



TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR  
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

March 2012

# TAIMH NEWS

Texas Association for Infant Mental Health

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 2012 Brazelton Conference was a wonderful learning experience. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Gina Lebedeva from the University of Washington Institute for Learning and Brain Science ( I-LABS) shared with us their research on human learning focusing on 0-5 year olds. Their work tells us that the quality of early care, high or not, sets a “trajectory of lifelong learning.” The brain physically changes in response to experience most efficiently in the first 3 years of life.

We believe we should be looking at changes to child care licensing under the lens of current research. The ratios and group size are being discussed by the Department of Family and Protective Services –right now and we are urging them to reduce the ratios so children between 0-3 being cared for outside the home can experience nurturing care. Presently 1 caregiver can care for 5 babies 12-17 months or 9 babies 18-23 months or 11 two-year olds. In the language of Child Care Licensing, “licensing does not believe that the current ratios ... and group size... adequately protect the health and safety of children in some age ranges.”

Current research tells us not only are they not safe physically, but we are missing a critical time to help them be the happiest and the smartest they can be. How can one person talk to, play with, hold, and connect to nine babies?

Now is the time to have our voices heard. The current ratio and group size standards do not protect Texas children. Texas is responsible for setting the standards and they should be modified to at least the recommendations of Child Care Licensing in 2010.

Best to all of you,

Susan Craven



Susan Craven  
Executive Director

## SAVE THE DATE:

- April 27, 2012  
Food For Thought  
Session 3
- May 25, 2012  
Food For Thought  
Session 4
- September, 2012  
TAIMH Annual  
Meeting



### BABYCONNECTIONS AUSTIN

Baby Connections, Austin Area Chapter of TAIMH, has had several very educational and interesting presentations this quarter, including:

1/18/12 Mr. Rudy Rodriguez of the Austin Independent School District who presented AU101: Autism Awareness.

2/15/12 Margery Segal spoke on Movement and Meaning: Integrating Developmental Movement Education

and Bonding into Sessions with Infants, Toddlers, and Parents

3/21/12 Damaris Nicholson, Disproportionality and Disparities Specialist, spoke on Disproportionality and Disparities in Multiple Systems.

Our April presentation will be by Naijean Bernard-Onwere on Attachment in Foster Children.

Approximately 25 professionals and

caregivers continue to attend meetings on the third Wednesday of the month from 9 to 10:30 am at 5207 Airport Blvd.

This month we had visitors from El Paso who are starting Infant Mental Health Consultation in childcares and preschools in their area.

Please join us!

Melanie Walter-Mahoney

### ALAMO ALLIANCE FOR NUTURING YOUNG CHILDREN



The new San Antonio area chapter is now the Alamo Alliance for Nurturing Young Children: A Chapter of the Texas Association for Infant Mental Health.

A slate of nominees is being presented to members and will be voted in by the next meeting which is Tuesday, March 27, 2012 at Boys Town Texas, 503 Urban Loop, San Antonio.

The Alamo Alliance is delighted to welcome Dr. Ken Graves to San Antonio and we look forward to his expertise and commitment as we develop training and activities to benefit our youngest children.

-Kathy Fletcher and Fred Cardenas

### GREATER HOUSTON CHAPTER LAUNCHES!

On February 29th, Houston-area infant mental health professionals and advocates convened at Ninfa's Mexican Restaurant near the Galleria to celebrate the launch of the **Greater Houston Association for Infant Mental Health (GHAIMH)**.

The event attracted a variety of professionals from numerous disciplines and offered attendees an opportunity to network while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and drinks. G.H.A.I.M.H. Board Members Barbie Brashear, Teri Jackson and Aaron Carrara were on-hand to welcome participants and offer a glimpse into the G.H.A.I.M.H.'s direction. "We are excited about the launch of the Greater Houston Chapter because it will serve as a much-needed support for professionals working with

Houston's infants, toddlers and their families," said Barbie Brashear President, G.H.A.I.M.H. "We are confident our presence in Houston will help build a greater awareness of the critical importance of the first three years of life."

The chapter has plans to offer regularly scheduled meetings, networking and professional development opportunities, mini conferences and more for both members and non-members alike.

The Greater Houston Association for Infant Mental Health is housed at the Center in Houston for Infant Learning and Development (C.H.I.L.D.). For additional information on G.H.A.I.M.H. please visit [www.DiscoverCHILD.org](http://www.DiscoverCHILD.org).



Heather McCracken, Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston, and Mitzi Bartlett, President-Elect, Texas AEYC



## TAIMH FINISHES ROUND ONE OF TRAINING FOR HOUSTON HOGG GRANT



*TAIMH Child Care Training Group # 1 in Houston*

The Texas Association for Infant Mental Health was the recipient of a \$39,411 grant from the Ima Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. The grant was created to train adults who work with children and youth in the Houston area but are not mental health professionals. TAIMH's funding is allocated to train two groups of 30 child care providers and 15 staff (CPS, CASA, attorneys) working in the Harris County Child Court project.

Each group will receive 6 days of 4-hour trainings, for a total of 24 hours of training on infant mental health. In order to participate in the trainings, each provider and advocate must apply and demonstrate a commitment to 100% training attendance, as well as a desire to pursue TAIMH's Endorsement as proof of their increased knowledge and competency in working with infants, toddlers and their families.

The first groups of child care providers and Child Court staff have already completed the training series, with overwhelmingly positive feed-

back and great assessment results from both groups. The child care training group finished up their trainings with Susan Meriwether in January. Here is just a sample of their feedback:

- \* "The training made me aware of areas where I needed to improve and gave me the skills I need to teach my coworkers and communicate with parents."
- \* "I wish every mother and worker in child care could attend this type of conference."
- \* "The topics we have discussed have been eye-opening and very relevant. I have taken back information I learned in this training to my classroom and I believe it has made me a better brain builder."

The group has already begun to work toward earning Endorsement as Infant Family Associates, with the help of some of our amazing volunteer advisors.

The Child Court staff just finished their last training with Joshua Brown in mid-March. TAIMH is excited to report that many of the attendees have decided to pursue reflective supervision to continue their professional development and work to-

ward Endorsement as Infant Family Specialists. Here are some of their comments about the training and how it has influenced and changed their work with families:

- \* "I liked that Josh used real life examples to help us understand how to assess the mental health of young children on many different levels—it brought a different understanding to my work."
- \* "I have learned how to look for different cues while I am watching a parent/child visit."
- \* "We are learning a lot to confirm how important it is for our 3 and under kids to get extra intervention and how differently we need to approach our infant/toddler cases than the way we have in the past."

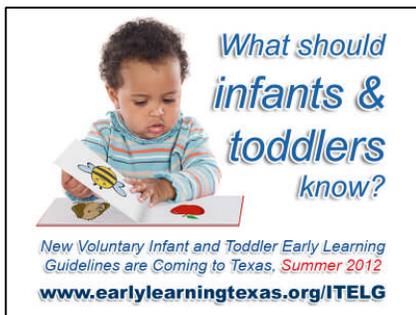
TAIMH is excited about these groups of professionals using the new knowledge they gained from these trainings in the different settings they employ with families and very young children. We are also pleased that these groups will be involved in our new Houston chapter—GHAIMH: Greater Houston Association for Infant Mental Health!

### Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

SERVICES, RESEARCH, POLICY & EDUCATION



# INFANT/TODDLER EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES ARE FINALLY COMING TO TEXAS!



What should Infants and Toddlers know and be able to do? The question itself is difficult to comprehend, although 33 states have asked and answered it

already, and Texas is currently on its way! The Texas Early Learning Council is working with the National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative at Zero to Three and a broad group of Texas-based stakeholders,

including Sarah Crockett (TAIMH's Education Coordinator), to develop new Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines (ITELG) for the state of Texas.

The new Texas ITELG will improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers inside and outside the home by supporting and guiding more appropriate practices for early care and education professionals who work with our youngest children. With clearly defined

statements on what infants and toddlers should developmentally know and be able to do, the ITELG will support the healthy development of infants and toddlers because they will positively influence the design of professional development strategies, parent engagements, administrative planning, key materials, and curricula. Be on the lookout for more information—Coming soon!

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT 2012: SEATS ARE FILLING UP FAST!

**KERA, 3000 Harry Hines Blvd. Dallas, TX 75201. Sign in is from 11:00am to 11:30am with the program running until at 1pm.**

**April 27, 2012**  
**Session 3: The Impact of Mental Illness on Developing Relationships**  
by Dr. Callie Rogers Emery M.D. Dr. Emery will discuss the classifications for parental mental illness, disruptions of the parent-child relationship, and emotional containment for interventionists supporting these relationships.

**MAY 25, 2012**  
**Session 4: Environmental Risk of Poverty and Culture**

by Dr. Tyler Droege, Psy.D. and Dr. Laura Vogel  
Offering practical applications for working with families and children with multiple socio-cultural factors. Addressing the following questions: What, if any, are socio-cultural factors that impact child and infant mental health? What types of socio-cultural factors are most often seen in practice? What are the implications of these factors? and Helpful tips, applications or solutions for working with these families.

*Each session covers 1.5 competencies toward the TAIMH Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health. For each session, please choose 1.5 from the following competencies: Pregnancy and Early Parenthood, Family Relationships & Dynamics, Attachment Separation & Loss, Mental & Behavioral Disorders in Adults and Cultural Competence.*



Sign up online at [www.taimh.org/food-for-thought-2012](http://www.taimh.org/food-for-thought-2012).  
**\$15 for members, \$20 for non-members**  
Lunch is provided.



## ENDORSEMENT GETS EASY (ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION SYSTEM)

*IMPROVING THE ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION PROCESS FOR EVERYONE!*

### What is endorsement?

The purpose of TAIMH Endorsement® is to recognize and document the development of infant and family professionals by examining their infant mental health learning and work experiences, creating an organized system of culturally sensitive, relationship-based professionals. Endorsement verifies an applicant has attained a specified level of education, participated in specialized in-service trainings, worked with guidance from mentors or supervisors, and acquired knowledge to promote the delivery of high quality, culturally sensitive, relationship-focused services to infants, toddlers, parents, other caregivers and families.

Originally developed in Michigan by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, the Endorsement System is meant to honor and recognize people working in a variety of settings for the work they do and the competence they have achieved in their professional roles. This includes all infant and family professionals, from the child-care providers who spend significant amounts of time raising Texas babies, to those who provide infant-parent psychotherapy to the most at-risk families in our communities. Each endorsement designation (level) has a different set of competencies associated with it, just as each

profession has different responsibilities and plays different roles in the lives of babies. The Endorsement System has been approved by Zero to Three, is nationally recognized, and is honored in other states. Endorsement by the Texas Association for Infant Mental Health verifies each applicant has attained a specified level of functional understanding based on a set of competencies which have been identified and agreed upon by hundreds of professionals, service providers, faculty members and policy makers in the infant, young child and family field. Once an individual has earned endorsement, he or she is required to document 15 hours of continuing education in the field of infant mental health in order to remain endorsed.

### What is the new EASY?

This secure, web-based software has been designed to accept preliminary applications and professional portfolios; facilitate communication between and among applicant, Endorsement Coordinator, Endorsement Advisor, and portfolio reviewers; and coordinate portfolio reviews. It has been created with following goals in mind:

- a) Reduce the amount of time required to manage Endorsement portfolios
- b) Increase the efficiency of portfolio reviews
- c) Include portfolio reviewers and advisors from across the state, even from rural/isolated regions
- d) Decrease the amount of paper

required and stored

- e) Create a more user-friendly and streamlined process for all users with fewer errors
- f) Allow advisors to readily access an applicant's application progress and increase ease of communication between advisors and applicants

This system allows Endorsement applicants to:

- ◇ Compile the professional portfolio electronically. Once the user creates an account, he/she can log in and add to the portfolio, save revisions, and come back as many times as necessary to complete the portfolio.
- ◇ Communicate with the Endorsement Coordinator and/or Endorsement Advisor using in-system messaging.
- ◇ Receive automated reminders about incomplete sections as deadlines approach and email alerts when they receive a message from the Coordinator or Advisor.
- ◇ Utilize HELP tools that can supply definitions of terms, links to documents, links to FAQs, and access to technical support.
- ◇ Make payments electronically

This system will drastically improve the Endorsement system in Texas and we could not be happier to be moving to this advanced, user-friendly application process! Look for more information about the transition over the next few months!



## THE 2012 INFANT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY AWARD AND CONFERENCE WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!!

This year's title was **Securing the Future for Our Babies**, and our 243 attendees gained a lot of knowledge and learned a few new skills on how to do just that! Our amazing roster of speakers shared incredible insight and knowledge with us, as well as a few fun stories. We had 26 fabulous workshops, a fabulous policy luncheon with guest speaker Jason Sabo and lots of opportunities for networking and resource sharing. We were lucky to have a national reach this year, with groups from New Mexico, Oklahoma and Idaho in attendance.

Dr. Gina Lebedeva, from the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences (I-LABS) at the University of Washington, gave one of the most talked about presentations of the entire conference, entitled "Learning, Language & Love: Connecting the Keys to a Strong Start in Life". Her interesting research on how everyday interactions shape infants' capacity to learn was new information for most participants and Dr. Lebedeva actually went over time because so many conference attendees had questions. We were also fortunate to have Dr. Brazelton and Dr. Sparrow present on the Newborn Behavioral Assessment Scale and on the many lessons and observations they have made over the

course of so many years of infant mental health practice. It was truly touching to see Dr. Brazelton light up as he shared his memories of families he worked with and impacted. Dr. Tom and Jennifer Brazelton were also fabulous featured speakers, sharing their knowledge and expertise about infant mental health practices and principles in the hospital environment.

One of the most well-received speakers of the conference was Jason Sabo, our policy luncheon speaker. Jason presented on the Texas legislature, the current budget crisis in Texas and how participants can make a change in policy without formal advocacy training. He shared cutting-edge advocacy techniques (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and was able to entertain the audience while sharing his 5 simple steps to help participants organize themselves to achieve legislative victory. Jason got rave reviews for his talk, with one participant writing "Yes! Yes! Yes! OMG! Priceless! Engaging! Invaluable information for becoming involved immediately!"

One of the most heartwarming parts of the conference was awarding Judge John J. Specia, Jr. as this year's Infant Mental Health Advocacy Award winner. Judge Specia was the 11th winner of the Infant Mental Health Advocacy Brazelton Award. Since 2009, Judge Specia has



Dr. Brazelton, Dr. Tom and Jennifer Brazelton, and Dr. Gina Lebedeva



Judge Specia , 2012 Brazelton Award Winner and Dr. Brazelton



## BRAZELTON CONFERENCE CONTINUED



served as the Jurist in Residence for the Children's commission of the Supreme Court of Texas. In addition to his private law practice, he works tirelessly on the many and varied projects directed by the Commission by meeting with judges, legislators, child welfare officials, and countless stakeholders to promote the work of the Children's Commission. Judge Specia is recognized statewide as the driving force behind successful projects which focus on assisting courts and identifying best practices to improve outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being of Texas' most vulnerable children and families. He is a lifetime advocate for the best for Texas children. We were so happy that he could be in attendance to personally accept the award from Dr. Brazelton himself.

The overall feedback was very

encouraging and we will use it to help us build our next conference in 2014. One of the participants from New Mexico wrote, "Our organization only provides funds for us to attend one conference per year. I am so very happy that I chose this conference...I will definitely be back!" Another attendee wrote, "The whole conference was great. Keynotes and breakout sessions were excellent. I can't say there was a highlight because every session I attended was quality. TAIMH was also very attentive to our needs with food, breaks, drinks, etc. and the hotel staff was helpful and polite as well. Thanks so much for a great experience!" We are so thankful to our of our conference attendees for choosing our conference with so many fabulous options available and with so little training funds.

We appreciate you so much!

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