

## 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, as well as for their ability to build healthy relationships.
- Caregivers can experience a range of emotions during and post pregnancy.
- A caregivers 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 coping and support mechanisms with caregivers?
- Discuss access to primary health care support with expectant caregivers?
- Explore connection opportunities to informal and formal supports (e.g., professional and peer community-based supports and services)?
- Screen and refer caregivers for risk factors that may impact their mental health (e.g., substance-induced mood disorders, postpartum mood disorders)?

### Where can you find more information?

- [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](#)

### Where can you find services that support families?

- [Parenting in Ottawa: Pregnancy](#) and [Life with your new baby](#)
- [Parent Resource Centre](#)
- [211 Ontario](#)
- [Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario](#)
- [Mental Health and Substance Use Services and Resources](#)

### References:

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