

For Immediate Release

Date: February 5, 2013

Infant Mental Health: Often Overlooked but Critical to a Child's Development

New Web Content for Parents/Caregivers Promotes Healthy Development, Identifies Warning Signs, and Provides Resources in CT for Early Intervention

Farmington, CT – The www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com website added a **new Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health section** for parents and caregivers. The new content provides information and resources on the critical, but often overlooked issue of mental health of children ages birth to 5. Research shows that between 9.5 and 14.2 percent of children in this age group experience social-emotional problems that negatively impact their functioning, development and school readiness.

"Healthy socio-emotional development begins at (and even before) birth and hinges on the early relationships that foster strong attachments between infants and toddlers and their parents or caregivers," according to Dr. Judith Meyers, President and CEO of the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI).

"This web content answers questions parents may have about how they can foster their child's healthy development and what they should do if they notice problems," added Dr. Robert Franks, Vice President of Mental Health Initiatives for CHDI and creator of the website.

The [Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health section](#) provides an extensive resource library filled with publications, facts and figures, links and a section on frequently asked questions specific to infant/early childhood mental health issues. It was written in partnership with Margaret Holmberg, President of the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health and includes:

- Ways to develop caring relationships
- Reaching important milestones in your child's social and emotional development
- Information on maternal depression
- Understanding how stress affects infants and young children
- How to get the best help for your infant or young child
- Infant/early childhood services and supports available in Connecticut and nationally

The Connecticut Center for Effective Practice (CCEP), a division of the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) initially developed www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com in November 2010 to serve as a free, comprehensive resource on children's mental health issues for parents and caregivers. When parents are first confronted with worries about their children's mental health, they often feel overwhelmed. The website provides a range of information in **English and Spanish** impacting infants to late teens. In 2012, two new sections were added on **Childhood Trauma** and **Mental Health in Schools**.

For more information, contact Julie Tacinelli [tacinelli@uchc.edu, 860-679-1534] or Cindy Langer [langner@uchc.edu, 860-679-1538].

Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) works to advance policy, systems, program and practice changes that will result in better health and developmental outcomes for the children of Connecticut. **The Connecticut Center for Effective Practice (CCEP)**, a division of CHDI, focuses on improving mental health care for children across Connecticut.

###