

# Caring for Babies: How State Child Care Policies Can Support Continuity



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# Presentation Overview

- Making the case for infants and toddlers.
- Supporting continuity through child care policies.
- Policy assessment
  - How do *your* state's policies support stable, quality care for babies and toddlers?



# A Path to Policy Change

## Information Collection

- Parents
- Providers
- Staff
- Data analysis

## Comparative Analysis

- Demographic
- Regional

## Policy Assessment

- Identify Policy Gaps
- Identify Appropriate Actor(s)
- Identify Obstacles

## Opportunities for Change

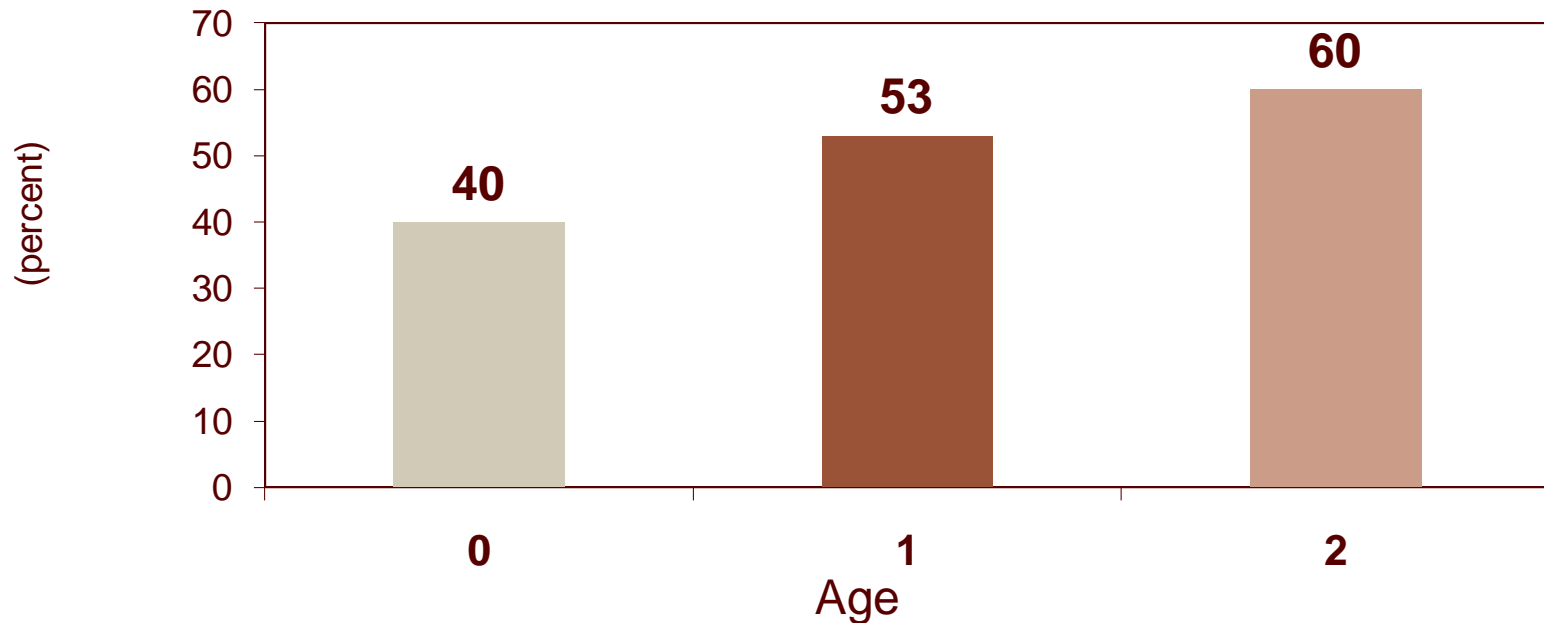
- Administrative
- Regulatory
- Legislative
- Executive

# Making the Case for Infants and Toddlers

Information Collection/Comparative  
Analysis

# Many babies and toddlers are in child care

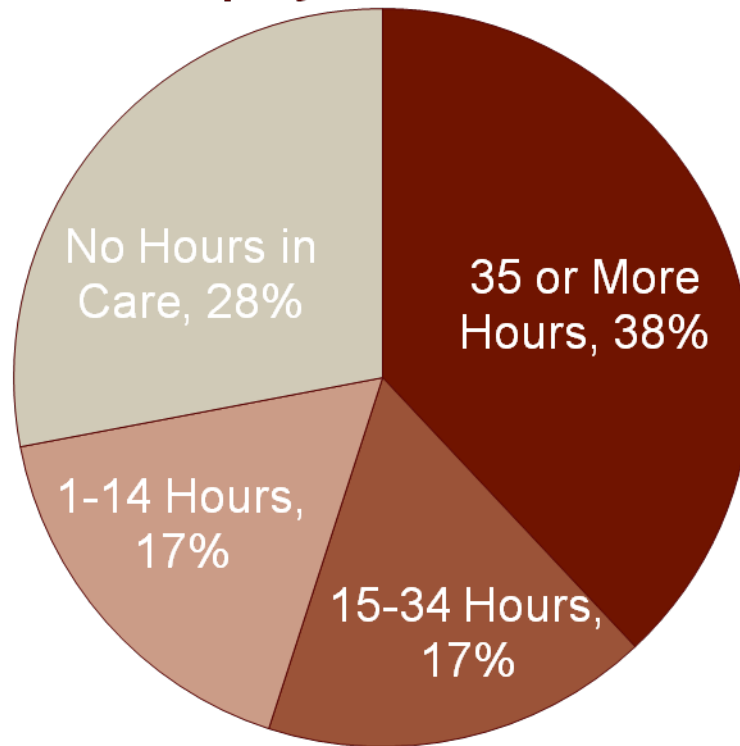
## Percentage of Children in Care by Age



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Program, National Household Education Survey 2001.

# Babies are in child care for many hours...

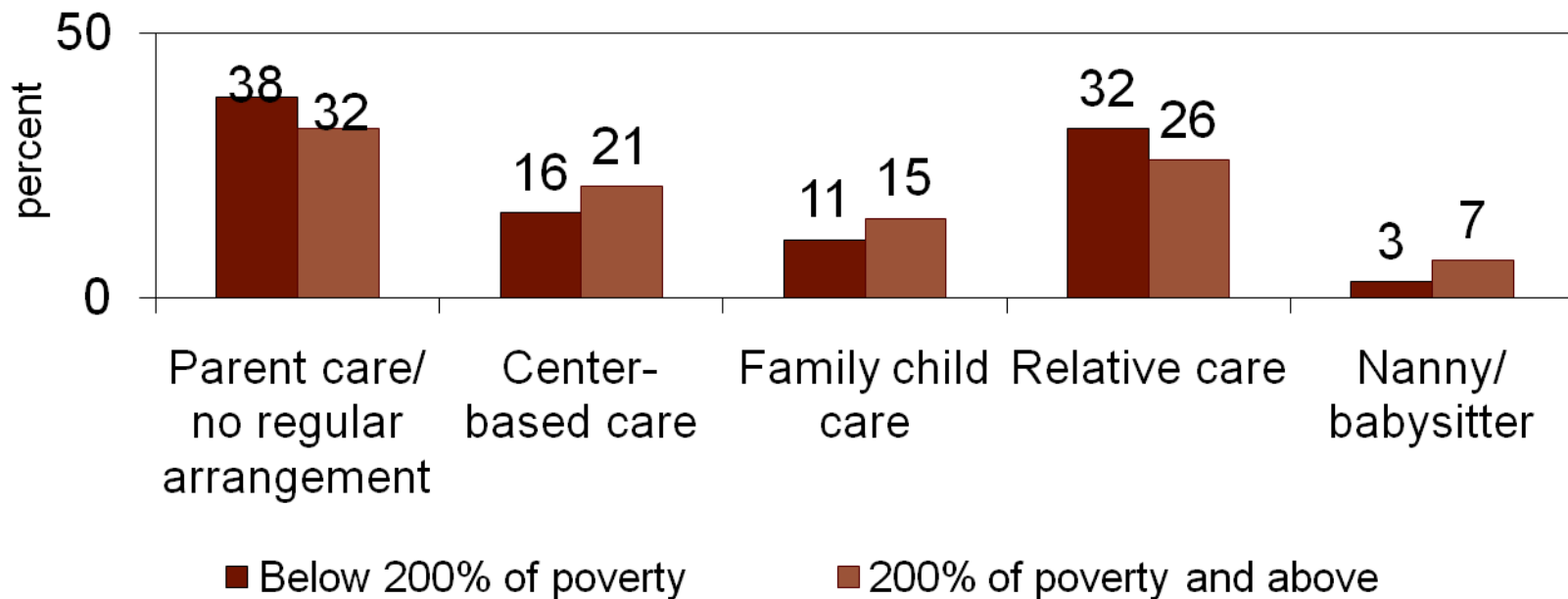
Hours Spent in Nonparental Care by Children Under 3 with Employed Mothers, 2002



Source: Jeffrey Capizzano and Regan Main, *Many Young Children Spend Long Hours in Child Care*, Urban Institute, 2005. Analysis of 2002 NSAF Data.

# ...and in a variety of settings

## Primary child care arrangements for children birth to 3 with employed mothers



Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Jeffrey Capizzano and Gina Adams, *Children in Low-Income Families are Less Likely to be in Center-Based Care*, Urban Institute, 2003.

# Quality Matters for All Children

- Quality child care helps children across all developmental domains
- Negative impacts of low quality care are more likely felt among more disadvantaged children
- And especially for babies...

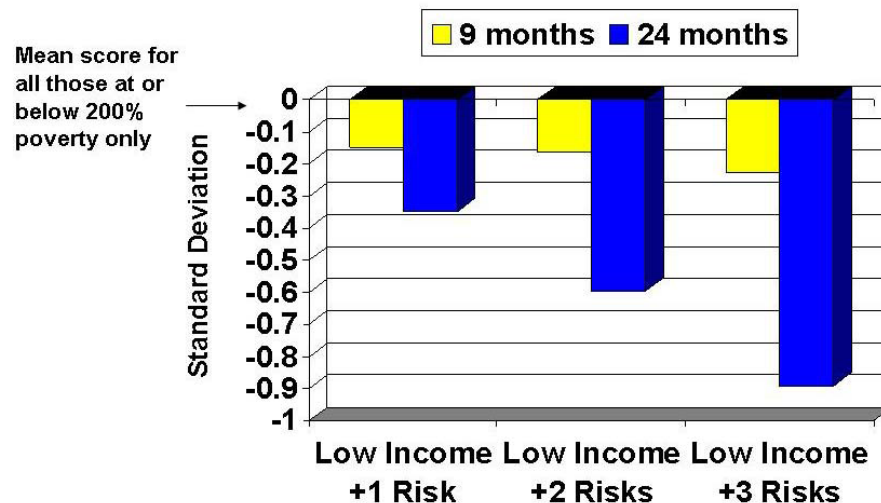




# Disparities Begin to Emerge Early

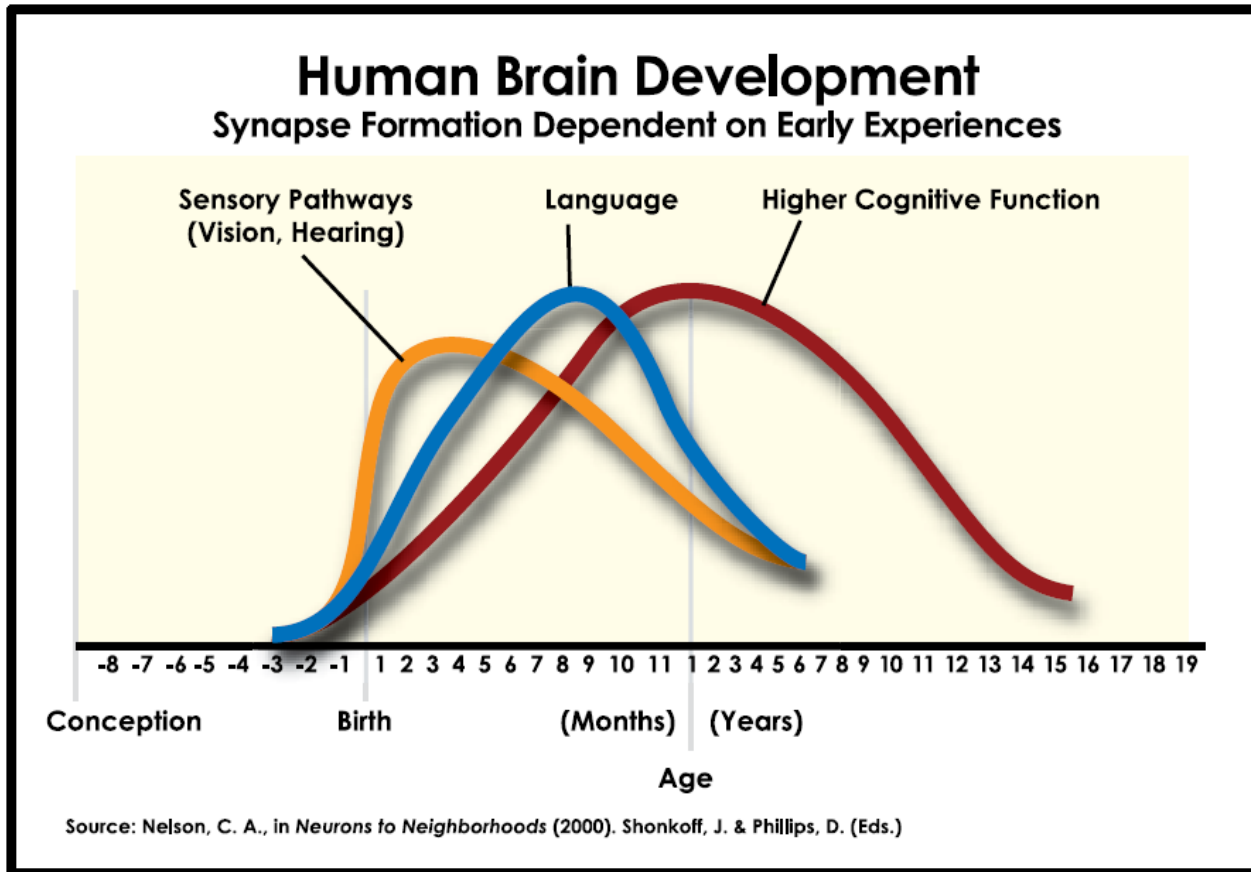
- Disparities in children's cognitive, social, behavioral, and health outcomes begin as early as 9 months.
  - Disparities grow larger by 24 months
  - Disparities are present by family income, race/ethnicity, home language and maternal education.

Disparities on the Bayley Cognitive Assessment Among Those At or Below 200% Poverty at 9 and 24 Months, by Cumulative Risk



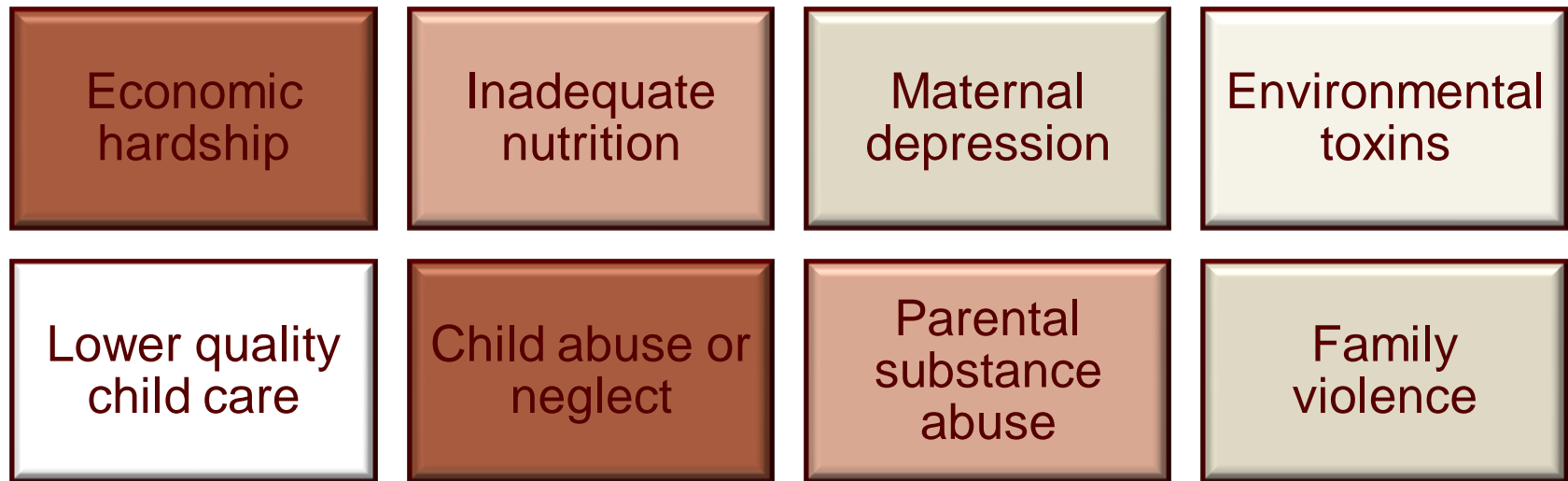
Source: Child Trends, *Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)*.

# ... and Grow Over Time



# High Quality Child Care is Especially Important for Children At Risk

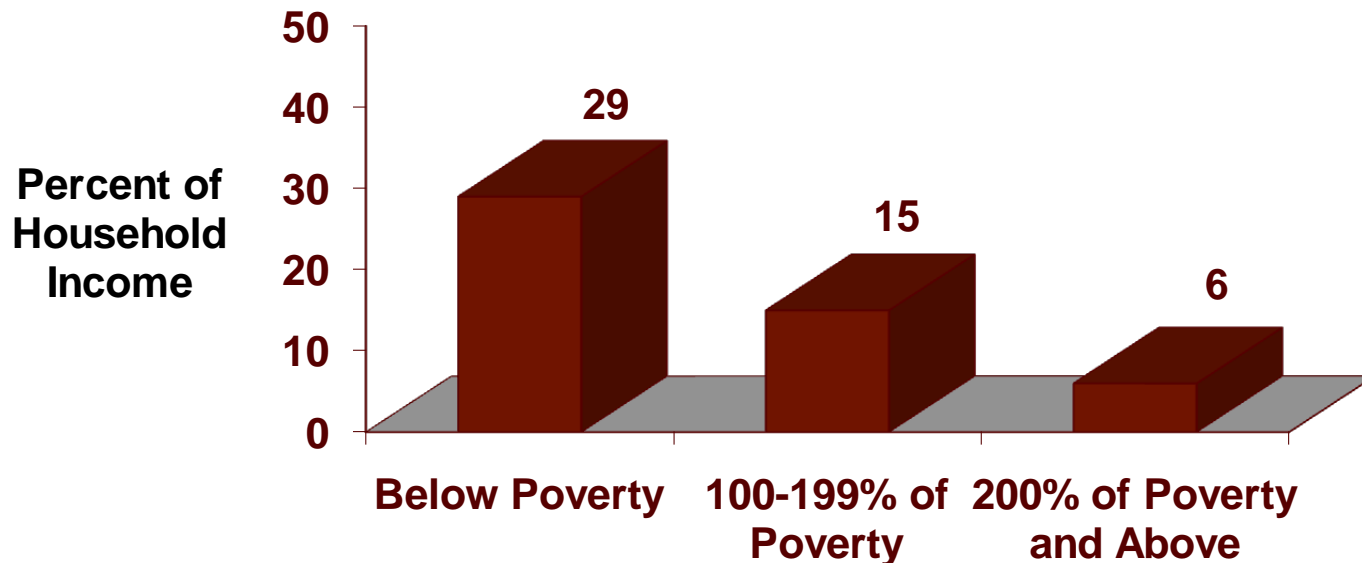
- Research finds that these factors put babies and toddlers at risk for impaired development:



Source: National Center on Children in Poverty

# Child Care is Costly for Poor Families

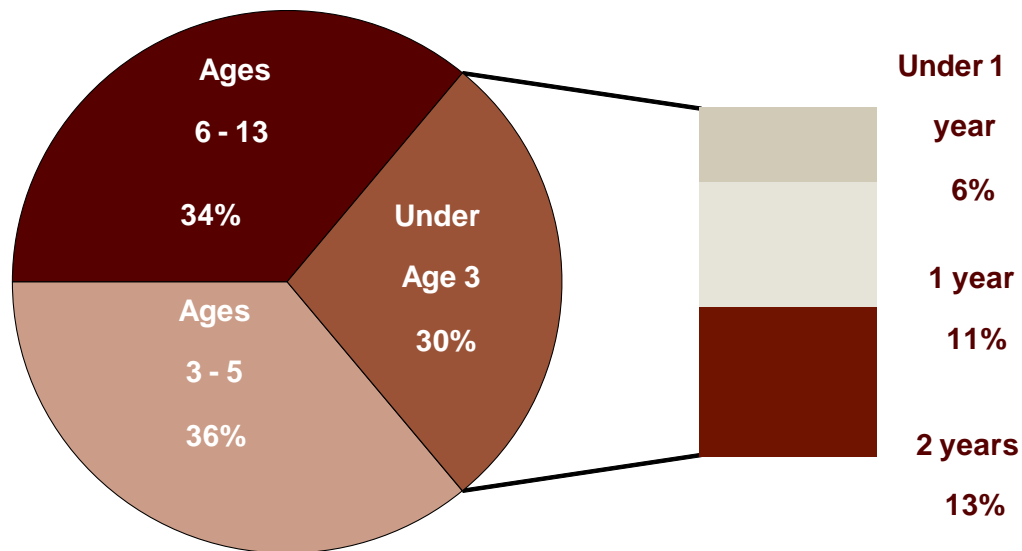
Monthly Child Care Expenditures of Families with Employed Mothers as a Percent of Household Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Winter 2002*. 2005.

# Infants and Toddlers in CCDBG

**Ages of Children Served in CCDBG, 2009**



Source: CLASP report, *Infants and Toddlers in the Child Care and Development Block Grant: 2009 Update*

# Supporting Continuity Through Child Care Policies

# Child Care Stability is Critical for Babies and Toddlers

- Stable care arrangements support healthy development for babies and toddlers.
  - Stable arrangements support secure attachment with caregivers.
  - Frequent changes in care arrangements are stressful for babies.
- Babies in low-income families are particularly vulnerable to child care instability
  - Families have difficulty accessing stable, quality care.

# What Do Babies in Child Care Need?





# What Policies to Consider?

Licensing

Subsidy

Quality  
Enhancement

# Child Care Subsidies Support Family Economic Stability

- Access to child care subsidies increases the likelihood that parents are employed, and that they may remain employed for longer periods of time.
- Parents who receive child care subsidies appear to have longer periods of employment and higher earnings.

# How Can Subsidy Policies Support Continuity?

- Child care subsidies may expand child care access for low-income families.
- Child care subsidy policies may promote stable, quality infant/toddler child care.
  - Loss of subsidy = loss of child care for many families
- Policies that reduce families' burden will likely support higher take-up and longer duration of subsidy use.

# How Can Subsidy Policies Support Continuity?

- Subsidy policies can be designed to:
  - Help families obtain and maintain subsidies.
  - Help families access more child care options
    - Payment levels can allow families to access high-quality infant/toddler care.
    - Payment methods can support financial stability for child care providers.



# Help Families Obtain and Maintain Subsidies

- Extend eligibility periods
  - Extend subsidy eligibility to 12 months for all children, or at least to children in EHS/child care partnerships or target families with stable work histories.
- Limit interim reporting
  - Require only minimal reporting of household changes
  - Only adjust subsidies for few, significant changes.

# Help Families Access More Child Care Options

- Provide adequate funding to providers to support infant/toddler care
  - In 2011, only 3 states had rates equal to or higher than the 75th percentile of current market rates for child care.
- Increase provider payment rates to centers and family homes that implement quality infant/toddler care
  - Pay higher rates for infant/toddler care that meets established standards (i.e. EHS, accreditation)
  - Pay higher rates to providers implementing strategies that benefit infants/toddlers (i.e. continuity of care models)
  - Contract directly with providers for high-quality infant/toddler care.

# Learning from Other States

# Massachusetts: 12-Month Subsidy Eligibility

- Data showed short subsidy durations for families; 86 percent of families remained eligible at time of 6-month recertification.
- Massachusetts' Department of Early Care and Education adopted new regulations and released a new policy guide for the child care subsidy program in 2006, including extending family recertification to one year and simplified recertification requirements.



# Montana: Using Subsidy Policy to Promote Continuity of Care

- Three goals for maintaining continuity of care:
  - Maintain parents' eligibility
  - Meet the needs for additional child care
  - Stabilize child care arrangements
- Subsidy policies address:
  - Absent days
  - Medical appointments and emergencies
  - Presumptive eligibility up to 30 days
- Policies apply to all children, benefit infants and toddlers

# Indiana: Requiring Continuity of Care in Licensing

- Indiana licensing regulations require child care centers to make a "reasonable effort" to achieve continuity of care for infants and toddler up to 30 months of age.
- Interpretive guidelines specify “reasonable effort” to include:
  - Moving teachers with children to another classroom as children mature;
  - Modifying the classroom as the children mature;
  - Creating mixed age groupings of children, ages six weeks to 36 months; or
  - Creating intentional transitions that prepare children as they move into the next age classroom.

# Policy Assessment

# A Path to Policy Change

## Information Collection

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## Comparative Analysis

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## Policy Assessment

- Identify Policy Gaps
- Identify Appropriate Actor(s)
- Identify Obstacles

## Opportunities for Change

- Administrative
- Regulatory
- Legislative
- Executive

# Policy Assessment

- **Do your state's subsidy policies support access to stable, quality infant/toddler care?**
- **CLASP Child Care Subsidy Policies Tool**

*<http://www.clasp.org/babiesinchildcare/tools>*

## Policy Assessment

- Identify Policy Gaps
- Identify Appropriate Actor(s)
- Identify Obstacles

# Opportunities for Change

- **Which path(s) to policy change will you pursue?**
  - Where are the opportunities?
  - What are the challenges?
  - Who are your allies?

## Opportunities for Change

- Administrative
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# State Information

## CLASP DataFinder

<http://www.clasp.org/data/>

- Poverty
- Young Child Demographics
  - Race, ethnicity, immigrant family status
- Child Care assistance
- Head Start/Early Head Start

## CLASP State Profiles

[http://www.clasp.org/in\\_the\\_states/](http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states/)

- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Child Care assistance
- TANF spending
- Infant/toddler initiatives



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