
Support a Diverse and Culturally Competent Workforce

Recruit, maintain, and support diverse and culturally sensitive infant and toddler providers and caregivers.

WHY? RESEARCH SAYS:

Children under three are racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. In recent years, immigration has accelerated diversity among the infant/toddler population. One in four children under age 3 has one or more foreign-born parents. The development of babies and toddlers is rooted within a cultural context, as are the early care practices of parents and caregivers. The foundations of children's language skills are also developing during the earliest years. Young children's social and emotional development is supported when there is cultural and linguistic continuity between their experiences at home and in child care. Many infants and toddlers are in nonparental child care with providers and caregivers who may or may not reflect their cultural or linguistic backgrounds. As babies and toddlers are developing their core identity, it is critical that providers and caregivers have access to meaningful training in cultural competency and knowledge of dual language acquisition. States should seek to both increase the multilingual and multicultural capacity of the birth to three workforce and ensure that providers of all backgrounds are skilled to work with diverse babies and toddlers in their care.¹

HOW? STATE POLICY OPTIONS:

Increase language access to the licensing system for limited English proficient providers.

States can support language access for infant/toddler providers by paying for the translation of materials on licensing, regulations, applications, and preparatory classes; hiring bilingual staff; and using qualified interpreters. States can provide training and technical assistance in languages other than English to providers working towards licensure.

Pay differential child care subsidy payment rates to centers and family child care homes that serve English Language Learners and/or to providers who have a bilingual endorsement.

In California, contracted child care providers receive a rate 10 percent above the standard reimbursement rate for serving children who are not proficient in English.² States may also consider paying higher payments to providers who have completed training or coursework on cultural competence or have a bilingual endorsement.

Include measures of cultural and linguistic competence in state quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS).

Eighteen states have established statewide QRIS and an additional 27 have QRIS in the process of development. States can use QRIS to encourage child care programs to employ staff who demonstrate competence in working with diverse children and families, access meaningful cultural competency training, plan for communication with linguistically diverse families, and incorporate children's home language and culture in daily activities and learning. States should provide financial supports to help programs meet these goals.

Ensure that providers receive training in cultural competence relative to the populations of infants and toddlers they serve.

The Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) is a training curriculum for infant and toddler providers that includes an emphasis on cultural sensitivity. California has implemented the PITC model across the state in multiple languages.³ In May 2008, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, and the Pennsylvania Key held the first Pennsylvania Higher Education Diversity Institute to provide faculty, administrators, and professional development providers with research and instructional strategies on working with diverse children.⁴

Support the professional development of racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse infant/toddler providers.

States can pay for scholarships and stipends that encourage providers to take credit-bearing courses relevant to caring for babies and toddlers and work toward earning state infant/toddler credentials or other education goals. Most of California's counties have implemented a version of the CARES program to build a skilled child care workforce. Some counties use a cohort model, in which small groups of early childhood providers who share similar backgrounds, including those whose first language is not English, receive supports and work toward an education goal together.⁵

Work with child care resource and referral agencies to create professional development plans that incorporate culturally and linguistically appropriate training.

Minnesota funds The Early Childhood Resource and Training Center to provide training, resources, and technical assistance to families and providers, particularly those from communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities.⁶

¹ For additional resources and complete references, see Matthews, *Supporting a Diverse and Culturally Competent Workforce: Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care Research-Based Rationale*, CLASP, www.clasp.org/publications/cp_rationale5.htm.

² California Department of Education, *Child Care and Development Programs Reimbursement Fact Sheet*, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/op/factsheet07.asp>.

³ The Program for Infant/Toddler Care, California Initiatives, http://www.pitc.org/pub/pitc_docs/caprogs.html.

⁴ Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality, "Diversity Institute," <http://www.pakeys.org/profdev/diversityinstitute.aspx>.

⁵ First 5 California, *CARES Fact Sheet*,

<http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/pdf/press/fact%20sheets/CARES%20Fact%20Sheet%20revised%205-15.pdf>.

⁶ The Early Childhood Resource and Training Center, <http://www.ecrc1.org/>.