

**Infant Development Association of California
Northern California Regional Conference**

Growing and Thriving in Supportive Relationships



KEYNOTE: Saturday, September 9, 2017 / 8:30 am – 9:45 am

Growing and Thriving in Supportive Relationships

This presentation will highlight the many ways that early relationships support the health and long term well being of young children and their families. Topics included will be links between early interactions and development of key brain structures and regulatory capacities. The session will tackle the complexities involved when multiple professionals are involved in the lives of young children and families because of medical, developmental or social needs. Collaborative relationships among providers from many disciplines will be discussed as well as how attunement can be a key strategy to help balance the treatment, support and information needed by families when extraordinary needs that can impair the development of early relationships are present.

Learning Objectives:

- To highlight current & emergent knowledge related to the centrality of relationships as a factor in early development.
- To explore strategies for groups of professionals to support early relationships when medical, developmental or social needs pull attention away from the importance of the parents' nurturing and caregiving.
- To outline the constructs of attunement and parallel processes to help professionals balance supportive processes and essential treatment and information.

Participants: ALL

Presenter: Mary Claire Heffron, Ph.D., Infant Family Early Childhood Mental Health Mentor

Bio:

Dr. Heffron began her career in the field of early childhood intervention in the early 1970's working in Head Start Resource and Training Centers providing consultation and training to Head Start center based and home based programs in California and Region IX. She has had extensive experience in direct service settings including teaching students and developing and running an infant child care site at Lone Mountain University (now the University of San Francisco), providing infant mental health services in community based settings, and a broad range of experience in consultation, teaching and training at many different kinds of programs for young children and families. In the mid-eighties, Dr. Heffron began her training as a clinical psychologist. Since 1989, Dr. Heffron has worked in Early Intervention Services (EIS) at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland (CHILDREN'S), Division of Mental Health & Child Development. In that position, she has provided infant mental health treatment to medically fragile infants and their families, carried out assessments of infants and young children, provided clinical supervision, coordinated the activities of the Statewide Infant Family Mental Health Initiative including a successful community-based infant and early childhood mental health training program. She has initiated and led many successful community collaborations including work with several mother infant drug treatment sites. Until her retirement in December 2014, Dr. Heffron was the clinical director of Early Childhood Mental Health Training Programs under EIS where she also has clinical oversight for the Fussy Baby Program as well as multiple community consultation projects. Additionally, she directed the community-based Irving B. Harris Early Childhood Mental Health Training Program, and the EIS Consultation and Training Team (CATT). Dr. Heffron continues to work with these programs as a consultant and mentor. Dr. Heffron also participates on a statewide workgroup involved in the development, publication, and dissemination of competencies and training standards in infant and early childhood mental health. These standards, which have evolved into a statewide endorsement project, include a special section on reflective facilitation for those interested in developing skills in supervision and facilitation. (*see second page*)

Dr. Heffron's work has reflected her interest in integrating notions of infant mental health and social emotional wellness into a variety of health, education, social service and early intervention settings that make up systems of care for infants, young children and families. In addition to her work through UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, Dr. Heffron also maintains a small private practice in which she provides assessment, treatment consultation, and co-parenting services and reunification therapy to infants, children and families as well as supervision and consultation for selected projects.