

Fellowship Overview and Expectations

The 2025-2026 Fellowship is accepting applications from professionals and paraprofessionals whose work directly or indirectly impacts young children and/or their families. All disciplines are invited to apply.

Program Overview

The DMH + UCLA Early Childhood Fellowship supports the growth and wellbeing of professionals working with young children and families.

- For ten months, Fellows come together to learn, practice, and reflect on the application of key knowledge and skills that promote resilience in young children and their families.
- Fellows learn from national and local experts and collaborate with colleagues to create and implement innovative approaches that address the challenges faced by families with young children in their communities.

Program Description

The Early Childhood Fellowship:

- Provides a model of professional development that connects knowledge and practice through a curriculum that integrates seminal theoretical models with best practices in early intervention.
- Emphasizes relationship building, workforce wellbeing, and leadership skills to build a collaborative learning community that supports Fellows' professional and personal growth.
- Integrates a sociocultural lens throughout the program to create a learning environment that honors the strengths and challenges that characterize diverse and under-resourced communities.

Topics include:

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| ▪ Culturally informed approaches to early intervention | ▪ Self-regulation in children and caregivers |
| ▪ Principles of reflective practice | ▪ Relationship-based approaches to support healthy neurodevelopment |
| ▪ Facilitative leadership | ▪ Importance of fathers |
| ▪ Prenatal risk | ▪ School readiness |
| ▪ Early experience and brain development | ▪ Outdoor, nature-based approaches to promoting resilience |
| ▪ Perinatal mental health | |



Program Objectives

Fellows will:

- Explore key theoretical perspectives relevant to infant and early childhood mental health.
- Apply and refine trauma, resilience, and culturally informed practices in their early Childhood settings.
- Strengthen their leadership skills to advocate for improved services and resources in systems of care.
- Consider the relevance of and apply reflective practice principles in their work with young children and families, as well as interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and supervisees.
- Learn critical knowledge and skills that can be shared with parents, caregivers, families, and other early childhood professionals.

Eligibility

The Early Childhood Fellowship is open to professionals and paraprofessionals whose current work directly or indirectly impacts young children from birth to age six and/or their families. All disciplines and sectors are invited to apply.

- Applicants may work in a variety of organizational settings, including county or community agencies, early education or childcare settings, academic or research institutions, health care organizations or clinics, or advocacy organizations.
- Applicants may be from any discipline. Examples include child development, marriage and family therapy, medicine, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology, recreational therapy, social work, and speech and language therapy.
- Applicants' work may impact young children and/or their families through a variety of mechanisms, including:
 - Direct or indirect service provision, training, and/or supervision
 - Advocacy or public policy
 - Consultation
 - Research or program evaluation
- Applicants who are currently completing graduate school or postdoctoral fellowships are eligible to apply.

Preference will be given to applicants whose work impacts under-resourced communities.

Multiple participants within the same organization are invited to apply. However, please note that it is not guaranteed that every applicant from the same organization will be accepted.

Program Structure

Live Sessions:

- The Fellowship meets virtually (via Zoom) for Live Sessions over the course of ten months (September – June). Live Sessions occur two consecutive days (Friday-Saturday) *per month*, except for September, the first month of the Fellowship, which only has a Friday session.
- Sessions include didactic presentations and trainings with national and local leaders, experiential activities, Collaborative Learning Groups, and Reflective Practice Groups.
- Sessions typically run from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (exact starting and ending times may vary slightly), with about an hour break between morning and afternoon sessions, and shorter breaks scheduled throughout the day.

Pre-work (prior to Live Sessions):

- Fellows complete 1-2 hours of pre-work each month (reviewing slides, reading articles, and/or watching videos) so that they are prepared to contribute to group discussions and derive the most benefit from the sessions.

Collaborative Learning Groups:

- Fellows participate in small Collaborative Learning Groups during the Live Sessions to build their facilitative leadership skills and share how they applied their learning from the previous month.
- Each Fellow will facilitate one Collaborative Learning Group during the Fellowship by reviewing their group members' written reflections from the previous month in advance, identifying important themes, and preparing questions to guide a group discussion.

Reflective Practice Groups:

- Fellows participate in Reflective Practice Groups each month during the Live Sessions to explore the impact of their work on their own professional growth and personal wellbeing.
- Each group consists of a maximum of eight Fellows and will be led by an endorsed Reflective Practice Facilitator.
- Participation in Reflective Practice Groups address competencies identified by the [California Center for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health](#). Please see the Fellowship FAQ below for additional information.

Online Learning Community:

- Fellows remain connected with one another and the Fellowship team throughout (and after) the Fellowship through an online Learning Community where they can contribute to discussion posts, share resources, and access Fellowship materials (including presentation slides, handouts, and pre-session work).

Monthly Written Reflections:

- Fellows reflect upon, apply, and refine key knowledge and skills in their work settings following each month's Live Sessions.
- Fellows submit written reflections to the Learning Community describing their experiences applying their learning from the previous Live Sessions.

Culminating Projects:

- On teams of their choosing, Fellows will create a project based on their interests and professional goals to develop their leadership skills and bring about positive change in their organizations and communities. Fellows share lessons learned from the implementation of their project. Fellows should anticipate that it will take approximately 10 – 12 hours to complete their project outside of the Live Sessions.
- Projects can take many forms, including a new staff or parent resource, a proposal to enhance service delivery or community outreach at their organization, or some other creative endeavor. For example, Fellows can develop a staff training, parent workshop, therapeutic tool or resource for children, or social media campaign or video public service announcement related to an early childhood topic.

Program Requirements

One of the primary goals of this Fellowship is to create a positive, supportive, and respectful learning environment in which Fellows, Presenters, Reflective Practice Facilitators, and the Fellowship Team can share and exchange expertise and experiences in working with young children and their families. Consistent attendance and robust engagement in the Live Sessions, online Learning Community, and all other Fellowship activities are key to building relationships that will support such a learning environment.

Fellows must satisfy all the following Fellowship requirements to receive a Certificate of Completion. Please note, supervisors will be provided with updates regarding Fellows' satisfaction of the following requirements, as needed.

Fellowship Attendance and Participation in Live Sessions

- Fellows may not miss more than 16 hours of the Live Sessions held via Zoom.
- Fellows must participate **with their video on** during the virtual Live Sessions. Fellows should make arrangements in advance to have access to a computer or tablet equipped with a camera.
- Fellows are expected to complete assigned pre-work prior to each session.

Monthly Written Reflections

- Fellows must complete all Monthly Written Reflections and submit them by the due date, even if they were absent from a Live Session. Late and non-submissions will count as missed hours.

Participation in and Facilitation of Collaborative Learning Groups

- Fellows are expected to actively participate in Collaborative Learning Groups each month by coming prepared to discuss their experiences integrating new concepts and/or skills learned during the Live Sessions into their work.
- Fellows are required to facilitate one Collaborative Learning Groups during the Fellowship.

Culminating Projects

- Fellows must complete a Culminating Project.
- Fellows are expected to work collaboratively with the other members of their team to complete all project-related tasks in a timely manner. Late submissions and non-submissions will count as missed hours.

Professional Conduct

To maintain a respectful environment and mutually supportive learning community for all participants, the following code of conduct has been established for the Fellowship:

- Fellows are expected to:
 - come prepared and ready to actively engage in discussions, small group work, and experiential activities during the Live Sessions.
 - join on time and on camera and stay engaged for the full duration of each session.
 - notify the Fellowship Team by email at least ten days in advance of any anticipated absences and within two days following any unanticipated absences.
- Fellows are asked to be open to diverse perspectives on work in the early childhood landscape and are expected to express any difference of opinions with one another in a respectful manner.
- Fellows who are repeatedly late, leave early, go off camera for extended periods without communication, have multiple absences, do not communicate with the Fellowship Team about their absences, do not submit Monthly Written Reflections (or repeatedly submit them late), or engage in other behaviors that detract from the learning environment may be dismissed from the Fellowship.

Program Details

When

- September 2025 – June 2026
- **Live Sessions** will occur one **Friday-Saturday of each month** (September will only have a Friday session).
 - **Friday** and **Saturday** sessions will typically run from **9:00 AM to 5:00 PM**.
 - Please note that the end times may vary slightly for some days. Fellows will have advance notice of any modifications to the daily schedule.

Live Sessions on Zoom.	
Friday	Saturday
09/26/25	N/A
10/03/25	10/04/25
11/07/25	11/08/25
12/05/25	12/06/25
01/09/26	01/10/26
02/06/26	02/07/26
03/06/26	03/07/26
04/10/26	04/11/26
05/08/26	05/09/26
06/05/26	06/06/26

Where

- All Friday and Saturday Live Sessions will be held virtually via Zoom.

Cost

For Fellows who work in Los Angeles County:

- The fee for participation is \$500. Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health supports the Fellowship, allowing us to significantly reduce the cost for those who work in Los Angeles County.

For Fellows who work outside of Los Angeles County:

- The fee for participation is \$4,000.

Payment information:

- Applicants should discuss with their organization in advance how the fee will be paid.
- Once accepted into the Fellowship, applicants will receive instructions on how to submit payment by July 1, 2025, to secure their spot in the program.
- Applicants are encouraged to explore training funds available through their employers or consider applying for scholarship opportunities through professional or philanthropic organizations. Please note that scholarships are not available through the Fellowship.

Continuing Education

- UCLA Division of Population Behavioral Health is an [approved sponsor](#) by the American Psychological Association to provide continuing education for psychologists. Professionals who typically request CEs include licensed psychologists, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. We suggest you check with your state licensing board to see if these CEs will meet your requirements.
- If your license is with the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS), refer to this page to see which organizations are recognized by the board as approved agencies: https://www.bbs.ca.gov/licensees/cont_ed.html. Fellows will receive CEs for the sessions they attend in full and for which they complete an evaluation. Typically, at least 30 CEs are available.

Application Process

Timeline:

- Applications will be accepted until **Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 11:59 PM.**
 - Your supervisor must complete a recommendation form by **Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 11:59 PM** in order for your application to be considered.
- Applicants will be notified of decisions by **Wednesday, June 18, 2025.**
- Applicants who are not accepted in the first round of decisions may be placed on a waitlist and contacted if a spot becomes available.
- Accepted applicants required to submit payment by **Tuesday, July 1, 2025.**

Steps of the Application Process:

1. **Login or create a free account on the Wellbeing for LA Learning Center to access the online Application (<https://learn.wellbeing4la.org/ecf/apply>).**
2. Fill out the Application sections with general information such as education/training, organization information and field of work.
3. Respond to 4 short answer questions in the Professional Interests and Goals section of the Application ([preview this section](#)).
4. Provide the name and email address of your supervisor so they can complete a recommendation form ([preview this form](#)). A link to the online form will be sent directly to your supervisor after you submit your application.
5. Upload a PDF of your CV/Resume.

Selection criteria and considerations in admission decisions:

- Current work that directly or indirectly impacts young children and/or their families, especially those in under-resourced communities
- Clearly articulated goals for the applicant's learning experience
- Commitment to satisfying all Fellowship requirements (listed above on page 5)
- Supervisor's recommendation of the applicant and organization's commitment to support the Fellow's training experience.
 - It is highly recommended that all applicants discuss participation in the Fellowship with their supervisor(s) and program managers before completing an application.
For DMH employees: Program manager and supervisor approval are required.
- Thoughtfulness and completeness of the application
- Representation of a diversity of organizations, sectors, and disciplines

Need more information?

- Review our **FAQ** (included in this packet).
- Contact us via email at ECFinfo@wellbeing4LA.org.
- **Register on our website** to join one of our **Information Sessions** held on Zoom.
 - Information Session #1: **Tuesday, March 11 12:00 to 1:00 PM PT**
 - Information Session #2: **Wednesday, April 9 9:00 to 10:00 AM PT**

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

1. Who is eligible to apply?

The DMH + UCLA Early Childhood Fellowship is open to professionals and paraprofessionals whose current work directly or indirectly impacts young children aged birth to six years and/or their families.

Applicants may work in a variety of organizational settings, including county or community agencies, early education or childcare settings, academic or research institutions, health care organizations or clinic settings, or advocacy organizations.

Applicants' work may impact young children and/or their families through a variety of mechanisms, including:

- Direct or indirect service provision, training, and/or supervision
- Advocacy or public policy
- Consultation
- Research or program evaluation

2. What are the selection criteria?

- Current work that impacts young children and/or their families, especially those in under-resourced communities
- Clearly articulated goals for the applicant's learning experience
- Thoughtfulness and completeness of the application
- Commitment to satisfying all Fellowship requirements
- Representation of a diversity of organizations, sectors, disciplines, and experience levels
- Supervisor's recommendation of the applicant and organization's commitment to support the Fellow's training experience.
- *Some* preference will be given to applicants who apply with another colleague from their organization; however, individuals who apply as the sole representative of their organization will still be considered competitive. Please note that it is not guaranteed that every applicant from the same organization will be accepted.

3. Do I need to work within Los Angeles County?

No, you do not need to work within Los Angeles County. For the first time since its inception, the DMH + UCLA Early Childhood Fellowship is open to professionals or paraprofessionals working both inside and outside of Los Angeles County whose current work impacts young children aged birth to six years and/or their families.

4. Do I need to be a DMH employee to be eligible?

No, applicants are not required to be DMH employees. Applicants may work in a variety of organizational settings, including community agencies, early education, childcare, medical settings, academic or research institutions, or advocacy organizations.

5. I don't have extensive experience working with young children. Should I still apply?

Yes, individuals with a strong interest in working with this population should apply. We are looking for a group of Fellows with a diverse range of experiences. Our expectation is that some Fellows will have considerable experience working with young children and/or their families, whereas others may be relatively new to working with this population.

6. Do applicants need a supervisor's recommendation for their application?

Yes, applicants will be required to provide the name and email address of their direct supervisor in their application. If you do not have a direct supervisor, please reach out to us at ECFinfo@wellbeing4la.org.

After submitting the application, an applicant's supervisor will receive a link to complete a brief online recommendation form. The recommendation form will prompt an applicant's supervisor to answer a few questions about the applicant's role within their organization, the applicant's strengths, and how their organization would benefit from and support the applicant's participation in the Fellowship. Most supervisors report this form takes approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

Before applying, applicants should be sure to discuss their application to the Fellowship and the Fellowship's requirements with their supervisor.

Program

7. How is this Fellowship different from other professional development programs that focus on early childhood?

There are a number of other excellent professional development programs that are similarly focused on early childhood. The DMH + UCLA Early Childhood Fellowship focuses on some topics that are broadly relevant to work in early childhood and other topics that are especially relevant to working with young children and families within diverse, under-resourced communities (for example, the impact of immigration policies and family separation on young children). The Fellowship places a strong emphasis on the professional and personal wellbeing of early childhood professionals, and seeks to support Fellows in cultivating meaningful connections with a multidisciplinary network of professionals and paraprofessionals. The Fellowship also focuses on enhancing individuals' leadership skills through didactics and experiential activities.

8. Is there work Fellows must complete outside of the Live Sessions?

Yes, there is some work required outside of the Friday-Saturday sessions. Please note that the following times are estimates:

- Pre-work for Live Sessions: 1 - 2 hours per month.
- Contributions to the online Learning Community (including written reflections): 1 hour per month.
- Preparation to facilitate a Collaborative Learning Group: 2 hours total.
- Culminating Project: 10-12 hours total.

9. Can my participation in the Fellowship count towards endorsement through the California Center for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health?

Many of the Fellowship presentations address competencies identified by the [California Center for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health](#). Upon request, a certificate will be provided after the June Live Sessions with the breakdown of hours by domain. Please note that the California Center for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health does not endorse specific Fellowship programs. The certificate the Fellowship team provides is intended to support Fellows' applications for endorsement but does not guarantee that any specific hours will meet endorsement criteria.

Details and Logistics

10. How much does it cost to participate in the Fellowship?

The program cost for Fellows working **outside of** Los Angeles County is \$4,000. For Fellows **working in** Los Angeles County, the fee for participation is \$500. Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health supports the Fellowship, allowing us to significantly reduce the cost for those who work in Los Angeles County. Applicants are encouraged to explore training funds available through their employers or consider applying for scholarship opportunities through professional or philanthropic organizations. Please note that scholarships are not available through the Fellowship.

11. How long is the Fellowship?

The Fellowship runs from late September through early June. Refer to the Program Details for all session dates.

12. When and where are the Live Sessions? Is the Fellowship held virtually?

All Friday and Saturday Live Sessions will be held virtually via Zoom. Reference the *Program Details* section of the Overview for exact dates.

Friday and Saturday sessions typically run from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, but exact starting and ending times may vary slightly.

13. Should I still apply if I am not able to attend all the dates?

Fellows may not miss more than 16 hours of the Live Sessions. Before applying, please carefully review the dates of the Fellowship to ensure you do not already have conflicts with more than three Fellowship dates.

Consistent attendance and engagement in the Fellowship sessions and all related activities are key to building the kinds of relationships that will support a positive and respectful learning environment. Fellows are expected to reserve all Fellowship dates, attend consistently, and abide by the Fellowship the attendance and participation policies.

More questions? We are happy to help!

Please contact our team at ECFinfo@wellbeing4LA.org.