

## **The i-CAMHS Project in the Southern Trust CAMHS**

On 4th June 2012 the Step 2 Infant Mental Health Project (i-CAMHS) was set up within the Southern Trust's existing CAMHS Service to address the mental health needs of young children 0-3years where there were concerns regarding an infant's emotional presentation, the parent/s' issues were impacting on the developing parent child relationship and where despite intervention, professional or parental concern remained. Research has shown the importance of the early years and early intervention as indicated in attachment theory, neuroscience, and child development research as well as in the ACE study, the WAVE report and various other early intervention reports. Since 29th October 2012, referrals are received into i- CAMHS from SHSCT Multidisciplinary Trust Professionals via the single point of entry; CAMHS Teams [CAMHS.Teams@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:CAMHS.Teams@southerntrust.hscni.net)

Highly skilled and specialist interventions are offered to attending families, comprising of the Solihull approach, systemic practice, cognitive methods, psychoanalytical and child development theory, infant observation, video feedback, video interaction guidance (VIG), behavioural therapy, Sleep Scotland, Social Stories, and person centred intervention. All interventions to date are measured pre and post intervention using scales. Measureable data has indicated the following positive outcomes:

- A high number of attendees have engaged in and completed their program of care.
- Attendees value the input from the Practitioners.
- Improved parent infant dyads
- Improved mental well-being in infants and their parents
- Improved family functioning

Professional Consultation is also offered to requesting professionals. This reflective practice and multidisciplinary approach is valued as indicated in their evaluations. Attendees receive a detailed written summary of the Consultation which includes an agreed plan of care for the infant and family with the Signs of Safety model incorporated.

Infant mental health training is also provided by the Practitioners to Foster Carers residing in the Trust and, when possible depending on clinical capacity to Southern Trust professionals.

The Team Leader has previously represented i-CAMHS on the Trust Mellow Parenting Steering Group, is currently the Deputy Chairperson of the Regional Association of Infant Mental Health Northern Ireland (AIMHNI) and is an active participant in AViGUK-NI. She has also presented at various Southern Trust seminars, regionally at AIMHNI annual Conferences, PHA Annual Conference, Cross border and internationally at WAIMH Congress.