Better for Babies: Improving State Early Care and Education Policies

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Presentation Overview

• Why infants and toddlers?
• Where are we now?
• What are the challenges and opportunities?
• Where can we go?
Why Infants and Toddlers?

- All babies need good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences.
- The youngest children are most likely to be poor.
  - A quarter of infants and toddlers are poor and half are low-income.
  - Infants and toddlers in poverty face challenges that can negatively impact their development.
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.

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

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Many infants and toddlers are in child care

Percentage of Children in Care by Age

Age
0 1 2
(percentage)
40 53 60
Primary child care arrangements for children birth to 3 with employed mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrangement</th>
<th>Below 200% of poverty</th>
<th>200% of poverty and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent care/no regular</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-based care</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family child care</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative care</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanny/babysitter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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…
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.
Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care

• Research based framework
• Policy recommendations
  ▪ Subsidy
  ▪ Licensing
  ▪ Quality Enhancement
• State examples

• Better for Babies: A Study of State Infant-Toddler Child Care Policies

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Charting Progress Framework

Babies in Child Care Need:

- Healthy and safe environments in which to explore and learn.
- Nurturing, responsive providers and caregivers they can trust to care for them as they grow and learn.
- Parents, providers, and caregivers supported by and linked to community resources.
- Their families to have access to quality options for their care.
What Policies to Consider?

- Licensing
- Subsidy
- Quality Enhancement
Infants and toddlers need healthy and safe environments in which to explore and learn.

- Selected policies:
  - Appropriate Ratios and Group Size in Centers
  - Appropriate Group Size in Family Child Care
  - Regular, On-site Monitoring of Providers
  - Infant-Toddler Training for Monitoring Staff
Ratios for Infants and Toddlers in Centers

- State meets recommended ratio for infants and toddlers
- State meets recommended ratio for infants only
- State meets recommended ratio for toddlers only
- State did not respond to the survey

Source:
Group Sizes for Infants in Centers

- **6 or less**
- **7-10**
- **More than 10**
- **Group size is not regulated**
- **State did not respond to the survey**

Source:
Infants and toddlers need nurturing, responsive caregivers they can trust as they grow and learn.

- Selected indicators:
  - Access to Training and Education
  - Monetary and Non-monetary Supports for Caregivers
  - Core Competencies for Infant-Toddler Caregivers
  - Adequate Compensation and Benefits
  - “Continuity of Care” Approach
  - Consistent Primary Caregivers
  - Infant-Toddler Credential
  - Infant-Toddler Early Learning Standards
Infants and toddlers need nurturing, responsive caregivers they can trust as they grow and learn.

• Access to training and supports
  ▪ Thirty states reported having infant-toddler training for providers, most state requirements for number of hours are minimal, and the content of training curriculum related to infants and toddlers is limited.
  ▪ Twenty-six states reported funding a network of infant-toddler specialists to support infant-toddler child care providers and increase their knowledge and skills.
Infants and toddlers need nurturing, responsive caregivers they can trust as they grow and learn

• Thirty-nine states reported that they provide financial supports for the training or education of infant-toddler providers – many through T.E.A.C.H. scholarships

• Twenty states have compensation initiatives available for infant-toddler providers.
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.
Families Need Access to Quality Options for Their Babies

- Primarily reviewed child care subsidy policies.
- Selected indicators:

  - Authorization Periods
  - Provider Payment Rates and Processes
  - Direct Contracts to Increase Supply, Improve Quality
  - QRIS with Infant-Toddler Specific Standards
  - Support for FCC
  - Support for FFN

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CCDF Overview

• Primary source of funding for child care assistance for low-income working families and to improve child care quality.

• Federal government sets broad parameters for the program and a floor for basic health and safety.

• States make policy decisions within those broad parameters that impact access, quality, and supply of child care.
Infants and Toddlers in CCDF

• 28 percent of children in CCDF < Age 3
  - Ranges from 18 percent in California to 49 percent in DC

• 87 percent of infants and toddlers in CCDF are in licensed care.
  - 69% in centers and 28% in family child care and group homes.

• 64 percent of infants and toddlers have family incomes under federal poverty.
Redetermination Periods

States’ Maximum Redetermination Periods for Child Care Assistance

- 6 month redetermination period
- 12 month redetermination period
- 8 month redetermination period
- 11 month redetermination period

Source: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plans, FY 2011-2012.
Reimbursement Rates

- Only five states (Alaska, Hawaii, New York, North Dakota, and South Dakota) set their standard reimbursement rate for a one year-old in center-based care at the federally recommended rate.

- Average monthly CCDF payment for infant-toddler care is $462 ($5,544 annually)
Infant and toddlers’ families need to have access to quality options for their care.

- **Direct Contracts with Providers**
  - Contracts can increase the supply or improve the quality of infant-toddler care
  - Contracts may bring stability to child care providers in underserved communities and provide more stable child care for families.
  - Fourteen states reported using direct contracts with child care providers.
Absent Day Policies

- Providers bear the cost burden when states don’t reimburse for absent days.
- Particularly important for families with the youngest children since infants and toddlers have more frequent illnesses and require more frequent doctor visits than older children.
- Forty-one states reported that they pay child care providers for days when a child is absent.
Parents and Caregivers Linked to Community Resources

• Selected indicators:
  - Dedicated Infant-Toddler Funding
  - State Initiatives to Expand Early Head Start
  - Support for Comprehensive Services
  - Infant-Toddler Mental Health Consultation
Infants and toddlers need parents, providers, and caregivers supported by and linked to community resources

- Only four states report they make additional, dedicated funds available specifically for infants and toddlers outside of the CCDBG infant-toddler set-aside
Infants and toddlers need parents, providers, and caregivers supported by and linked to community resources

State Initiatives to Expand Access to Early Head Start

- **Have state initiatives**
- **Do not have state initiatives**
What is Early Head Start (EHS)?

- Federally-funded, community-based program that provides comprehensive child and family development services to low-income pregnant women and children under age 3
  - Access to health care and screenings
  - Support for full range of child development
  - Parent support and linkages to services
  - Prenatal health care and support
What is Early Head Start (EHS)?

• Services provided in centers, homes, child care or a combination of settings
• Programs must comply with federal Head Start Program Performance Standards
• Program positively impacts:
  ▪ Children’s cognitive, language and social-emotional development
  ▪ Parental support of child development
  ▪ Family self-sufficiency
There are Many Challenges….

- Infant-toddler child care quality and affordability
- Infant-toddler child care availability and qualified teachers (Center-based)
- Early Head Start serves only 4% of eligible infants and toddlers
- Child care subsidies serve only 15% of eligible infants and 29% eligible toddlers
- Low-wage work makes parenting difficult
  - Half of low-wage workers have nonstandard schedules.
  - Job scheduling challenges are increasing for low-wage work.
...And Also New Opportunities

- Home visiting
  - Congress extended MIECHV program funding through March 2014
- Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships
  - $500 million to increase the number of children ages 0-4 in high quality child care
- Preschool Development Grants
  - May be an opportunity to support progress on birth to five early childhood system.
- Child Care Subsidy changes
  - New proposed regulations
  - Potential Congressional reauthorization
What are Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships?

• Funding will be available to all 50 states
• Will allow new or existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving low-income infants and toddlers.
• Provides a tremendous opportunity for states and communities to make an impact and reach our youngest, most vulnerable children and families.
Reform child subsidy policies

- Longer eligibility periods with limited interim reporting
- Establish broad definitions of work, including job search, that allows for more continuous eligibility
- Use direct contracts for high quality infant and toddler care.
- Pay rates that support high-quality care.
- Use payment methods that support provider stability: enrollment vs attendance, absence days, timely payments.
- Waive parent co-payments for families under poverty.
Recommendations for States

• Promote quality and continuity through policies.
• Consider the full-day, full year needs of families.
• Support system-wide planning and action.
• Gather and share data.
• Play convening role for partners.
• Leverage all available funding.
Moving An Infant-Toddler Agenda Forward

• Visioning: Develop long term goals for state policy
• Collect Data and Assess Need
• Conduct a Policy Audit
• Advocate
• Build in ongoing planning, assessment, and visioning.
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/
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Child Care assistance
- TANF spending
- Infant/toddler initiatives
CLASP EHS-CC Partnership Resources

- What State Leaders Should Know About Early Head Start:

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