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## Provide Information on Infant/Toddler Care

**Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information on choosing infant/toddler child care and subsidy eligibility.**

### **WHY? RESEARCH SAYS:**

Quality infant/toddler care is scarce. All parents of young children need information on infant/toddler development and quality child care. Low-income families need information on subsidy eligibility. In particular, parents with low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, or recent immigrant parents who are unfamiliar with child care programs and child care assistance, need understandable information conveyed through multiple formats. Effectively providing information to diverse cultural groups includes tailoring how information is presented and determining who the most effective transmitters of information are for particular groups. Low literacy and limited English proficiency serve as barriers to accessing information about quality infant/toddler care. Immigrant parents face additional barriers accessing information. In addition to being more likely to have language barriers, immigrants must navigate unfamiliar, and sometimes intimidating, programs and services to access information. Limited English proficient (LEP) and immigrant families are often unaware of or unfamiliar with the availability of child care assistance. Many parents of infants and toddlers need individualized consultation, provided through bilingual and culturally competent staff, to understand the full range of child care options and make informed choices about infant/toddler care.<sup>1</sup>

### **HOW? STATE POLICY OPTIONS:**

**Create and disseminate information packets for new parents that discuss quality care for infants and toddlers and help link parents with information and referral agencies.**

Funding from First 5 California provides a free Kit for New Parents for every child born in the state. The kit includes information on infant health and care and is available in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cantonese. Nearly 2.5 million kits have been distributed statewide.<sup>2</sup>

**Fund public information campaigns and telephone hotlines publicizing child care subsidies.**

States use a range of media, including radio, television and the internet, to promote awareness of child care subsidies. Some states, including New York, Connecticut, and Texas, have invested in free “211” or other public information and referral telephone hotlines that can provide information about child care assistance verbally to parents who may have low literacy levels. In Texas, the “211” system provides child care information in over 90 languages.

### **Improve language access in the subsidy program by translating information, regulations, and applications; hiring bilingual staff; and using qualified interpreters.**

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Indiana evaluates organizations conducting intake for the subsidy program on their ability to accommodate families with language barriers. The District of Columbia conducts periodic intake at a variety of community sites to assist families whose primary language is not English. The subsidy agency has multilingual staff fluent in Spanish, French, Amharic, Vietnamese, Thai, and Serbian.

### **Provide grants for outreach on quality infant/toddler care and subsidy eligibility to community-based organizations with expertise in serving LEP populations.**

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Grants should support providing information on subsidy eligibility and enrollment in both oral and written forms, including face-to-face information sharing, partnerships with immigrant-serving organizations, and the use of ethnic radio, television, and websites.

### **Increase bilingual staff capacity in subsidy agencies through pay differentials or other incentives.**

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State agencies should seek staff who are bilingual and have experience working with immigrant families or in immigrant communities by including such requirements in job descriptions, offering bilingual pay differentials, providing access to professional development that supports cultural competency, and advertising in areas with high concentrations of bilingual providers. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services funds a Hispanic services coordinator position at the Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association. The coordinator is bilingual and bicultural and works with local child care resource and referral agencies to develop language-access plans for serving Spanish speaking families and also provides direct referrals.

### **Provide language access and cultural competency training for subsidy agency staff and child care programs.**

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South Carolina provides language access training to subsidy caseworkers and supervisors on the agency's procedures for working with LEP families. Arkansas uses CCDBG quality funds to provide training and technical assistance to early childhood providers, caring for children of all ages, on issues related to cultural sensitivity and appropriately serving dual language learners.<sup>3</sup> States should also provide guidance to local child care agencies about immigrant eligibility for subsidies.

### **Provide dedicated funding for translation and interpretation services at the local level, including facilitating access to language telephone line services.**

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Minnesota provides access to language line services in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali to all child care resource and referral agencies statewide.

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<sup>1</sup> For additional resources and complete references, see Hannah Matthews, *Providing Information on Infant/Toddler Care: Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care Research-Based Rationale*, CLASP, [http://www.clasp.org/publications/cp\\_rationale15.htm](http://www.clasp.org/publications/cp_rationale15.htm).

<sup>2</sup> First 5 California, *Kit for New Parents*, <http://www.cffc.ca.gov/kit.asp>.

<sup>3</sup> Welcome the Children Project, <http://www.uams.edu/welcomethechildren/>.