



South African Association for Infant Mental Health

Dear ZA-AIMH members and friends,

This newsletter includes information about our **June speaker**, a new **Ethics in Infant and Early Childhood mental health survey**, a reminder about the upcoming **Marcé congress**, a paper on **Mattering in early childhood** and information about **ZA-AIMH membership**. At our May meeting, Raeesa Kerbelker shared results of her study on infant feeding practices in Khayelitsha. If you missed this talk, please email us for a recording.

JUNE SPEAKER



We are very excited to introduce **Shelley O'Carroll** as our June speaker. She will present on the topic **A survey of organisations and digital tools that support responsive caregiving and early learning in very young children (birth to 3 years)**.

South Africa has a strong base of civil society organisations with experience developing and delivering contextually relevant caregiver support programmes with a focus on responsive caregiving and early learning. Much of this work is informed by evidence and the strengths and needs of local communities. A survey of organisations was conducted in mid-2025 by Hold My Hand in partnership with SAPPIN (South African Parenting Programme Implementers Network). In this talk, Shelley will share the survey findings and provide a picture of this important work to support caregivers of babies and young children.

Shelley started her career as a Teacher and Educational Psychologist and then went on to complete a doctorate at the Institute of Education, University of London. She was the founding director of Wordworks, a leading early literacy NGO, and led the organisation for 16 years. She has experience developing and implementing programmes to support early language and literacy development in under-resourced contexts, and in research exploring the impact of supporting caregivers and teachers in home, preschool and school settings. She is working as a consultant with a special interest in bridging early language and literacy research and practice.

Date: 18 June at 19:00
Cost: Free for ZA-AIMH members
R100 for guests
Registration link: [ZOOM](#)

Please send proof of payment to
zainfantmh@gmail.com

Banking details on next page



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Ethics and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Survey

Have you been challenged by ethical issues in your work? Practitioners are invited to share their experiences!

The **Ethics and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Survey** is being conducted by The Infant Mental Health Ethics Collaborative.

The purpose of this survey is to understand practitioners' experience of ethical issues in their work with infants and their families, and the resources they use to address these.

The survey is anonymous. WAIMH will not share WAIMH member or Affiliate member personal or contact information with the IMH Ethics Collaborative.

Read the background article:

<https://perspectives.waimh.org/2026/04/30/infant-and-early-childhood-mental-health-is-it-time-for-a-code-of-ethics/>

Complete the survey:

<https://redcap.link/ethicsandinfantmentalhealth>

Get in touch

🌐 www.infantmentalhealth.co.za

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International Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health conference

The Marcé congress will be hosted in Cape Town – the first time this event takes place on African soil. The conference will provide a platform to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and advance efforts to improve perinatal mental health globally.

Join us in Cape Town as we come together to strengthen our shared commitment to perinatal mental health for all.

Early Bird Registration has been extended until 30 June 2026.

For more information, visit:

<https://marceconference2026.com/>

ZA-AIMH Banking details:

Account name: WCAIMH

Standard Bank, Rondebosch

Account number: 274916401,

Branch code: 051001



South African Association for Infant Mental Health



Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Mattering in Early Childhood

Recently, the concept of mattering (the feeling that we are valued and have value to add to the world) has gained momentum among scientists and practitioners as a key ingredient for lifelong well-being. While mattering is important to us all, our sense of whether or not we matter—to our loved ones, our communities, and the world at large—begins in the earliest days of infancy.



While it's never too late to build a sense of mattering, when we start early, we can have an outsized positive effect on children's health and well-being across their lifespan.

When young children feel like they matter, it gives them emotional security, a stable foundation that supports their mental health in childhood and beyond. That emotional grounding helps fuel healthy development, fosters positive self-esteem, and gives children the confidence to try new things and take healthy risks. Learn more about the importance of mattering in early childhood in a recent paper co-authored by **Lindsey Burghardt** from the Harvard Centre on the Developing Child and **Jennifer B. Wallace**, founder of The Mattering Institute.

To access this lovely new resource, visit:
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/working-paper/mattering-in-early-childhood/>

ZA-AIMH MEMBERSHIP 2026

Membership to ZA-AIMH is open to anyone working in the field of infant mental health, including: *Social Workers *Midwives *Paediatricians *Psychologists *Occupational Therapists *Speech Therapists *Teachers *Nurses *Doctors *Childcare Workers

Membership spans from 1 January to 31 December. We have **maintained** the annual membership at R500. Membership allows you access to all talks throughout the year. The talks take place on the third Thursday of the month and 1 CPD point is earned for each talk attended. Membership also allows for active engagement with the decisions and processes involved in the establishment of ZA-AIMH.

To join ZA-AIMH, please send proof of payment to zainfantmh@gmail.com and complete the following membership form: <https://forms.gle/RyBHxpVC6SffA4tN6>

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