



**Media Contact:**

Michael Graubard

[Michael@whyforgood.com](mailto:Michael@whyforgood.com)

206-898-0706

**Washington State Nonprofits Join Forces to Launch Infant Mental Health Center**

*Merger To Establish a Center for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health  
Workforce Development, Advocacy and Endorsement*

**SEATTLE, Wash.** (July 11, 2023) -- The Board of Directors of Childhaven and Washington Association for Infant Mental Health (WA-AIMH) have voted unanimously to merge organizations effective July 1, 2023. Through the merger, the organizations are joining forces to launch a center for workforce development in infant and early childhood mental health.

The needs for mental health services among children and families across Washington state are at an all-time high. And yet, the early childhood systems of care are losing staff and are underprepared to serve the developmental needs of children in the earliest years. “While Childhaven remains dedicated to delivering a comprehensive continuum of care from birth, we recognized we would never truly be able to scale our impact if we didn’t focus more on growing, diversifying, and better supporting the early childhood workforce,” said Childhaven CEO, Jon Botten. “The more we discussed our complementary strengths, it became clear that launching the workforce development initiative in conjunction with WA-AIMH allows both organizations to jointly expand our mission, enhance our impact and improve our effectiveness,” said Mike Rodden, Childhaven Board Chair.

The Washington Association for Infant Mental Health was founded in 2014 to educate, support, and advocate for service providers in Washington State to improve the well-being of babies and young children, while advancing racial equity and belonging for marginalized communities. “As advocates for infant and early childhood mental health across Washington state, we share in Childhaven’s mission and passion to bring infant mental health awareness and practices to all segments of early childhood care,” said Nick Flett, WA-AIMH Board President. He added, “with a century of experience in serving children and families, we believe Childhaven’s expertise, extensive program offerings, and vision for infant and early childhood mental health, will make them a critical partner in growing our work and meeting the workforce development needs within communities across our state.”

Under this merger, WA-AIMH becomes part of Childhaven with continued membership in the national [Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health](#), serving as our state’s central resource for IECMH endorsement and training. WA-AIMH’s Executive Director, Kelli Bohanon, retains that role in leading and launching the workforce development initiative. “I’m thrilled to become part of this forward-thinking organization that, like us, recognizes that the status quo isn’t working and sees the potential to create greater impact through community engagement and workforce development,” said Bohanon. Bohanon will lead development of the hub to

deliver dynamic, evidence-informed, accessible, and affordable in-person and online resources, trainings, and tools for a wide range of providers and for anyone who wants more information on how to best support the mental and relational health of young children and their families.

The workforce development hub is slated to launch Fall 2023 and will operate as an extension of the Childhaven brand, expanding the organization's footprint statewide and beyond. For more information, visit <https://childhaven.org/programs/capacity-building/> or contact Jon Botten, CEO of Childhaven ([jonb@childhaven.org](mailto:jonb@childhaven.org)).

### **About Childhaven**

Since 1909, [Childhaven](#) has been a safe and caring place for young children and families in the Puget Sound. Childhaven's healing-centered framework embeds relational health, trauma-informed care, racial equity, and social justice in all places in which children and families live, learn, and play. Childhaven's mission is to partner with parents and the community to strengthen families, prevent childhood trauma, and prepare children for a lifetime of well-being.

### **About WA-AIMH**

Our vision is for Washington State babies and young children, their families, and service providers, especially those from marginalized communities, to thrive and reach their full potential. To achieve this, [WA-AIMH](#) educates, supports, and advocates for service providers in Washington State to improve the wellbeing of babies and young children, while advancing racial equity and belonging for marginalized communities.