

# Babies in Our Minds: working therapeutically with parents and infants to promote secure attachment and parental mentalization



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## Course structure

### Module 1: Infant brain development + observation/recording skills

- How early relationships impact on the structure of the infant's brain, with long-term implications
- The impact of neglect and trauma on brain development and behaviour (parent and infant)
- Techniques for detailed observation and recording of infant behaviour and parent-infant interaction - why observe closely?

### Module 2: Attachment - the importance of positive early relationships, and how we can promote secure attachment

- Why do infants and children behave as they do?
- What is the impact of early life experience?
- What impact do parents have on the infant's social and emotional development?
- What is parental mentalization, attunement, and emotional regulation of the infant?
- How can we support parents to understand and attune to their infants?

### Module 3: Watching and waiting – promoting parental attunement through infant-led play

- Understanding the principles of the well-established therapeutic intervention *Watch, Wait and Wonder* (Muir 1992), the universal adaptation developed by Dr Zilibowitz in Australia, and the development of the Tavistock Clinic approach: *Watch Me Play!* (2020)
- How infant-led play can enhance parental sensitivity, attunement and bonding, and promote a more secure attachment in the infant
- Skills to use infant-led play in practitioners' own settings: all perinatal practitioners, whatever their role, can use this approach

### Module 4: Developing skills in structuring parent-infant interventions, and in reflective practice

- Further application of theory to practice: practitioner cases, using observation skills learned from Module 1
- Using genograms to highlight intergenerational transmission
- How to structure your parent-infant intervention?
- Working with colleagues to assess, and reach a coherent narrative (co-constructed with the client) to inform intervention

Modules 1-3 are standalone; Module 4 follows on from delivery of Modules 1& 2, and preferably after Module 3. Two Modules can be delivered on the same day, or different days, as preferred.

## Learning outcomes

- Understanding of **theoretical concepts in infant's social and emotional development, and parent-infant relationships**, including:
  - psychobiological brain development
  - emotional regulation
  - attachment security/insecurity & intergenerational transmission
  - parental mentalization, attunement and sensitivity
  - resilience
- **Application of theoretical concepts** to work with infants and their parents, including understanding the **infant's communication through behaviour and play**
- **Essential skills in detailed observation** and recording of infant behaviour and parent-infant interaction
- Essential skills in **building robust therapeutic relationships with parents**, to enable them to support their infant's emotional development and secure attachment
- More thorough **assessment** of emotional needs of parent and infant, and what the parent may be bringing to parenting from their own history (intergenerational transmission)
- **Reduced risk and better safeguarding**, and more effective communication with the professional network.

## Knowledge and understanding

*Babies in Our Minds (BIOM)* increases practitioners' knowledge and understanding of the **impact of the family environment** (caregivers' capacity for mentalization, attunement and sensitivity) on the social, emotional and cognitive development of infants, and their ongoing emotional wellbeing through life.

Detailed reference lists are provided, including references for academic journal articles, books and websites, to support self-directed learning.

## Skill development

*Babies in Our Minds (BIOM)* supports the development of essential skills in delivering parent-infant interventions.

*BIOM* supports skills identified in the ***Perinatal Mental Health Competency Framework***, and the ***Infant Mental Health Competency Framework***. *Babies In Our Minds* is in the process of being 'recognised' by the Association for Infant Mental Health (AIMH) UK, *Infant Mental Health Recognition Register* <https://imhrr.co.uk/>

*BIOM* emphasises the importance of **detailed observation, reflection and analysis**.

- **Guidelines** are provided on how to observe and record infant behaviour, and parent-infant interaction
- Understanding is enhanced through **microanalysis of audio-visual recordings** showing parent-infant interaction
- **Trainer case examples** illustrate the value of detailed observation in increasing our understanding
- Practitioners have the opportunity to bring their **own case examples** for in-depth discussion, applying theory to practice.

## Assessment, safeguarding and intervention

Assessment of the parent-infant relationship requires an understanding of the **complexity** of this relationship.

Understanding the complexity of the parent-infant relationship contributes to **more effective assessment, safeguarding and intervention with parents and infants**.

*BIOM* explores **intergenerational transmission**: what parents bring to their parenting of infants, from their own childhood experiences of being parented, and the impact of their own past trauma and unresolved difficulties on their bond with their infant.

Practitioners have the opportunity to reflect on their own work (through case discussions) and recognise the value of beginning conversations with clients about possible intergenerational links, in order to promote change.

Practitioners are encouraged to discuss with colleagues, share thoughts and their own responses to the family, in order to increase understanding – multi-disciplinary work is essential.

Participants are enabled to **integrate theory and practice**, providing a **solid basis for assessment of emotional needs and therapeutic intervention, and effective communication with the network**.

## Background to Babies in Our Minds

*BIOM* was created, and is delivered, by Rachel Pardoe (Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist) who has over 27 years' experience of working in the NHS in CAMHS and perinatal services. Rachel has provided training to staff in the NHS, education and social care, since 2000.

*BIOM* has been delivered to date as follows:

Date	Commissioner	Practitioners	No. attended
Nov-Dec 2020	Cornwall & Somerset NHS Foundation Trusts	Perinatal practitioners & midwifery	15
March 2020	Cornwall NHS Foundation Trust	Perinatal practitioners, health visitors and family workers	11
April-June 2019	NHS England	Perinatal practitioners in the south west region	20
2018-19	Avon & Wiltshire MH Partnership Trust	Perinatal practitioners	40

*BIOM* has received highly positive feedback (evaluation reports available on request). *BIOM* has been adapted from workshops and courses delivered by Rachel Pardoe since 2004.

*2015-ongoing*: EarlyYES *Who Am I?* 5-day course delivered to 110 practitioners in Wales and Swindon (including Health Visitors, Midwives, Social Workers, Family Workers, Youth Workers, CAMHS mental health practitioners, and voluntary sector family worker staff).

*2011-2016*: 5-day training delivered within a Bristol NHS Trust to over 180 health visitors and early years practitioners.

## Practitioner feedback

Feedback on BIOM from perinatal staff in the south west:

*BIOM training has **completely changed my way of thinking about how people's histories play such a significant role in their own parenting styles.** I also feel that my **knowledge base has significantly expanded** and I am able to provide a better service to the individuals I work with.*

*The two days have been **incredibly helpful in upskilling and will definitely impact on my day to day work** with families. (Mental Health Nurse)*

*I enjoyed the course and found it very useful. I have since been able to be **much more reflective during my observations of parent-infant interactions** and have been able to write **more comprehensive assessments** regarding observations of attachment.*

*There were many useful points and **although I have learned about attachment before, today it made more sense.** The teaching was at the right pace and kept my interest throughout – thank you. I will be taking a lot from it! (Mental Health Nurse)*

***Focus on the baby** – with years as an adult Mental Health professional, it's been great to be able to view the baby holistically in the sessions. I value the shared discussion and found reading lists very helpful to guide learning. (Occupational Therapist)*

*Revisiting theory of attachment, and then **directly applying the theory to our role/service** – **made even richer with the case studies.** (Mental Health Nurse)*

*Helpful to think about recording observations of parent/infant interactions in an accurate and helpful way. **Voice of the child** to be used in all interventions/contacts. (Mental Health Nurse)*

*I found the **techniques for recording observations** very helpful to record the voice of the child – feel more confident on how to record my observations. (Perinatal MH Worker)*

*The **language** used when talking to parents and documenting these engagements is so important, and I feel like these sessions **have supported my use of terminology more positively and appropriately.***

***All of it useful!** Focus on infant observation. Neuropsychology stuff. (Perinatal Clinical Psychologist)*

***Very experienced trainer.** Increased my knowledge and understanding around the importance of early brain development. Excellent training. (Senior FSW, Specialist Pre-Birth Service)*

*Excellent use of DVD examples – thank you for showing us what happens when it doesn't go well. (Perinatal MH Worker)*

***I have thoroughly enjoyed the course, it has been very interactive, despite being online, and extremely stimulating and thought provoking.** The skills and knowledge I have learned with inevitably impact on my practice alongside further reading from the **extensive reading list** provided. I would like to take the opportunity to **thank Rachel for her commitment, compassion and enthusiasm for having 'babies in our minds' in the delivery of the course.***

*Good discussions throughout and caseloads we went through. **My knowledge has definitely improved and would highly recommend this course.***

Practitioner feedback over many years demonstrates that **EarlyYES training contributes significantly to workforce development, enabling practitioners to access up-to-date knowledge and skills.**

## Course delivery

*Babies In Our Minds* is designed as a modular training, which can be delivered as required.

Modules 1-3 are standalone.

Module 4 follows on from delivery of Modules 1& 2, and preferably after Module 3.

It is recommended that there is a **1-2 week gap between each module**, to allow time for reflection and application of learning.

Maximum number of practitioners for each module: **15**

Training delivered **online** using Zoom. Modules usually delivered as half days, 9.30-13.00.

**Face to face delivery:** available if commissioned for minimum 10 practitioners. Travel expenses and overnight accommodation (if required) will need to be added.

## Course fees:

BIOM Module	Duration	Fee per person per module
Module 1	Full day: 7 hours	£120
Module 2	Full day: 7 hours	£120
Module 3	Half day: 3.5 hours	£70
Module 4 (follows 1, 2 & preferably 3)	Half day: 3.5 hours	£70

10% Discount available if booking 5 or more practitioners.

Example costs 5 practitioners:

BIOM Modules	Fee per person	Cost for 5 practitioners	10% discount	Total cost
Module 1 or 2 alone	£120	£600	£60	<b>£540</b>
Modules 1 & 2	£240	£1,200	£120	<b>£1,080</b>
Modules 1-3	£310	£1,550	£155	<b>£1,395</b>
Modules 1-4	£380	£1,900	£190	<b>£1,710</b>

For further information, please contact:

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