## A Few Infant Mental Health Terms ...

**Competency Guidelines:** Describe specific areas of expertise, responsibilities, and behaviors that are required to earn Endorsement through AimEarlyldaho. Areas of expertise, very generally described here, include Theoretical Foundations; Law, Regulation & Policy; Service Systems; Direct Service Skills; Working with Others; Communicating; Reflection; and Thinking.

**Cultural Competence:** The ability to observe, understand and respond, appreciating individual capacities and needs of infants, toddlers, and families with respect for their culture, including race, ethnicity, values, behaviors, and traditions.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** The ability to respect and acknowledge differences in beliefs, attitudes and traditions related to the care and raising of young children, remaining open to different points of view and approaching families with respect for their cultural values.

**Family Centered Practice:** The infant and family professional/service provider's ability to focus on the infant or toddler within the context of the family and to respect the family's strengths as primary.

**Infant Mental Health:** An interdisciplinary field dedicated to promoting the social and emotional well-being of all infants, toddlers, and families within the context of secure and nurturing relationships. Infant mental health services support the growth of healthy attachment relationships in early childhood, reducing the risks of delays or disorders and enhancing enduring strengths.

**Parallel Process:** Parallel process describes the interlocking network of relationships between supervisor, supervisees, families, and children. Describes the ways in which the experiences that a staff person has with her supervisor can affect the way she interacts with a family. In turn the way the staff person interacts with a child, parent, or colleague can then positively spill over and influence the parent's relationship with her child.

**Relationship Focused Practice:** Values early developing relationships between parents and young children as the foundation for optimal growth and change; directs all services to nurture early developing relationships within families; values the working relationship between parents and professionals as the instrument for therapeutic change; values all relationship experiences, past and present, as significant to one's capacity to nurture and support others.

**Reflective Functioning:** The capacity to recognize mental states, feelings, thoughts, intentions—in yourself and others; the capacity to link mental states to behaviors; and a necessary skill for reflective practice.

**Reflective Supervision:** A learning experience in which a service provider/early childhood professional meets regularly with an experienced infant mental health professional to examine thoughts and feelings in relationship to their work in the infant and family field.