Coordinator to upload the documents
- There are two components for each education entry: First, you will enter details about the education experience (institution attended, degree earned, year, etc.). Second, you will click on the Edit Competencies icon. This will open a pop-up window showing a grid with the 8 competency domains

- Please select the competencies that you believe were addressed in your coursework. Click on the domain name (e.g., *Theoretical Foundations*) for a drop-down menu of the knowledge/skill areas (e.g., pregnancy & early parenthood; attachment, separation, trauma, & loss; cultural competence). You will be limited to **12 competencies per transcript**. Please indicate the ones you believe were most thoroughly and adequately covered
- If you earned 2+ degrees at the same institution and your transcripts are combined into one document, you may add that institution twice in 2 entries so that the Administrator can upload your transcripts twice, this will allow you to select the 12 competencies met by the first degree and 12 competencies met by the second degree
- Use the *Competency Guidelines*® to find definitions for each knowledge/skill area at the Endorsement® for which you are applying
- If you have had coursework that was specific to IECMH please use the Notes text field within the Education entry
- You may also include training curricula that has been cross-walked with the competencies within the this tab. Examples include Healthy Families America or Pyramid Model. The crosswalk is uploaded here to hold the crosswalk as there is no place to upload a crosswalk within the Training tab of the Application. You DO NOT select competencies within the Education tab. You will also include the crosswalk as a training entry within the Training tab and will select the competencies there
- **When an Application Reviewer reviews your Application, they will be looking to see that you have covered a majority of the competency areas found within the *Theoretical Foundations* and *Direct Service Skills* domains through your education and training experiences. A major gap found in one or more of the competencies found within those domains could be reason for deferral**

Work

- You will enter as many work entries needed to demonstrate fulfillment of the requirements (i.e. if you meet the requirements in one job experience, you do not need to enter additional entries). If your resume is uploaded within the Details tab of your Application, it will be viewable here for an Application Reviewer to view the full breadth of your experiences
- Be sure to fully describe your work experience(s) as it relates to the requirements found at the top of the page; this may be different from the way it is described on a resume
- The text field has a maximum word count of 250
- It is important to keep in mind that the Application Reviewer may not be familiar with the agency you work for, your specific program, or your region of the state. The better narrative you can provide them with, the more thorough and accurate their Application review can be
- Applicants for IMHM-C and ECMHM-C will include the RSC that they have provided to others. These experiences should also be listed within the Supervision section

Leadership

- IMHM/ECMHM Applicants are expected to demonstrate leadership in the promotion and practice of IECMH
- For IMH Endorsement®, practice leader experience must be specific to 0 – 3 year olds
- For ECMH Endorsement®, practice leader experience must be specific to 3 up to 6 years old
- Some leadership activities may be demonstrated through paid work experience, however, there is an expectation that some will also be volunteer

- If your resume is uploaded within the Details tab of your Application, it will be viewable here for an Application Reviewer to view the full breadth of your experiences
- If your resume or CV includes a thorough list of your leadership accomplishments specific to IECMH, you can type, “See resume” upon selecting “Add Entry.” You do not need to enter each accomplishment individually
- Serving as a provider of RSC should be included within the Supervision tab

Training

- Applicants will include as many hours of relationship-based in-service training and/or continuing education as necessary to document that the competencies (as specified in *Competency Guidelines*®) have been met
- For those whose degree is in a field that is unrelated to IECMH, more specialized 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 principles of IECMH
- **Minimum 30 clock hours required**
 - Successful Infant/Early Childhood Family Associate (IFA/ECFA) Applications typically include an average of 40 or more hours of specialized training unless the Applicant has completed coursework specific to the *Competency Guidelines*®
 - Successful Infant/Early Childhood Family Specialist (IFS/ECFS) Applications typically include an average of 50 or more hours of specialized training unless the Applicant has completed coursework specific to the *Competency Guidelines*®
 - Successful Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist (IMHS/ECMHS) typically include an average of 75 or more hours of specialized training unless the Applicant has completed coursework specific to the *Competency Guidelines*®
 - Successful IMHM/ECMHM Applications typically include an average of 75 or more hours of specialized training unless the Applicant has completed coursework specific to the *Competency Guidelines*®
- ECMH-E® Applicants are expected to demonstrate competence in all of the competencies, specifically those found within the *Theoretical Foundations and Direct Service Skills* domains just as an IMH-E® Applicant would. We believe that knowledge specific to 0 – 36 month olds is critical to ECMH-E® because we come to understand better the needs of older children when we more fully understand infancy and toddlerhood. This likely means that an ECMH-E® Applicant will have attended **more** hours of training than an IMH-E® Applicant as they need to have demonstrated competence prenatal up to 6-years years of age
- You may also include a training entry that has been cross-walked with the competencies. Examples include Healthy Families America or Pyramid Model. Upon entering the crosswalk details into the Education section of your application, you will also add those details here in a new training entry. You will select all of the competency areas that are identified from the crosswalk
- You can include conferences in this section, but keep in mind that only one conference can be counted toward the 30-hour minimum
 - Conferences, meaning a day or more of keynote speeches and workshops of 90-120 minutes each, provide opportunities to gain knowledge and skill over a range of topics.
 - Applications should include a balance of broader experiences, like conferences, with more intensive trainings that spend 6 or more hours going in depth on one topic

- For conferences, each workshop and relevant competencies should **either** be listed separately, or the Applicant can use the Comments to list out the workshops attended at one conference
- There are two components for each training entered. First, you will enter details about the individual training (training name, number of hours, dates, sponsor, etc.). Second, you will click on the Edit Competencies icon. This will open a pop-up window showing a grid with the 8 competency domains
 - You are asked to indicate which competencies were covered for the training. Click on the domain name (e.g., *Theoretical Foundations*) for a drop-down menu of the knowledge/skill areas (e.g., pregnancy & early parenthood; attachment, separation, trauma, & loss; cultural competence) and select the ones you believe were covered in the training. You can only select once competency area for each hour of training (e.g. 4-hour training would have no more than 4 competencies selected). **BE SURE TO SELECT Save BEFORE CLOSING THE POP-UP WINDOW**
- Use the *Competency Guidelines*® to find definitions for each knowledge/skill area at the Endorsement® for which you are applying
- **When an Application Reviewer reviews your Application, they will be looking to see that you have covered a majority of the competency areas found within the *Theoretical Foundations* and *Direct Service Skills* domains through your education and training experiences. A major gap found in one or more of the competencies found within those domains could be reason for deferral
 - DC: 0-3R and/or DC: 0 – 5 training covers a large portion of the disorders of infancy and early childhood competency (not required for IFA/ECFA); if you have not attended this training, it is important that you have attended other trainings that cover this competency area in great detail (for example: trainings on atypical development, fetal alcohol syndrome, autism, sensory integration disorders, insecure attachment, etc.) and/or that you have coursework listed within your transcripts that covers this area
 - In order to demonstrate that competency has been met for screening & assessment, IMH-E® Applicants need to have attended trainings that are specific to tools for 0 – 36 month olds, including, but not limited to: DECA I/T, DECA-C, ASQ 3, ASQ SE 2, MCHAT-R, PEDS, PEDS DM, Denver Developmental Screening Test II, IDA, NCAST, etc.
 - In order to demonstrate that competency has been met for screening & assessment, ECMH-E® Applications need to have attended trainings that are specific to tools for 3 up to 6 year olds, including but not limited to: ASQ 3, ASQ SE, DECA-C, PECFAS, the Survey of Well-Being of Young Children, Early Childhood Screening Assessment, Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning Development (CHILD), etc.
 - Often times, intensive trainings that spend 5-6 hours going in depth on a screening and assessment tool are necessary to document competency in this area. Additionally, IFS/ECFS, IMHS/ECMHS, and IMHM/ECMHM Applicants typically attend more than one screening and assessment training to fully demonstrate that competency has been met in this area or they have coursework listed within their transcripts that covers this competency
 - For IMHS/ECMHS and IMHM/ECMHM Applicants, training on adult screening & assessment tools can help lead to competency in screening and assessment as well
 - In order to demonstrate that competency has been met for Observation & Listening, IFS/ECFS, IMHS/ECMHS, and IMHM/ECMHM Applicants are encouraged to attend training(s) on an observation tool, such as the Massie Campbell or PICCOLO**

- Applicants for IMHM-C and ECMHM-C must include a minimum of 15 hours of didactic training about the provision of RSC

Supervision

- Required for IFS, ECFS, IMHS, ECMHS, IMHM-C, & ECMHM-C. Optional for others
- List all relevant RSC experiences that you have participated in along with a description of each
 - Is the provider of RSC endorsed at the appropriate category of Endorsement®? If not, has the association vetted the provider as qualified?
 - Do the total number of hours meet the minimum required?
 - Were the minimum number of hours accrued over a period of time that was at least 12-months and not more than 24-months?
 - Were the hours accrued while providing qualifying work experience?
- Applicants for IMHM-C and ECMHM-C will also list people/groups for whom they have provided RSC. These experiences should also be listed within the Work section

References

- We encourage you to download, print, and review a hardcopy of the reference rating form, specific to your category of Endorsement®, before asking reference raters to complete these on your behalf. Additionally, it is valuable to share the reference rating form with your reference raters before you ask them if they are willing to be a reference on your behalf. You can find the forms here: <https://www.allianceaimh.org/endorsement-requirements-guidelines>
- A total of three professional reference ratings are required. The requirements for who needs to complete a reference rating for your category of Endorsement® will be found at the top of the page. At least one must come from an individual who meets Endorsement® requirements as an IFS/ECFS, IMHS/ECMHS, IMHM/ECMHM OR is familiar with the *Competency Guidelines*® and vetted as approved by the association
- Please use a personal email address for your reference raters so that the email is not blocked. Once you have entered the required information for the reference raters, you will select "Save." When you are ready to have the reference form sent to the reference raters, you will select "Send." You cannot go back and change an entry upon selecting "Send"
- The raters will receive an email from EASy with a link to complete the reference rating form in a secure, on-line format. There are no paper forms to fill out or mail. Tell your reference raters that the email will say that it is from "EASy server." It will not say that it is from the association
- For each reference, you will be asked whether or not you waive your access to the completed form. Some reference raters will only agree to complete the form if they know the Applicant has waived this right and therefore their ratings are confidential
- Please do not complete this section TOO early in the process. You want to ensure that your reference raters know you well enough to complete the form. Also, reference rating forms are only valid for one year from the date completed
- Once the reference has been complete, you will see an indication that it has been received even though you cannot read the form itself

Submitting the Application

- Once you are satisfied that you have entered all your relevant experience, all three of your references have been completed, all of your transcripts have been uploaded and your association membership is up-to-date, click the Submit button on your Dashboard; the

Submit button will not appear until the EASy system believes that your Application is complete. If you do not see the Submit button, scroll to the bottom of your Dashboard. You will see a list of what is missing

- Once you select Submit, you will be directed to your Shopping Cart. From here you will submit payment for the Endorsement Processing Fee. You will select whether you wish to pay by credit card, alternate payment (check, purchase order, etc.) or scholarship
- If you wish to pay by credit card, you will be directed to PayPal or Stripe. Please note that you do not need to have a PayPal or Stripe account to pay and that PayPal and Stripe accepts both credit and debit cards
- If you select alternate payment, you will be directed to complete the required fields: Payment Type, Payment Number, Paying Organization, Date Mailed, Applicant(s) covered. You will send payment, along with a note indicating the payment is for Endorsement Processing Fee, to the association
- If you select Scholarship, you will be prompted to complete the required fields: Scholarship Source, Scholarship Name, Scholarship Details, Date Awarded
- Once your Application is submitted and you've paid the fee, you will receive a "Receipt of Complete Application" email from the Endorsement Coordinator. This email will confirm that your Application has been received and will tell you the date of when the decision regarding the results of your Application review will be made

Application Review

- The Endorsement Coordinator will find at least one Application Reviewer for your Application. The Reviewer, who is endorsed and trained to evaluate Endorsement® Applications, will review of your Application. They will handle your information confidentially and must come to a consensus decision
 - IFA/ECFA & IFS/ECFS Applicants receive an Endorsement® decision after at least one Application Reviewer examines and approves the Application
 - IMHS/ECMHS & IMHM/ECMHM Applicants move on to the written Endorsement® exam after at least one Application Reviewer examines and approves
- The Endorsement Coordinator will relay any messages the Reviewers have regarding your Application to you
- You will hear back from the Endorsement Coordinator after Reviewers have reached consensus, by the deadline listed within the "Receipt" email