



Child Care Helps America Work and Learn



Administration for Children & Families

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The Recovery Act Expands Services for Infants and Toddlers

The first three years of life are a crucial time of development, affected by the quality of relationships with others as well as learning environments. Parents, providers, policymakers, and the public all play important roles in helping ensure infants and toddlers have good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences. This issue of the Office of Child Care's *Child Care Helps America Work and Learn* focuses on how States across the country are using investments made possible through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) to ensure young children benefit from care.

Using Recovery Act funds, States are investing in new and existing initiatives that help foster infant and toddler early learning through increased parent and provider awareness of child development. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Administrators are also helping providers gain knowledge and skills needed to work most effectively with this age group. Quality enhancements through development of specialist networks and training are priorities. Although Recovery Funds are ending, States are working very hard to sustain their Recovery efforts. The following examples demonstrate the many innovative Recovery-funded approaches/activities States have successfully sustained.

In addition to these great examples, new resources have been developed and are available at: <http://nitcci.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/resources/index.htm>.

- Developing a Statewide Network of Infant and Toddler Specialists: Technical Assistance Manual.
- A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and their Families: Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions.

The *Guide to Effective Consultation* is a collaborative effort of ACF Region I's CKC Workgroups. The Guide defines the core knowledge, competencies (CKC), and dispositions for consultants working in all early care and education settings and sectors serving infants, toddlers, and their families.

I hope the resources and stories in this issue inspire continued improvements for our country's youngest children.

Shannon L. Rudisill
Director
Office of Child Care
Administration for Children and Families

Significant Training Boost for Providers

Thanks to Recovery Act funding, infant and toddler providers across the country are gaining valuable training opportunities so that they can provide optimal care for our country's youngest.

In **Louisiana**, more than \$1.9 million supports the Beginning with Babies Pilot project, which provides training based on Child Development Associate competencies and is available for up to 360 infant and toddler teachers and program directors. It focuses on increasing knowledge, skills, and understanding of the importance played in healthy social and emotional development and later school readiness. Louisiana will sustain these efforts by integrating its Core Knowledge and Competencies, Early Learning Guidelines, and future training—into online training to provide continued practitioner support.

Using \$1 million, the Nurturing Homes Initiative Project will recruit and enroll additional family child care providers in **Mississippi**. This project offers one-on-one instruction, including demonstration methods, hands-on activities, and follow-up visits by program instructors. This intensive training enhances quality of care, while recruitment increases providers serving infants and toddlers—helping reduce Mississippi's waiting list for child care assistance. Mississippi is using its targeted funds to sustain the Nurturing Homes Initiative Project.



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Recovery Act Funding Promotes Early Learning for Country's Youngest

With the infusion of Recovery Act funds, States are making important investments in new and existing initiatives that boost the early learning of infants and toddlers—helping promote their healthy development and later school readiness.

Using \$150,000, **Alabama** is expanding Baby TALK (Teaching Activities for Learning and Knowledge)—a comprehensive program fostering parents' knowledge and ability to support their young children's early learning and development. This researched-based, community model provides parents with instruction, books, and activities. Services and resources are delivered through a hospital, as well as health departments and clinics. The Baby TALK program will be sustained through the University of Alabama.



Infant and Toddler Care Gets Big Quality Enhancements

The Recovery Act is playing a key role to ensure infant and toddler providers meet high-quality standards critical for young children's healthy development.

Massachusetts used \$50,000 toward development of Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers. To meet its goal of statewide guidelines integration, these will be embedded within Massachusetts's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). Massachusetts will use CCDF funds to print a Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers parent guide.

In order to foster practitioners' understanding, adoption, and application of guidelines in their work, the State is creating a course that may be completed in a self-study format, face-to-face with a cohort, or for college credit.

Enhancing Practitioner Supports through Infant/Toddler Specialist Networks

With the help of Recovery Act funds, States strengthened their systems of career development for the workforce through investment in Infant/Toddler Specialist Networks (ITSN).

Ohio allocated approximately \$3.2 million to support its existing ITSN, scaling up capacity from 12 to 24 specialists. Specialists are required to become certified in the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) in addition to having a bachelor's degree and previous experience with infants, toddlers, and adult learners. Ohio is also partnering with South Carolina to develop *Strengthening Professional Practices of Infant Toddler Care teachers*, an infant/toddler field guide, based on efforts to support teachers with everyday needs they might encounter on the front line. The field guide will provide an avenue to sustain the work of Ohio's ITSN.

Maryland developed a similar field guide and also used \$1,150,962 to invest in its existing ITSN. The State will be able to sustain its ITSN through CCDF targeted funds.

Illinois used more than \$3.8 million to develop its Infant Toddler Child Care Specialist Program—a network of highly skilled individuals located at the State's 16 resource and referral agencies. These specialists conduct onsite visits assisting providers with assessment and evaluation. They offer targeted training and technical assistance in all types of child care settings, leading to improved environments for infants and toddlers. The program will be sustained through the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Infant and Toddler Quick Facts

CCDF Plans for FY 2010–2011 reveal Lead Agencies use targeted funds for early care and education systems that promote healthy development of infants and toddlers:

- More than 94 percent enhance professional development activities for infant and toddler caregivers;
- Nearly 66 percent are improving infant and toddler classrooms and literacy initiatives;
- Nearly half support infant and toddler specialist networks; and
- Approximately 32 percent support Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, rate increases related to improved quality, and overall quality in infant and toddler settings.

ABOUT THE RECOVERY ACT

The Recovery Act (Public Law 111-5) provided \$2 billion in supplemental funding to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) for grants to States, Territories, and Tribes for child care assistance to low-income families and investments for improving the quality and availability of child care. CCDF Lead Agencies were required to obligate their CCDF Recovery Act awards by September 30, 2010, and expend all CCDF Recovery Act awards by September 30, 2011. Section 1512 of the Recovery Act requires recipients of Recovery Act funds to submit quarterly reports detailing the use and impact of the funds, including jobs created and retained. The reports are available to the public at www.recovery.gov.

About the Office of Child Care

The Office of Child Care (OCC) was established in September 2010 and replaces the former Child Care Bureau. OCC administers the CCDF program, a multibillion-dollar Federal and State partnership to support access to high-quality child care for working families. OCC helps States, Territories, and Tribes administer their CCDF programs through program support, policy guidance, technical assistance, and research.