



TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

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TAIMH News

Texas Association for Infant Mental Health

A Message from the Executive Director



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- TAIMH Contacts—see page 8
- Membership form—see page 10

The TAIMH Board has gone through a strategic planning process that has set out some very clear goals for the organization and clarified the vision and mission of the organization. As we move through 2009, we are working to bring Texas closer to our vision that “all Texas babies will experience nurturing relationships within the context of family and community.” As we all know this will take years, but some exciting steps have begun.

There are now Chapters or soon to be Chapters in Ft. Worth, El Paso, Lubbock, Corpus Christi, Austin, Houston and San Marcos. The Chapters serve as a community of learners and advocates in their community for improved care of the 0-3 child population. TAIMH state office is rebuilding its website to include a section for Chapters to share ideas, solve problems and learn from each other. We are also distributing “Food For Thought” curriculum, a series of presentations around best practice in supporting the healthy social and emotional development of babies. We hope that this “curriculum in a box” will assist out Chapters in planning monthly educational programs.

As you might know, TAIMH received a grant from the Hogg Foundation on Mental Health to work on changes to child care licensing standards that would promote infant and toddler social/emotional health. I hired Melanie Rubin, a graduate of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, to be our project coordinator and she is putting so much energy and passion into the job. Our partner in this effort is Texas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (TACCRRA) and they are busy designing a survey and focus group questions for activities over the next few months. The surveys and focus group will give us the picture of child care for babies. We have identified a few bills that would enhance the care of the states “little ones” and you will hear more about that later.

Continued on next page

Message, continued

In February, I had the opportunity to present for TAIMH at the Texas Children's Mental Health Forum this month. In May, I will be a presenter at the 'Texas Judicial Summit: Improving Outcomes for Children in Care.' One of the primary goals of the conference is to offer insight and practical information for individuals determining outcomes for children in protective custody. This will be a great opportunity for TAIMH to be recognized as a voice and a resource for the 0-3 population.

Most of all I want to thank each and every one of you who are the foot soldiers on the ground working to bring TAIMH's vision closer to reality.

Thanks for being a voice for babies,



Texas Association for Infant Mental Health

The newborn infant is the future of the world. As members of the world community, we have a responsibility to advocate for environments which support the healthy, emotional development of infants and their families.

The mission of the Texas Association for Infant Mental Health is to promote the healthy emotional development of infants, toddlers and their families.

We are a statewide organization that advances our mission by:

- Building awareness of the critical importance of the first three years of life.
- Supporting conditions that enhance the quality of infant and toddler/caregiver relationship.
- Advocating for policies and practice that supports the healthy development of infants and toddlers.
- Educating the birth to three workforce in best practice.

Our Vision is that all Texas babies will experience nurturing relationships within the context of family and community.

A Note from the Board President

Marnie Stone, TAIMH Board President

On February 5, TAIMH received the Early Childhood Advocate Award from the ChildCareGroup. We were honored to be the recipient of this award, highlighting our efforts to impact child care licensing standards through the recent grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. Already TAIMH is receiving recognition for this important work.



The award was given during the ChildCareGroup's annual board meeting and volunteer recognition luncheon. Susan Peek Hoff, president and chief executive at that time, gave her farewell address to the group as she prepared to move to her new position as senior vice president of community investment with the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. As happens with many goodbyes, I was reminded of Susan's influence not only on our community, but on me as a professional and mother.

During my life as a direct service provider and as I moved into the administrative realm, I watched Susan from afar. I was and still am very impressed. I like her poise, her professionalism, her ability to quickly make her point with her audience, and her intellect. I also admire her ability to get a lot done! She is always be on the move, looking ahead, making plans for the next step in the long-term process of helping young children receive the best possible early education and care. And what a positive, upbeat attitude she maintains, even when the statistics can seem so grim at times in the field of child care.

As I had more contact with her over the years, I learned she is a working mom like me. This has been very encouraging. If she could do it, so could I! We all need those people we can see beside us, making a difference in the world while still maintaining, sustaining and impacting important relationships, such as family.

I look forward to keeping my eyes on Susan at United Way. I know she will continue to provide a good role model for me as she works toward the best possible conditions for children in our community.

I would also like to note that one of our fellow TAIMH members and board secretary Barbara Einsohn was a recipient of a social justice award from Jewish Family Services in recognition for her volunteer work over the years with the annual Domestic Violence Conference sponsored by JFS. We appreciate Barbara's influence across the community through her involvement with JFS, TAIMH and Early Childhood Intervention. She is daily making a difference in the lives of babies and toddlers in our community not only through her direct contact with them, but also by her gentle but powerful voice that speaks on behalf of them through these venues. Barbara constantly reminds us to think of how the baby feels. And that really is the goal of infant mental health.

Marnie L. Stone

Creating Connections: A *READY* Approach to Sensitive Caregiving

By: Cynthia A. Frosch, Ph.D, TAIMH Member, Visiting Scholar at UTD

Healthy parent-child relationships start early and grow over time. When researchers investigate the quality of children's early relationships, we often talk about security of attachment between children and their caregivers. Secure attachments are those marked by a child's desire to receive closeness and comfort from his or her parent or primary caregiver when distressed and to explore and learn about his or her environment when the parent is nearby and available. Secure parent-child relationships support more positive relationships with peers and teachers, greater self-control and emotion regulation, fewer problem behaviors, and a greater readiness for school and higher achievement. Secure attachments make a difference in the social, emotional, and intellectual lives of children. And even though there may be difficulty in the attachment relationship early on, change to more organized and secure patterns of behavior can happen when parents become more aware of their children's needs and cues, and are able to increase their sensitivity and responsiveness to their child's dual desires to explore *and* to receive comfort. For example, research by Hoffman, Marvin, Cooper, and Powell (2006) found significant changes to more secure child attachments following an intervention aimed at increasing security in the child-caregiver relationship.

Parental sensitivity has been identified as an important contributor to the quality of early parent-child relationships. Children with parents who are sensitive and supportive are more likely to be securely attached than children whose parents are insensitive. But what does sensitive caregiving look like? It may be helpful to think about the different pathways to sensitive caregiving. One way is by supporting young children's autonomy or growing independence. That is, by allowing them freedom to choose and explore without being intrusive and overly directive. Another path is through emotional engagement and involvement. Parents who are engaged and present to their child's emotional experience are in touch with their child's needs. Parental sensitivity then, reflects a combination of support, responsiveness, encouragement of autonomy, and engagement.



How can you support sensitive caregiving?

A key question in supporting sensitive caregiving is asking the parent or caregiver to consider what *they* bring to the relationship with the child. By looking at our own expectations and attributions for children's behavior, as well as our own developmental histories, we can generate important talking points for sensitive caregiving. A parent or caregiver who believes that babies cry to manipulate or control them may be less likely to respond sensitively to a child's needs. A parent who had a difficult childhood may bring forth history – often without even realizing the beliefs that are at work behind their parenting. When parents and caregivers recognize their own perspectives and developmental experiences, positive changes in parenting or caregiving can occur – simply by increasing awareness and shifting perspectives.

Sensitive parenting can also be increased by helping parents and caregivers see and understand what sensitivity actually looks like. This is often difficult to visualize from a book or workshop. What does it mean to respond to a baby's cues? Be emotionally connected? Support the child's autonomy and exploration? To address this issue, Margaret Tresch Owen, Ph.D., and I recently created a DVD and companion book called *The READY Method*. In *The READY Method*, we highlight five key aspects of parenting that contribute to the social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children. Using video examples of parent-child interaction from birth to three, we show parents, caregivers, and professionals what gentle, responsive parenting really looks like (and what it doesn't). For each of the five *READY* dimensions, we provide examples of higher quality and lower quality interactions to help caregivers visualize and develop their own skills. The *READY Method* helps parents increase awareness of their own behavior while demonstrating how to tune in to their children's needs and interests.

Continued on next page

Sensitive Caregiving Continued

In The READY Method, we emphasize learning to recognize and respond to a variety of child signals and cues. Sometimes children's cues are obvious such as crying when frustrated or squealing when excited. Other times, the cues are subtler such as looking away when they need a break or an increase in breathing rate when they are becoming overwhelmed. For example, when a child looks away, frowns, fusses, avoids eye contact, or even puts his hands up to his mouth or face, he is providing cues regarding his emotional and physical comfort, as well as his sense of security in that moment. These behaviors are all ways in which children show distress or indicate they need a break or change of activity. Learning how to tune in to the child's emotional experience can help caregivers see the buildup of emotion that happens before the big "meltdown." By recognizing the early signs of hunger, fatigue, over-stimulation, frustration, or discomfort, caregivers come to see that distress often builds slowly. An important point to highlight for parents and caregivers is that as children grow, the way they cue will be different—changing from looking away to walking away, for example.

Reflections to support sensitive caregiving:

Notice how the child signals that he is hungry, tired, or alert and ready to play. How does the child tell you she is becoming overwhelmed, needs a break, or a change of activity?

Notice how you tend to respond to the child's needs. Are your responses generally consistent, quick, and effective, or do they tend to be inconsistent, slow, and less effective?

When the child draws back or looks away when a toy or activity is presented, do you work extra hard to keep your child's attention or are you able to respond to the child's cue and pull back while he/she takes a break or respond to a different need that the child is expressing?

For more information:

Hoffman, K. T., Marvin, R. S., Cooper, G., Powell, B. (2006). Changing toddlers' and preschoolers' attachment classifications: The circle of security intervention. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 74*, 1017-1026.

Berlin, L. J., Ziv, Y., Amaya-Jackson, L., & Greenberg, M. T. (Eds.) 2005. *Enhancing early attachments: Theory, research, intervention, and policy*. Duke Series in Child Development and Public Policy. New York: Guilford Press.

To learn more about The READY Method:
www.ReadyMethod.com

Cynthia A. Frosch, Ph.D. is a researcher, child and family developmental consultant, and visiting scholar at the University of Texas at Dallas. Email: cindy@yellowhousekids.com



Food for Thought

Regulatory Processes: What Are They and How Do Caregivers Help Babies Use Them?

Spring 2009

Food for Thought continues with its focus on relationships and Relationship Centered Practices. This year our presentations and discussions will focus on how state and self-regulation are dependent on and supported by healthy relationships between babies and their caregivers. The importance of the role of regulation as the toddler moves towards independence and autonomy will be a central part of our discussions.

Once again, we are so fortunate to have experienced and excellent presenters. As in the past, each session will start with a short presentation of relevant material, to be followed by interactive discussions that will take the material presented and apply it to every-day practices.

It is not too late to still attend the remaining sessions! Mark your calendars now!

Register online at www.taimh.org/f4thought.php

March 27: Meet John (Film and Discussion)

Facilitator: Betty Ann Ablon, MSW, IMH-E (IV)

In this extraordinary film, we meet a securely attached toddler who spends nine days in a hospital nursery without the comfort and presence of his mother. Seeing “John” and having the opportunity to discuss the experience is something you won’t want to miss and will long remember.

April 24: Recognizing and Handling Separation Issues in Different Settings

Facilitator: Barbara Einsohn, MS., IMH-E (IV)

Toddlers are actively and passionately in the process of becoming themselves and are challenging their primary relationships. In this session, a panel with representatives from CPS, ECI, and childcare will talk about their experiences. The TAIMH Players will reenact situations for discussion. Participants will learn ways to support healthy emotional development.

May 22: Toddler and Beyond: Who am I Now?

Facilitator: Ernie Gotts, Ph.D.

This session will focus on how the toddler becomes a person with her own identity and preferences, but remains attached to her primary caregivers. Vignettes present typical challenges and invite participants to discuss the issues and propose helpful strategies.



Session 1

TAIMH HAS MOU WITH UTD

Liz Francis, MS, IMH-E (IV)

So what does that mean? Good question, given the alphabet soup. It means: Texas Association for Infant Mental Health has a Memorandum of Understanding with University of Texas at Dallas. And *that* means The Program of Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders (HDCD) at UTD has identified the classes in their graduate curriculum that fulfill TAIMH Endorsement requirements at Levels I and II.

The working plan is for students to document their progress in portfolios. These will be reviewed at graduation in order to determine what, if any, requirements are necessary prior to making application to TAIMH for endorsement. In return, TAIMH has agreed to inform the department of our training opportunities.

This accomplishment was attained over time, with lots of work. Members of the Professional Education Committee and the Endorsement Committee supplied information and reviewed forms, but the majority of the work was done by Sherry Bryant, M.S., Clinical Lecturer and Supervisor in the Department of Human Development and Early Childhood Disorders. Sherry mapped the criteria for Levels I & II onto the department curriculum. This was reviewed by instructors and adjusted as necessary. Then Sherry and her Graduate Assistant developed a competencies checklist based on forms used by TAIMH.

A standard UT System MOU form was completed specific to TAIMH; this was sent to the HDCD Department Head and TAIMH Executive Director for approval, then to the UTD Business Affairs Office for final approval and signatures.

All of which means... TAIMH Endorsement has been accepted at a major university program!

UTD Spring 2009 Lecture Series: Helping Children Succeed

The Center for Children and Families at the University of Texas At Dallas and the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences are hosting a lecture series that is free and open to the public.

The next sessions are:

March 25th: Deboard Wiebe, Ph.D. - *"Helping Children and Families Cope with Chronic Illness"*

April 29th: Candice Mills, Ph.D. - *"Encouraging Children to Think Critically in an Age of Misinformation"*

All sessions are located at the UT Dallas Conference Center (CN), Room 1.102. They are held Wednesday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m., at 800 W. Campbell Road., Richardson, Texas 75080



Help TAIMH earn dollar-for-dollar matching funds on May 20

DonorBridge at www.donorbridgetx.org, a new online resource for nonprofit supporters in North Texas, is debuting to the public on May 20, 2009. To celebrate, Communities Foundation of Texas and The Dallas Foundation will match, dollar-for-dollar, donations given through the website on that day. Communities Foundation of Texas has committed \$250,000 and The Dallas Foundation has committed \$50,000 for a total of \$300,000 to encourage the public to give to local nonprofits, especially in light of this year's hurting economy.

The day before the public launch, on May 19, Communities Foundation of Texas and The Dallas Foundation will match online grant recommendations to DonorBridge nonprofits from the foundation's donor advised funds in the amount of 50 cents of every dollar contributed, up to \$2,500 per fund while matching funds last. A total of \$100,000 will be available this day.

On May 20, online public donations via a credit card* will be match in the amount of one dollar for every dollar through DonorBridge, while matching funds last. A total of at least \$200,000 is available for the match plus any remaining matching funds from May 19. The minimum gift is \$25 and the maximum matching contribution per individual is \$2,500. Public users may support more than one organization with matching funds, as long as the total donations from one individual do not exceed \$2,500.

The maximum matching funds available per organization is \$25,000!

**All online credit card gifts made though DonorBridge will be processed through Communities Foundation of Texas. A credit card processing fee of 5% of the amount of the gift will be deducted from the total amount of the gift, with no charge to the nonprofit organization.*

Help TAIMH continue its work in promoting the healthy emotional development of infants, toddlers and their families.

Be a Voice for Babies in Texas!

Contact **TAIMH**

Email— contact@TAIMH.org

Phone - (972) 906-2696

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Chapter Updates

South Texas Regional Committee (Corpus Christi Area)

South Texas continues to increase their membership. They have at least 15 members and receive additional interest in the committee/Chapter every month. The chapter continues to meet by video conference once a month. This method of meeting allows them to involve members both in the Corpus Christi area as well as the Valley. They are currently moving forward on the Chapter Checklist to fulfill the requirements of a Chapter. The next item on their agenda is the Second Annual South Texas training on Infant Mental Health to be held this summer in the area.

Early Connections for Children's Mental Health (Tarrant County Chapter)

Early Connections for Children's Mental Health had a wonderful presentation by Andrea Van Kuren on financial planning for families of children with disabilities on February 10. We had a good group of child care providers present who really benefited from the presentation. This is a topic many families avoid, but it is critically important for the well being of their families and loved ones with disabilities.

Southwest Regional Committee (El Paso Area)

On February 11, 2009 the Southwest Regional Committee of TAIMH held its second lunchtime training. The topic was Maternal Depression and the speakers were Sergio Medina, LPC, LMFT; Diane Tatem, LPC; and Eunice Martinez, LPC. There were 90 people who attended the training and walked away with some very valuable information and local resources regarding maternal and paternal depression. TAIMH members have been meeting quarterly and are planning their 2nd Infant Mental Health workshop in May.

Baby Connections (Austin Area)

Over the last few months, chapter members have met to discuss the vision for the chapter. With this in mind, members completed surveys and participated in focus groups. Some of the ideas expressed by members included trainings on the endorsement process, evidence based practices, and policy. Members are also interested in raising community awareness on infant mental health. A Reflective Supervision group will be led by Sarah Hinshaw-Fuselier with the group working towards Level 3 Endorsement. Margaret McNeil, Chapter President, will be representing the chapter at City Hall on May 7th for Children's Mental Health day. As of January, 11 members have joined the chapter.



Texas Association for Infant Mental Health - Membership Application

TAIMH membership year is September 1-August 31. Must be received by November 20 for inclusion in directory. Any memberships after June 1, will rollover to the next membership year and you will not receive your directory and membership card until early December.

Office Use Only
Date r'd _____
Ck. No. _____
Amt. _____

Name: _____
Last First M.I.

Degree(s) and/or licensure: _____

Work Information:
Name of Agency or Business: _____
Work Address: _____
Street and Number Suite or Office Number
City ZipCode
Work Phone: _____ FAX: _____
Area Code and Number Area Code and Number
Email: _____
Include my work information in the directory: _____Yes _____No

Home Information:
Home Address: _____
Street and Number Apt. Number
City ZipCode
Home Phone: _____ FAX: _____
Area Code and Number Area Code and Number
Email: _____
Include my home information in the directory: _____Yes _____No

Send TAIMH mail to: _____Home address _____Work address

Please indicate the area(s) you are interested in:

- Infant Advocacy
- Professional Education
- Public Awareness/Membership
- Receiving TAIMH Endorsement as IMH Specialist

Membership Levels:

- ___ \$ 10 Student: TAIMH state organization, includes all benefits of regular state membership. Copy of student I.D.required.
- ___ \$ 45 State: TAIMH state organization, includes newsletter, directory and member discounts.
- ___ \$ 160 World and State Combination: World Association for Infant Mental Health (WAIMH), WAIMH quarterly *Infant Mental Health Journal*, WAIMH newsletter *The Signal*, all benefits of TAIMH state membership. (WAIMH membership year begins Jan. 1)
- ___ \$ 500 Agency: TAIMH state organization membership for up to 40 members. Fee schedule as follows: 0-40 Members: \$500, 41-60 Members: \$600, 61-80 Members: \$700, and so on. Please include contact information for all agency members.

Make checks payable to: TAIMH

Send to: TAIMH Membership
1199 S. Beltline Rd., Suite 100
Coppell, Texas 75019

For questions call: (972) 906-2696



Texas Association for Infant Mental Health

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SAVE THE DATE– Upcoming TAIMH Trainings

Food for Thought Series 2009

- ◆ *March 27, 2009*
- ◆ *April 24, 2009*
- ◆ *May 22, 2009*



Infant Mental Health Advocacy Conference

January 8-9, 2010 - Hilton Dallas Lincoln Centre

TAIMH is an affiliate of the World Association for Infant Mental Health and promotes the Texas Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health. Infant Mental Health is synonymous with good social emotional development in the very young. TAIMH strives to raise awareness and provide training to improve care-giving for infants and the very young child in order to change their future.

