

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

**Here is 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: Pregnancy](#) and [Life with your new baby](#)
- [Parent Resource Centre](#)
- [211 Ontario](#)
- [Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario](#)
- [Ottawa Public Health Mental Health and Substance Use Services and Resources](#)
- [Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development: Mental Health](#)
- [Caring for Kids: Pregnancy and Babies](#)
- [Best Start](#)
  - [Mental Health Resources](#)
  - [Life with a New Baby](#)
  - [Prenatal and Postpartum Health Resources](#)
  - [Prenatal Education Program](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada: Social Determinants of Health](#)

**References:**

- [Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child: The Foundations of Lifelong Health are Built in Early Childhood](#)
- [Infant Mental Health Promotion](#)