

# Welcome!

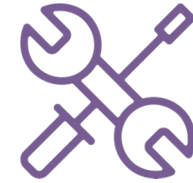
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# Unpacking Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH)

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## Event Materials

Visit the **event page** to download a copy of the presentation slides and any additional resources.



## Continuing Education

This webinar has been approved to offer continuing education credit. Please stay tuned for more information!



# OneOp

## Readiness. Knowledge. Network.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy,  
U.S. Department of Defense under Award Number 2019-48770-30366.

# Today's Presenters

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**Dr. Kelly Bost**

Professor  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



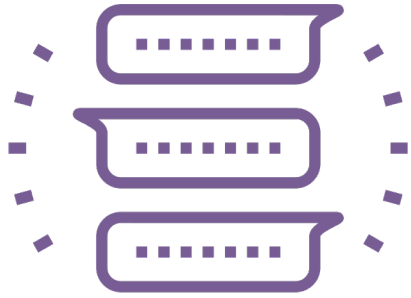
**Samantha Iwinski, M.S.**

Ph.D. Student, Graduate Research Asst.  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

# Today's Objectives

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1. Define IECMH and highlight its importance for healthy development
2. Specify how to recognize signs of healthy and unhealthy IECMH
3. Identify and discuss approaches to improve IECMH across diverse family contexts and situations



# Let's Chat!

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How do you describe infant and early childhood mental health?

# What is IECMH?

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- IECMH refers to healthy social and emotional development from birth to age 5
- This is a very important time period because of rapid growth in all developmental domains
- What are some core components of IECMH?

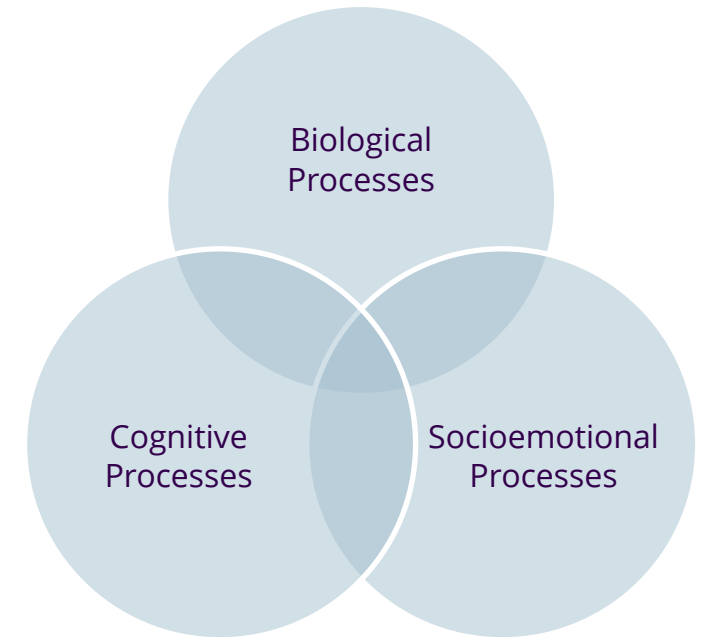


*Developing abilities to:*

Form close and secure interpersonal relationships

Recognize, express and regulate emotions

Explore and learn from the environment



# Mental Health Concern vs Developmental Delay

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Socioemotional milestones are at the core of IECMH but overlap with other milestones

Developmental period important

Perceptions and thought vs learning/cognitive ability

Consider context and whole picture

- Any physical illness?

- Behavior across childcare and home settings

Communication with parents about concerns

# Poll



What percentage of young children in the US experience a mental health condition?

- a. 1-10%
- b. 10-20%
- c. 20-30%
- d. 30% or higher

# 10- 16%

Between 10-16% of young children experience mental health conditions including PTSD and anxiety.

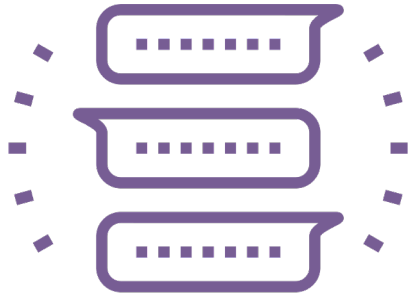
# 22%

For babies in poverty, that number is even higher—22 percent.

To view this video, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Pcr1Rmr1rM>



Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Pcr1Rmr1rM>



## Let's Chat!

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What behaviors did you notice when the father had a still face?

How can early childhood professionals use this information?

# The Importance of IECMH for Optimal Development

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Current research shows that early indicators of mental health impact later:

- School readiness/Executive Function
- Self-Regulation
- Peer Relationships
- Depression/Anxiety
- Physical Health

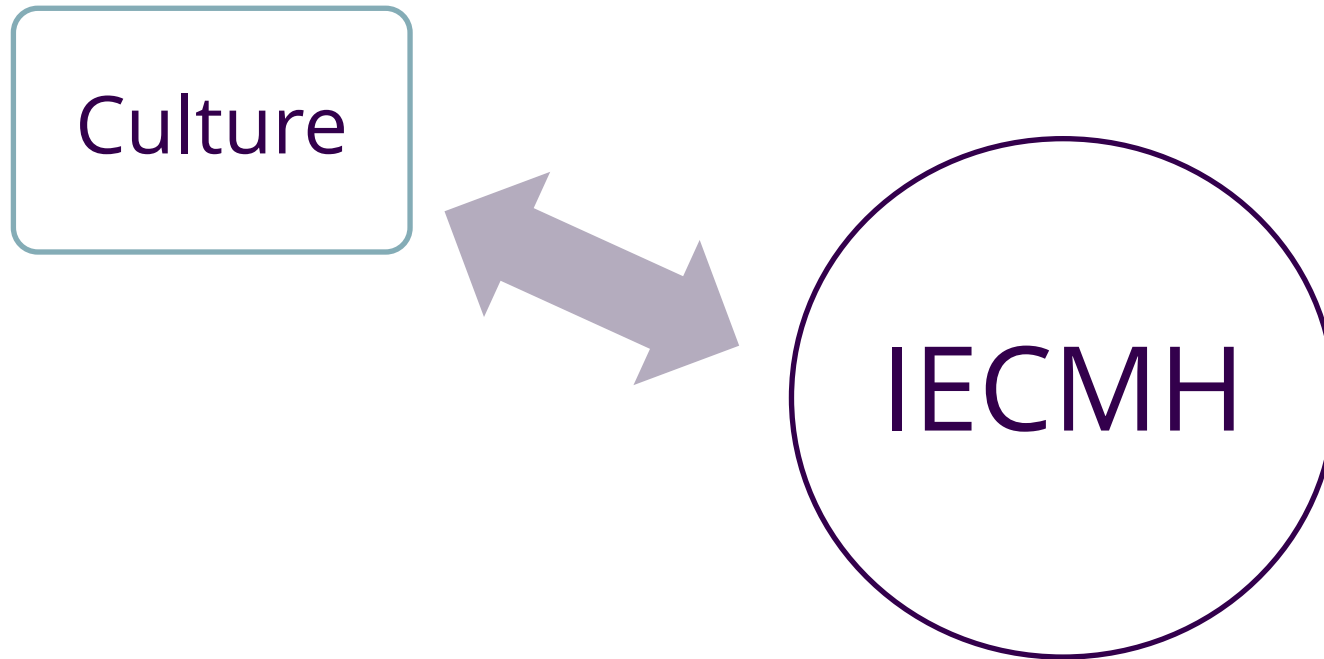


# What factors impact IECMH?

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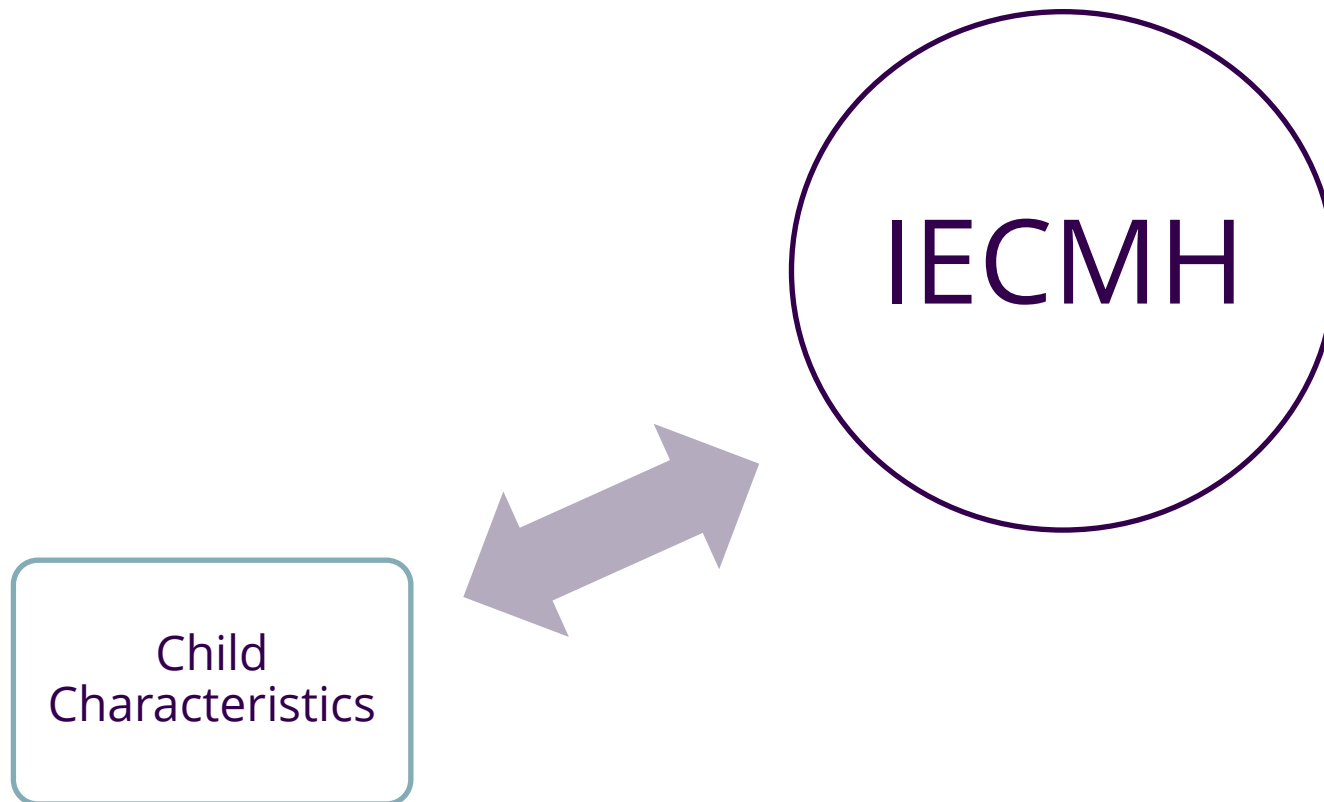
# Pathway #1: Culture and IECMH

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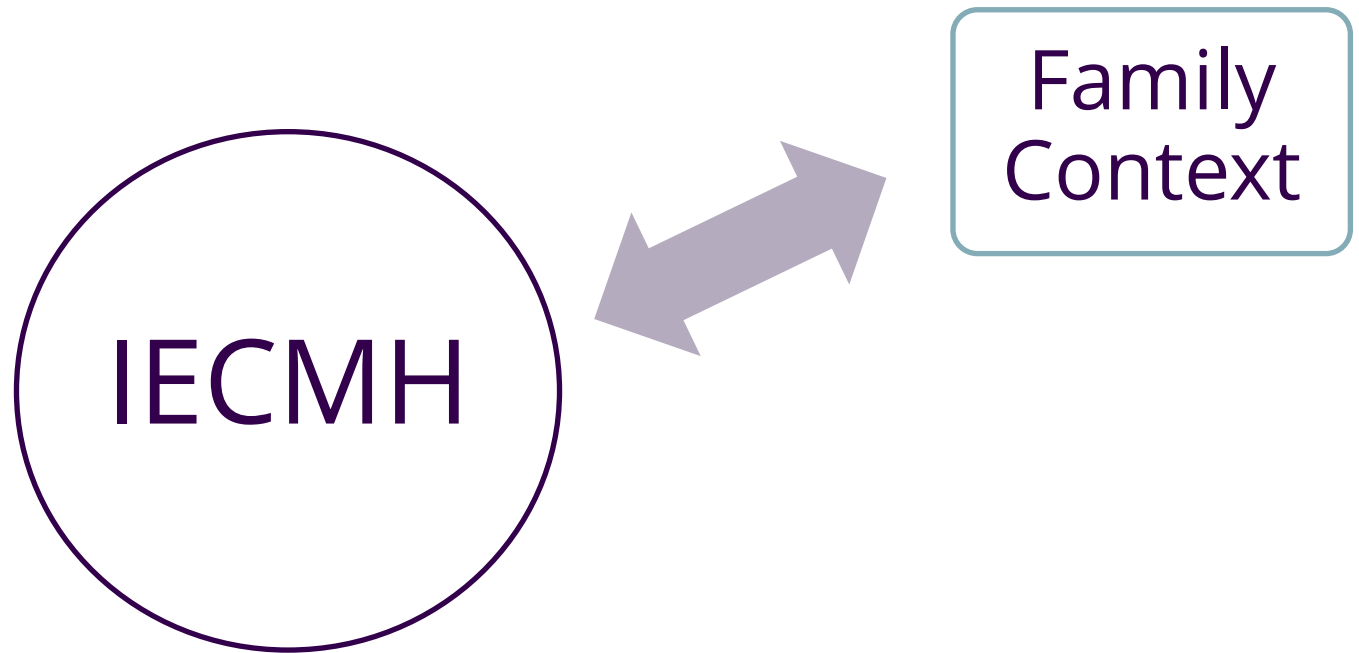
# Pathway #2: Child Characteristics and IECMH

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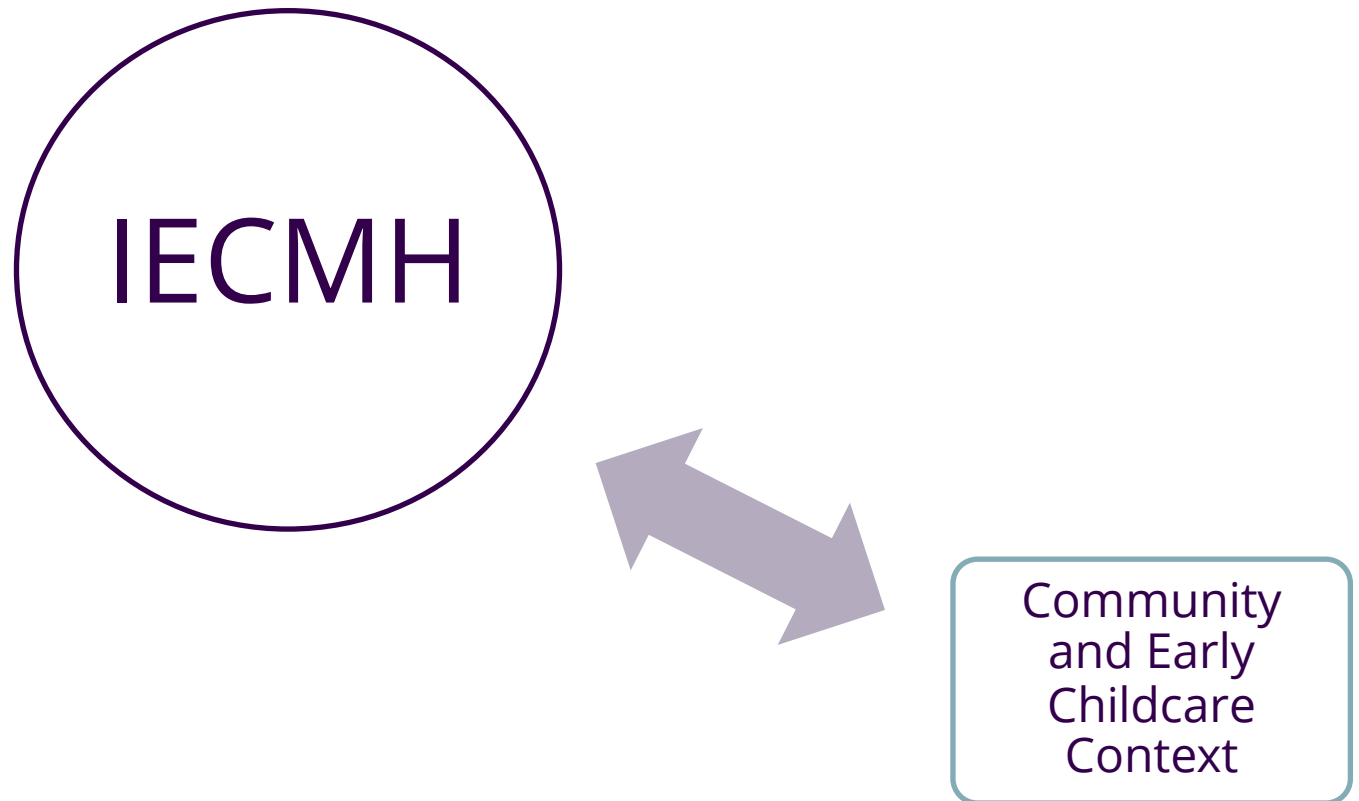
# Pathway #3: Family Context and IECMH

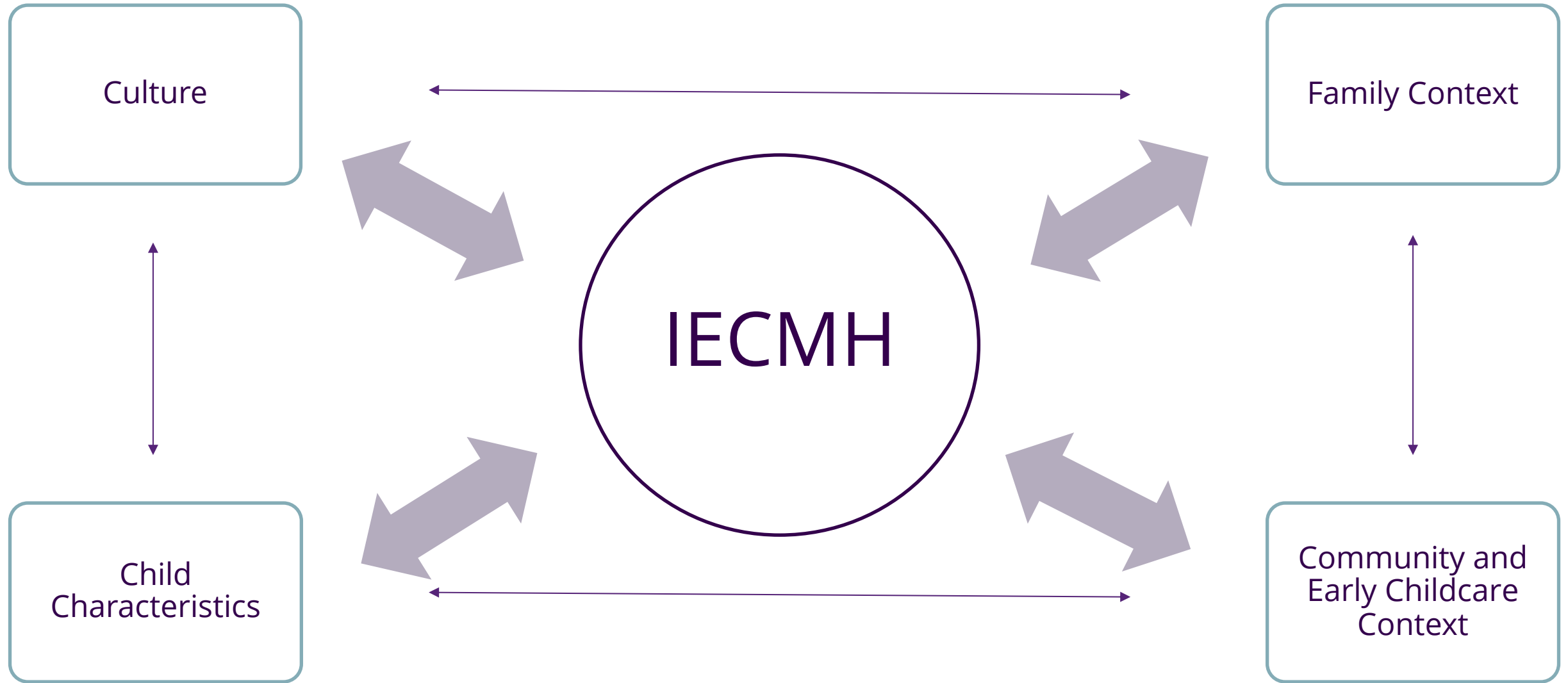
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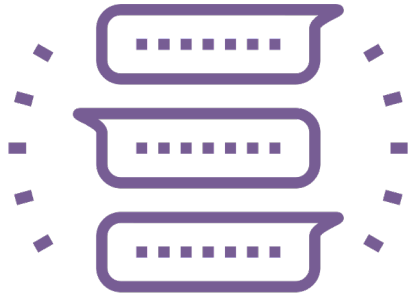


# Pathway #4: Community Context and IECMH

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# Let's Chat!

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Got questions?

# The Role of Early Childhood Professionals

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Collaborate with  
and support  
families



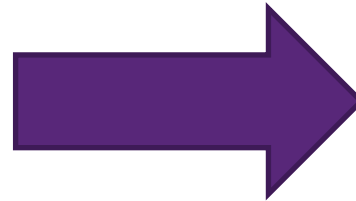
Shared  
responsibility to  
promote health  
behaviors



Expand  
knowledge to  
foster  
development

# Early Child Care Experiences & Attachment

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# Poll



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What percentage of your day do you spend addressing strong emotions from the children you are working with?

- a. 1-15%
- b. 15-30%
- c. 30-45%
- d. 50% or higher

# Signs of Healthy IECMH

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## Birth to 12 Months

- Make eye contact
- Interested in surroundings
- Enjoys attention & responds (e.g., smiles)
- Attempts to communicate (e.g., facial/vocal expressions)
- Copies gestures
- Cries to get needs met
- Uncomfortable with unfamiliar people

## One to Two Years

- Strong attachment to primary caregivers
- Begins to develop self-regulation skills
- Has tantrums, but can also manage strong feelings with some capacity
- Demonstrate an understanding of other people's feelings
- Seeks to do things independently

## Two to Three Years

- Continues to build relationships with others
- Enjoys being with others besides primary caregivers
- Copy what others say and do (e.g., mimics appropriate behavior that has been modeled)
- Begin turn-taking and sharing
- Expresses self with words

# Signs of Unhealthy IECMH

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Resists holding and/or withdraws from primary caregivers

Is difficult to comfort and/or cries inconsolably

Has sleeping or eating challenges

Rarely seeks or makes eye contact

Doesn't reciprocate bids for attention from adults

Shows any loss of language or social skills

Consistently not sleeping or eating well

Consistent loss of weight/growth

Extreme separation anxiety

Consistent, unexplained, and/or sudden changes to or escalating of challenging behaviors

# Recognizing Healthy & Unhealthy IECMH

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- Understanding your own emotion regulation
- Infant and child behavior has meaning, and it may differ by developmental period
- Recognize what is typical or expected for each child as individuals



# How to Support Children

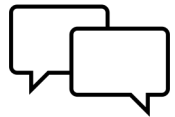
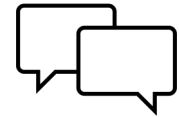
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- Support emotion literacy
  - Create a feeling vocabulary
  - Understanding what our body feels like when tensed vs relaxed
  - Making the connection between how they feel and how to express it
- Be observant and knowledgeable of child behaviors
  - Observing (e.g., when, where, and under which circumstances)
  - Listening
  - Reflecting
- Activities and screenings
  - Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

# How to Support Families

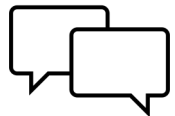
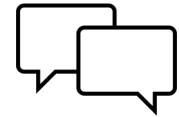
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Responsive care within the household and childcare setting



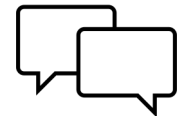
Importance of nurturing and protection

Creating daily routines and experiences that allow the child to develop new skills



Making sure the parent's expectations match the child's development

Discussing stressors, strengths, and providing additional resources



# How to Support Families

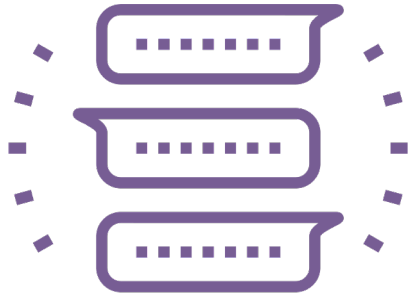
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- Develop relationships with families and routinely talk about children's development and parenting goals
- Open communication about concerns
- Community partnerships
  - Connect families to support systems and resources
  - Collaborate with community organizations that share family's interests
  - Support outside-the-home family experiences around learning
  - Prepare advocacy training so families can become better advocates for their children
- Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS)
  - If eligible, this service assists military families in their efforts to support their children's growth, development, and learning.

# Key Take Aways

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1. Early childcare professionals have an important role in promoting a healthy IECMH.
2. When a child experiences mental health concerns, it can influence their relationships, learning, and future health.
3. As young children grow and develop, their social worlds expand, and the implications and impacts of IECMH also expand.



# Let's Chat!

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Got questions?

# Contact Us

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Kelly Bost

[kbost@Illinois.edu](mailto:kbost@Illinois.edu)

Samantha Iwinski

[iwinski2@Illinois.edu](mailto:iwinski2@Illinois.edu)



# Upcoming Event

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## **Making the Journey Towards Healthy Attachment**

**Tuesday, Jul. 18, 2023**

This session focuses on how attachment relationships are formed, how to promote a healthy attachment, and information on how to rebuild and assist families who experience separation.

**Continuing education credit will be available for this session!**

# Continuing Education



This webinar has been approved for the following continuing education (CE) credits:



Thank you for participating in this evaluation.

**Board Certified Patient Advocates & Case Managers:** If you would like to receive 1.5 contact/clock hours from the **Patient Advocate Certification Board** and/or the **Commission for Case Manager Certification**, please click on this link to access your certificate: [https://www.oneop.org/evaluation/141474](#)

**Certified Family Life Educators:** If you would like to receive 1.5 contact hours (0.15 CEU) from the **National Council on Family Relations** to Certified Family Life Educators (CFLE) for this webinar, please click on this link to access your certificate: [https://www.oneop.org/evaluation/141474](#)

**Education professionals:** If you would like to receive a Certificate of Completion for **general use** and/or 1.5 State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECHs) for providers in **Michigan**, please click on this link to take the post-test: [https://www.oneop.org/evaluation/141474](#)

**Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists:** If you would like to receive 1.5 CE credits for Social Work, LPCs, and LMFTs from the **University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work**, please click on this link to take the post-test: [https://www.oneop.org/evaluation/141474](#)

## Evaluation Link

Go to the event page for the evaluation and post-test link.

[Continuing Education](#)

## Questions?

Email Robyn DiPietro-Wells:  
[OneOpEarlyIntervention@gmail.com](mailto:OneOpEarlyIntervention@gmail.com)

# Military Family Readiness Academy

**June 2023**

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