State Strategies to Improve Services for Infants and Toddlers

Barbara Gebhard
ZERO TO THREE
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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
Strategies—Good Health

- 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
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
Strategies—System

- 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](http://www.zerotothree.org/policy/statebabyfacts)

- Many other infant-toddler policy resources
  [www.zerotothree.org/public-policy](http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy)

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