



# KIT

## "Keeping In Touch"

### October 2008



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### Resource Article



Over the next four months, the KIT articles will focus exclusively on a facet of Early Childhood Mental Health. This month's article, *The Infant Mental Health Specialist from Zero to Three*, is located at

<http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/vol21-2s.pdf?docID=2127&AddInterest=1144>

The author, Deborah Weatherston, is the executive director of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (see website: [www.mi-aimh.org](http://www.mi-aimh.org)). She has authored numerous articles and books to include *Infant Mental Health Services: Supporting Competencies / Reducing Risks* (2002) and *Case Studies in Infant Mental Health* (2002).

Over the years, she has filled a gap in the broader field of early intervention by developing training that leads to the designation of Infant Mental Health (IMH) specialist. In addition to fostering the development of a curriculum for training for this designation, she created a certification process for this specialization that has since been adopted by several states.

In this article, Weatherston introduces the history of the IMH movement originally led by Selma Fraiberg. Providing these services within the home was a dramatic shift from existing practices. She cites six core services provided in this role, the provision of: 1) concrete assistance; 2) emotional support; 3) developmental guidance; 4) early relationship assessment and support; 5) infant-parent psychotherapy; and 6) advocacy.

She also provides a useful listing of tenets to help IMH specialists understand their role and guide practices in the form of thoughtful

observation, careful listening and empathic response. Finally, the strategies that characterize these services are embedded in the belief that development occurs within the context of relationships, past and present.

Weatherston, D. J. (2000). The infant mental health specialist. *Zero to Three*, 21, 3-10.

### On the WWW

This month's web resource is the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health at:

[www.mi-aimh.org](http://www.mi-aimh.org)

This organization is "devoted to strengthening relationships between infants, parents and other caregivers." The organization offers a variety of resources including a video lending library, articles, information about training opportunities and a quarterly membership newsletter.

### What Do the Data Say?



*What percentage of children eligible for EDIS early intervention is eligible with qualifying delays in the area of social/emotional development?*

To answer this questions SNPMIS data for the past DOD reporting year (1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008) were reviewed. Across the Army EDIS programs 3% of eligible children with developmental delays were found eligible due to qualifying delays (two standard deviations below the mean) in the area of social emotional development alone.

When combined with other qualifying domains (i.e., communication, cognitive, physical, and adaptive) 39% of eligible children across Army EDIS programs had qualifying delays in social emotional development (at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean).

Interestingly, the National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS) reported that 4% of children included in the NEILS received early intervention services because of a social/behavioral impairment or delay (NEILS Final Report, January 2007) [www.sri.com/neils/pdfs/NEILS\\_Report\\_02\\_07\\_Final2.pdf](http://www.sri.com/neils/pdfs/NEILS_Report_02_07_Final2.pdf)

However, given the variation in state (non DOD) eligibility criteria it is difficult to have a clear picture of the children being served in early intervention with qualifying delays in the social emotional domain alone or in combination with other areas of delay. Increased awareness and use of measures to screen and assess social emotional development (i.e., ASQ-SE; Brief Infant Toddler Social Emotional Assessment [BITSEA]; Infant-Toddler Social Emotional Assessment [ITSEA]; Temperament and Atypical Behavior Scale [TABS]) is encouraged across the field of early intervention.

## Consultation Corner



Beginning this month through January 2009 **Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH)** and the training project that took place over the last three years at EDIS Stuttgart (Germany) Early Intervention will be featured.

### Introducing The Team

The core Stuttgart team who participated in the training project consisted of a seasoned occupational therapist, a skilled physical therapist, and a clinical psychologist, who brings years of clinical experience with older children but is the newest initiate into early intervention practices. This project has been supported through Dr. Grabert's participation in Zero to Three's Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fellowship.

### ECMH Training Model

The team trialed a three-tier training model for infusing their early intervention work with Early

Childhood Mental Health practices. The model consists of three elements: 1) monthly self-directed readings as a team on Early Childhood Mental Health topics; 2) practicing and integrating communication skills into family and staff interactions; and 3) twice monthly group reflective supervision to explore how to meaningfully use new awareness and skills with families currently eligible for early intervention services (EIS).

### Change in Format

With the focus on ECMH, the KIT Consultation Corner will have a slightly different format in the coming months. The Stuttgart EIS team has agreed to write a series of four pieces for the KIT Consultation Corner. These contributions will include their reflections on this experience and provide examples of how their orientation to services has changed their practices. The team wants to answer the following questions about their experience and the outcomes of their project:

- *How is our approach with families different now?*
- *What outcomes have resulted from the change in our practices?*

## Continuing Education for KIT Readers

In line with the topical focus on Early Childhood Mental Health, KIT readers are invited to receive continuing education contact hours for reading the four monthly KIT publications (October 2008 – January 2009) and then completing a multiple choice exam about the content covered in these KITs.



If you are interested, complete the exam online at [www.edis.army.mil](http://www.edis.army.mil) and upon successful completion, you will receive a certificate of non-discipline specific continuing education contact hours.

*Please send your KIT ideas via email to:  
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