

# Mothers and Babies Alignment with Illinois Early Learning Guidelines

## Overview

The Mothers and Babies (MB) Course is a postpartum depression prevention intervention initially developed as a 12-session group intervention. More recently, it has been used as an eight-session group intervention and as a six-session group intervention. The six-session group version of the MB course is conducted weekly for two hours. It has been used in home visiting programs and has demonstrated positive outcomes for women who receive the MB course. Based on feedback from home visiting programs that indicated they would also like to deliver the MB course material individually to home visiting families, the developers of the six-session version of the MB course have developed the **Mothers and Babies 1-on-1 Curriculum (MB 1-on-1 Course)**. The MB 1-on-1 course takes the same core content found in the six-session group version of the MB course but delivers the core content via 12 brief sessions. These brief sessions are designed to last 15–20 minutes.

The MB Instructor’s Manual provides additional detail on the theory behind the MB course. In short, the MB course is based on principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and attachment theory. A basic way of defining CBT is that it attempts to change a person’s cognitions (thoughts) and behaviors to improve their mood. A basic way of defining attachment theory is that the quality of the relationship a child forms with his/her primary caregiver (usually the mother) during infancy has a sustained effect on that child’s behavior.

The three main components of CBT are pleasant activities, thoughts, and contact with others. The MB course is, therefore, divided into three sections—one on each of these CBT components. In each of these sections, participants are first taught to understand how the component influences her mood. This teaching of the relationships between CBT components and mood is referred to as psychoeducation. In addition to psychoeducation, participants also receive concrete skills in each of the three sections (pleasant activities, thoughts, contact with others). These skills are intended to provide participants with a “toolkit” of approaches they can use to improve their mood.

To further make the CBT concepts relevant for low-income ethnically diverse populations, who often have difficult life circumstances, the creator of the MB course (Dr. Ricardo Muñoz) has discussed these important CBT concepts as a way of managing one’s inner and outer reality to help manage their mood. Briefly, our inner reality refers to the thoughts that we have, which are not observable. Our outer or external reality refers to the behaviors that we engage in (whether alone, as in the case of pleasant activities) or with others (as in the case of contacts with others). It is important to help participants know that both our inner and outer realities can affect our emotions or mood. Part of this course will be to help participants manage their mood by changing their inner reality (have more helpful thoughts, decrease harmful thoughts) and/or outer reality (have more pleasant activities, improved contacts with others).

Elements of attachment theory are also integrated into the MB course. Throughout the curriculum there is an emphasis on highlighting how parents can develop and strengthen a positive and affectionate bond with their baby. The curriculum does this by making connections between the CBT components and the development of positive and affectionate bonding between mother and infant.

Although the MB course is delivered to pregnant women and women who are new mothers, the skills that are taught during the course are useful regardless of whether an individual is pregnant or just delivered a baby, and throughout life.

**List of materials used within the Mothers and Babies Program that address content in the Illinois Early Childhood Guidelines:**

Mothers and Babies Course 1-on-1 Home Visitor Field Guide and companion participant workbook (<http://www.mothersandbabiesprogram.org/providers-interventionists/access-to-curricula/>)

***Developmental Domain 1: Social & Emotional Development***

<p><i>Attachment Relationships</i>  <i>Emotional Expression</i>  <i>Relationship with Adults</i>  <i>Self-Concept</i>  <i>Relationship with Peers</i>  <i>Empathy</i></p>	<p><b>Session 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stressors can affect mother, baby, and the mother-baby relationship</li> <li>• Stress management skills can help mother and she can in turn teach her baby and other family members the skills she learns in MB</li> <li>• The importance of parents as their baby’s first teachers, especially in their first three years of life</li> <li>• Reading, playing, and singing with your baby will help their emotional and physical development</li> </ul> <p><b>Session 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mothers can do pleasant activities with their babies that can affect both mother’s and baby’s mood</li> </ul> <p><b>Session 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to teach your child to have a healthy mood</li> <li>• The way that you speak to your baby will teach him/her to understand you better as they grow up</li> </ul> <p><b>Session 10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humans by nature are social beings</li> <li>• Ways to increase and improve the quality of social support for both mother and baby</li> <li>• The stronger your support system, the better you and your baby’s health will be</li> </ul>
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***Developmental Domain 2: Physical Development & Health***

<p><i>Gross Motor</i>  <i>Fine Motor</i>  <i>Perceptual</i>  <i>Self-Care</i></p>	<p><i>n/a</i></p>
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**Developmental Domain 3: Language Development, Communication, & Literacy**

<p><i>Social Communication</i>  <i>Receptive Communication</i>  <i>Expressive Communication</i>  <i>Early Literacy</i></p>	<p><b>Session 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babies and young children learn by playing</li> <li>• Doing activities with your baby will help baby develop physically and emotionally and will strengthen your relationship with your baby</li> <li>• There are things babies enjoy doing from birth, so it is never too early to begin planning and doing pleasant activities with your baby</li> <li>• Your baby’s developmental level affects whether s/he enjoys a given activity. As babies develop, different activities become pleasant</li> <li>• All babies are different, so you need to learn to read their signals to determine which activities your baby will find pleasant and to understand how your baby learns best</li> </ul>
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**Developmental Domain 4: Cognitive Development**

<p><i>Concept Development</i>  <i>Memory</i>  <i>Spatial Relationships</i>  <i>Symbolic Thought</i>  <i>Creative Expression</i>  <i>Logic &amp; Reasoning</i>  <i>Quantity &amp; Numbers</i>  <i>Science Concepts</i>  <i>&amp; Exploration</i>  <i>Safety &amp; Well Being</i></p>	<p><b>Session 7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to teach your child to have a healthy mood</li> </ul> <p><b>Session 8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mothers play an important role in shaping their babies’ thoughts</li> <li>• Learning to think is like learning to talk—babies learn to think and talk by observing how their mothers think and talk</li> <li>• This affects how they behave with their children and how they think about themselves, their mother, and their relationship</li> <li>• You can teach your baby to think in such a way that s/he will feel good about herself and you</li> </ul>
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**Approaches to Learning**

<p><i>Curiosity &amp; Initiative</i>  <i>Problem Solving</i>  <i>Confidence &amp; Risk-Taking</i>  <i>Persistence, Effort,</i>  <i>&amp; Attentiveness</i>  <i>Creativity, Inventiveness,</i>  <i>&amp; Imagination</i></p>	<p>n/a</p>
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