



State Strategies to Improve Services for Infants and Toddlers

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**The earliest years
present an
unmatched
opportunity to
effectively intervene
with at-risk children**

Infants and Toddlers in the US

- **48% live in low-income families, 13% with unemployed parents, and 35% with a single parent**
- **1/3 of births are covered by Medicaid**
- **Only 75% of 2-year-olds are fully immunized**
- **36% of TANF families have at least one child under 3**
- **31% of children entering foster care are under 3**
- **63% of mothers with infants are in the labor force, but child care subsidies serve only 1 in 6 eligible children**
- **Less than 4% of eligible children participate in EHS and less than 3% receive Part C early intervention**

ZERO TO THREE's Policy Agenda

Health:

- Physical Health
- Social & Emotional Health
- Developmental Screening

Family Strengthening:

- Basic Needs
- Family Support
- Home Visiting
- Child Welfare
- Paid Family Leave

Early Learning:

- Child Care
- Early Head Start
- Early Intervention



**Good
Health**

**Strong
Families**

**Positive
Early Learning
Experiences**

Comprehensive Early Childhood System Equation



Services + Infrastructure = System

Accessible

High Quality

Culturally Responsive

Inclusive

Define & Coordinate Leadership

Recruit & Engage Stakeholders

Finance Strategically

Enhance & Align Standards

Create & Support Improvement

Ensure Accountability

- **Embed maternal depression screening and response into services for mothers of very young children**
- **Conduct developmental screening of all infants and toddlers and refer to needed services**
- **Provide infant and early childhood mental health consultation in all settings serving infants and toddlers**



Andrea Booher

Strategies—Strong Families

- **Reach parents of young children where they are to offer parenting support**
- **Establish a strong system of high-quality home visiting services**
- **Infuse a developmental approach into child welfare services for infants and toddlers**
- **Expand access to paid family leave**



Strategies—Positive Early Learning Experiences

- Find out where the babies are and who is caring for them
- Provide supports for home-based child care providers
- Expand access to EHS services
- Develop an infant-toddler specialist network to support programs serving infants and toddlers
- Include a specific focus on infants and toddlers in QRIS standards and supports



- **Develop and implement Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers**
- **Develop core knowledge and competencies and implement credentials for those working with infants and toddlers**
- **Include data on infants and toddlers in comprehensive, integrated data systems**
- **Create a financing mechanism to expand services for infants, toddlers, and their families**

Home Visiting in the States

- **MIECHV is a new (2010) federal program administered by HHS that provides states with funds to support evidence-based home visiting programs**
- **MIECHV TA Coordinating Center, operated by ZERO TO THREE, provides TA to state grantees**
- **States differ in:**
 - ***Extent to which home visiting services existed previously***
 - ***Amount of state funding for home visiting***
 - ***Home visiting models chosen for funding***

Home Visiting in the States

- All states are using funds to:
 - *Provide direct services to families*
 - *Develop the capacity to measure benchmarks and CQI*
 - *Build state-level capacity to administer and coordinate a home visiting system*
- Current priorities of states:
 - *Data on benchmarks and data systems*
 - *Core competencies and training for home visitors*
 - *Centralized intake and service coordination mechanisms*
 - *Funding and sustainability*
- More progress in developing a system of the various models than in integrating with the broader early childhood and health systems

Resources on Infants and Toddlers

Publications by ZERO TO THREE Policy Center:

- ***National Baby Facts and State Baby Facts:***
www.zerotothree.org/policy/statebabyfacts
- ***Many other infant-toddler policy resources***
www.zerotothree.org/public-policy

