

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Guide for Professionals: Perinatal and Parental Mental Health

Here's what we know about perinatal and parental mental health:

- “It takes a village to raise a child...”
- We all share a responsibility in supporting parenting practices.
- Family, friends, culture and community influence an adult’s ability to interact positively with children.
 - This circle of support is foundational for a child’s optimal growth and development, and their ability to build healthy relationships for life.
- Parents or caregivers can have a range of emotions and experiences during pregnancy and after the baby arrives.
- Parent’s or caregiver’s overall health and wellbeing may have an impact on the developing child.

Within your professional role and considering the social determinants of health, how do you:

- Discuss how the parent or caregiver is coping and their support system.
- Discuss if the expectant parent or caregiver is accessing primary health care supports.
- Explore opportunities for connecting to informal and formal supports (community, neighbourhood, resources, groups).
- Screen and refer for postpartum mood disorders and other risk factors that may impact perinatal and parental mental health.

Where can you find more information:

- Parenting in Ottawa
- Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development
- Caring for Kids: Pregnancy and Babies
- Best Start
 - Mental Health Resources
 - Life with a New Baby
 - Prenatal and Postpartum Health Resources
 - Prenatal Education Program
- Infant Mental Health Promotion: Parenting Moments
- Public Health Agency of Canada: Social Determinants of Health
- Parent Resource Centre
- 211 Ontario

References

- Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child: The Foundations of Lifelong Health are Built in Early Childhood
- Infant Mental Health Promotion: Mental Health and Brain Development