



# BABY TALK

The Official Newsletter of the Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health

Summer, 2003

Volume 3: Issue 2

## Notes From The President

*by Mike Thomasgard*

Welcome to summer! In line with the season, OAIMH continues to branch out across our state. I'm going to take this opportunity to list several of our accomplishments and to highlight upcoming events.

We recently added a new Southeast Ohio chapter to OAIMH. For more information, contact Delmar Dunlap at [ddunlap@muskingumhelpmegrow.com](mailto:ddunlap@muskingumhelpmegrow.com).

OAIMH is seeking to expand its membership by placing advertisements in several publications for Ohio professionals with experience working with or on behalf of young children and their caregivers (e.g., family physicians, Help Me Grow, mental health, nursing, pediatrics, psychology, social work, etc).

Members of the Southwestern Ohio chapter have taken a significant step by meeting with representatives of the local legal system whose work directly impacts infants, toddlers, young children and their caregivers.

Members of our Executive Board have contributed their voices to Ohio's National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)—a grass roots organization with over 60 local affiliates across our state. NAMI Ohio was created in 1982 by a small group of family members to provide mutual support, education and advocacy for individuals and families affected by serious brain disorders.

John Kinsel wrote a brief article on OAIMH for NAMI Ohio's quarterly publication *News Briefs*. At the recent NAMI Ohio Annual Conference, Jan Kushmaul distributed information and membership materials at our web site exhibit and Rosalind Williams gave a presentation on the effects of maternal

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## State Advocacy for Infant Mental Health

The Help Me Grow Collaborative of Cuyahoga County, as part of its early childhood mental health project, has been working to organize advocacy for infant mental health across Ohio. Here's a progress update:

- Cuyahoga County early childhood mental health supporters have used legislative meetings, letters, testimony, and a joint lobby day with the Coalition for Greater Cleveland's Children to advocate for continuation of the \$1.3 million line item for early childhood mental health in the Ohio Department of Mental Health's 2004-2005 budget. Although we would prefer increased funding, simply preserving the line item with continued funding was a victory in this year of drastic state budget cuts.
- Infant mental health needs to be a priority for advocates working on both mental health and early childhood initiatives. To that end, we are working with Lee Fisher, co-chair of the Mental Health Coalition and Ohio B.U.I.L.D., an initiative to support children, birth through 5, and their families by developing a single, comprehensive and coordinated early learning system in Ohio. Our goal is to have both projects include infant mental health in their advocacy agendas.
- The key to public funding for infant mental health is Medicaid change.

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***Demonstrating Competence in Infant Mental Health***

*By Mike Thomasgard*

In February 2003, I attended a regional meeting of WAIMH affiliates sponsored by the Michigan Association for IMH (MI-AIMH). Discussion focused on a proposed endorsement process for culturally sensitive, relationship-based learning and work experiences that promote IMH. This work is the culmination of over twenty years of effort by MI-AIMH and its membership.

As shown below, four levels of competency were outlined: 1) Infant Family Associate, 2) Infant Family Specialist, 3) IMH Specialist and 4) IMH Mentor. Two benefits of endorsement include continued growth and development as a service provider/professional and "...recognition by employers and peers of having attained a level of competency in culturally sensitive, relationship-based practice that promotes IMH."

Application would be open to "all MI-AIMH members (and members from other IMH associations) who have experience working with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, parents

and/or other caregivers and who meet the educational and training requirements as specified for each of the four levels."

Thirty hours of in-service training, a signed code of ethics and three reference ratings are required at each level. Levels 3 and 4 require successful completion of a written exam plus reflective supervision and/or consultation: 24 hours over two years for level 2 and 50 hours over two years for levels 3 and 4.

The entire process has five steps: inquiry, application—including a fee linked to the level of competency being sought, preparing a portfolio, documentation of competencies and endorsement. The portfolio would contain verification of education, course work, degree(s) earned, in-service training, work and/or supervision experiences and professional reference ratings. "Continuing endorsement requirements would include membership in MI-AIMH or another IMH association and annual participation in 15 hours of culturally sensitive, relationship-based training experiences that promote IMH practice." The endorsement process is currently in a trial phase for MI-AIMH members and may be available for other mid-west affiliate members as soon as fall 2003.

	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4</i>
<b><i>Endorsement</i></b>	<i>Infant Family Associate</i>	<i>Infant Family Specialist</i>	<i>IMH Specialist</i>	<i>IMH Mentor</i>
<b><i>Degree</i></b>	<i>CDA or Associate's</i>	<i>Bachelor's</i>	<i>Master's, Ph.D., M.D.</i>	<i>Master's, Ph.D., M.D.</i>
<b><i>Examples</i></b>	<i>Child care worker</i>	<i>Early Head Start home visitor, Nurse, Parent Educator</i>	<i>Clinical Nurse Practitioner, Mental health clinician, Physician, Psychologist</i>	<i>Faculty member, Infant &amp; family program supervisor, Researcher</i>

**President** (Cont. from Page 1)  
 depression on infants and young children. The idea of ameliorating or preventing future mental health problems through early intervention is a relatively new focus for NAMI Ohio. Similarly, our expertise in accessing the scientific literature on early emotional development represents another area where we can complement their existing advocacy efforts. In that regard, members of NAMI Ohio frequently testify before the state legislature, educate business leaders on mental health issues and sit on various state planning and advisory committees as well as county ADAMH/CMHRS Boards. Both NAMI Ohio and their parent organization NAMI, have informative and up-to-date web sites [www.namiohio.org](http://www.namiohio.org) and [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), respectively. I believe that our affiliate can learn a lot from NAMI Ohio and look forward to continuing our collaboration.

In February, I represented OAIMH at a regional meeting of WAIMH affiliates sponsored by the Michigan Association for IMH (MI-AIMH). The topic for discussion was the proposed endorsement process for professionals with varying levels of competency in infant mental health practices that are culturally sensitive and relationship-based. This proposed endorsement process has the potential to significantly raise the visibility of those who provide infant/family mental health services ranging from child care providers (Level 1) to those who function primarily as mentors (Level 4). For more information see the related article on [page 2](#).

If you haven't already paid your 2003 dues, you will be contacted in the near future. Our annual membership fee of \$25 for regular members and \$10 for students is a tremendous bargain. We need your support to continue offering great speakers at our annual conference and to improve our own young web-  
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**Advocacy for Infant Mental Health** (Cont'd)

- We are advocating that infant mental health experts be included in Governor Taft's efforts to review and reform Ohio's Medicaid system.

For more information on advocacy for infant mental health in Ohio, please call Marla Himmeger, Mental Health Administrator, Ohio Department of Mental Health, (614) 466-1984 or Karen Mintzer, Assistant Director, Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County, 216-761-3372. Thanks to all of the advocates who have participated and to United Way of Greater Cleveland for its support of the advocacy project.

**President** (Cont'd) site [www.oaimh.org](http://www.oaimh.org). If you know of someone who needs a membership form, see the web site section entitled "joining oaimh" and download one. If you're interested in forming a local chapter of OAIMH, contact Kate Merrilees— call our current vice president at [kmm@onenet.com](mailto:kmm@onenet.com).

I hope to see all of you at our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual OAIMH Fall Conference on Friday, Nov. 21. The featured speaker is Dr. Charles Zeanah who will pick up where he left off last fall on the topic of trauma and the treatment of attachment disorders in young children. Attendees will have a choice of several breakout sessions for the afternoon. Topics and speakers include an in-depth presentation by Dr. Zeanah on the treatment of a toddler who saw his mother murdered, cultural differences in attachment by Beth Troutman, Developmental and Mental health needs of young victims by Jane Sites and regulatory disorders/autism by Maria Sargent. Be sure to check the announcement section on our web site home page for other upcoming state and national conferences. I hope your summer contains some time for rest and relaxation.

## A Brief History of Infant Mental Health In Ohio-II *by Kate Merrilees*

*(Ed.'s Note: Part I of this story appeared in Vol 3: Issue 1 of Baby Talk. Please see that issue for a report on the early days of IMH in Ohio. We pick up the tale in 1997.)*

Another level of IMH training was initiated with funding from the Bureau of Early Intervention. RFP's were sent out statewide to recruit a core group of 20 individuals already working with infants and toddlers who would be willing to integrate relationship-based infant mental health principles into their practice.

The Merrill Palmer Institute provided 6 days of training over a four-month period. The trainees were then asked to return to their communities to provide one training on relationship practice for individuals in their communities.

Several of those trainees became members of the Stakeholders group and brought renewed enthusiasm to that effort, producing much fruit.

Under the leadership of Lisa Lockwood and her committee, the booklet When Children Live in Two Homes was published and circulated among court personnel, children's services workers and others who were involved in making decisions about how very young children would maintain bonds with their caregivers when those caregivers could not live together.

Another publication, What to Do Baby and You, was written by trainee Anne Marie Helm. This simple, yet instructive, set of developmentally appropriate activities for promoting attachment and growth was organized by developmental stage. Circulated to programs working with parents of young

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## Ohio History

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children, it quickly became a favorite.

Very significantly, the infusion of trainees reactivated an ongoing discussion about the formation of a state IMH association. Interested persons, with leadership from Jim Duffey and trainee Jan Kushmaul, began exploring the process of organizing such a group and in May, 2000 the Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health, under the leadership of Charter President (and trainee!) John Kinsel and the board, was born at its first Annual meeting.

The following September, the Infant Mental Health Stakeholders group, utilizing a grant from the Ohio Department of Mental health, sponsored a conference entitled, "Training for Ohio's Future." Emily Fenichel of Zero To Three addressed the assembly on "The State of Infant Mental Health in the Nation." Betty Tableman from Michigan spoke about developing a statewide infant mental health initiative. Many of the original trainees conducted break-out sessions.

The next day, with the support of the Ohio Department of Health, another group, comprised of representatives from a variety of state government departments, service providers and committee members, was convened. A professional facilitator guided the group in carving out what was to become the state plan for Infant/Family Mental Health in Ohio.

In January of 2001, the Infant Mental Health Stakeholders committee was disbanded, having accomplished more seemingly impossible things than they had ever envisioned in their original 5-year plan. Today, the Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health has taken up the charge of providing an interdisciplinary, non-governmental forum for keeping alive the original Infant Mental Health vision.

**NOMINATIONS SOUGHT**

It is once again time to select new members of the OAIMH Board. Board members serve a three year term, meeting at least quarterly to plan and carry out the activities of the Association. If you know someone dedicated to improving the lives of children under three and their families whom you feel would be a quality candidate for this (or if you want to nominate yourself!), please send their name and contact information to the nominating committee via either Beth Finley-Belgrad at eafb17@ hotmail.com or Kate Merrilees at kmm@onenet.com. Candidates selected will be announced at the annual conference on Nov. 21, 2003. Oh, and by the way,

**SAVE THAT DATE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Charley Zeanah is returning to share more about infants and trauma. See Mike Thomasgard's column in this issue for more program detail.

**Quote Of The Day**

"I believe that each newborn child arrives on earth with a message to deliver to mankind. Clenched in his little fist is some particle of yet unrevealed truth, some missing clue, which may solve the enigma of man's destiny. He has a limited amount of time to fulfill his mission and he will never get a second chance- nor will we. He may be our last hope. He must be treated as top sacred.

In a cosmos in which all things appear to have a meaning, what is *his* meaning? We who are older and presumably wiser must find the key to unlock the secret he carries within himself. The lock cannot be forced. Our mission is to exercise the kind of loving care which will prompt the child to open up his fist and offer up his truth, his individuality, the irreducible atom of self. We must provide the kind of environment in which the child will joyfully deliver his message through complete self-fulfillment." -- Sam Levenson, "Everything But Money", 1987. Submitted by Barb Feldmar

**ATTENTION, IF YOU ARE AN OAIMH MEMBER:**

**DO YOU WANT TO BE LISTED ON [WWW.OAIMH.ORG](http://WWW.OAIMH.ORG)?**

*If yes, please let us know how much of your contact information to publish.*

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Name

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Agency

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Address

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City State Zip Code County

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Phone Fax

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E-mail

You may E-mail your response to: [HenkelJl@pediatrics.ohio-state.edu](mailto:HenkelJl@pediatrics.ohio-state.edu), or fax this page to 614-722-4966, c/o Lynne Henkel.