

Highlighting Infants and Toddlers in Your PDG B-5 Application:

Resources from
ZERO TO THREE



The federal 2024 Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five funding is an opportunity for select states and territories to bolster infant and toddler services and ensure policies and programs that meet the needs of today's families with young children. ZERO TO THREE has many resources that can help you think about how you want to utilize funding opportunities such as this one to improve outcomes for babies in your state.

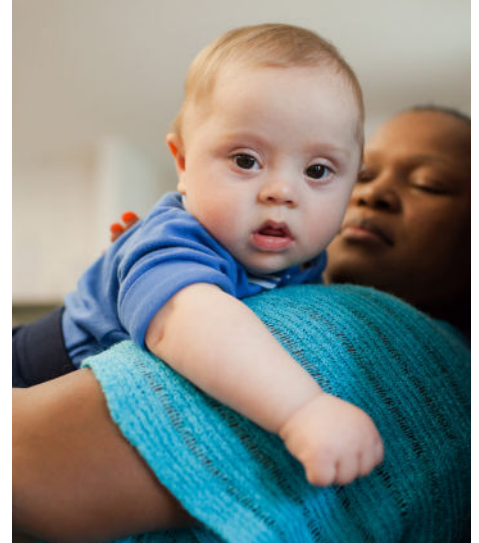
Table of Contents

- 2 How to Use This ZTT PDG B-5 Resource Guide
- 2 Activity 1 - Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment
- 3 Building for Babies: A State Policy Self-Assessment Tool
- 4 Activity 2 - Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan
- 4 Activity 3 - Maximize Family Participation and Engagement in the B-5 System
- 5 Activity 4 - Support the B-5 Workforce
- 7 Activity 5 - Support Program Quality Improvements
- 8 Activity 6 - Subaward (Subgrant) to Enhance Quality and Expand Access to Programs and Services
- 9 Bonus Options

How to Use This ZTT PDG B-5 Resource Guide

You will find that this resource has been organized to help you quickly find infant and toddler specific resources and state examples aligned with each activity and bonus option found in the current grant opportunity. Additionally, teams at ZERO TO THREE are on standby to help you think about how you want to structure and implement any of the examples you find here. Please feel free to email us at Policycenter@zerotothree.org at any time during the application or implementation phases – we are happy to be a thought partner!

In 2023 ZERO TO THREE collaborated with the BUILD Initiative and Start Early to create In Brief: [Learning from the New Round of PDG B-5 Systems Building Grants](#). We encourage you to check these briefs out, especially [Infant-Toddler Focused Strategies](#). These particular PDG B-5 plans were most likely to direct infant/toddler-focused dollars into five categories: 1) home visiting, 2) infant and early childhood mental health, 3) infant/toddler child care access, 4) infant/toddler-focused professional development and coaching and 5) systems to enhance access for families with infants and toddlers. The document provides descriptions of what each state proposed for children under three in their applications for the 2022 funding cycle.



Activity 1- Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Needs Assessment

Infants and toddlers have complex needs. Ideal state and community systems will support all families, recognize their unique circumstances, prioritize accessibility for those who have been made the least proximate to opportunity and engage those most impacted by policies in making crucial decisions about program structures. The two ZTT resources below can help you analyze how your state is doing in 2024.

[State of Babies Yearbook 2023: State Profiles](#): Learn how your state measures up on indicators related to Good Health, Strong Families, and Positive Early Learning Experiences. Each state profile provides a snapshot of how infants, toddlers, and their families are faring in each of the three policy domains. Within each domain, view data for selected child, family, and policy indicators compared to national averages. The profile begins with a demographic description of the state's babies and families to offer the broadest context for exploring what may be very different experiences of the state's youngest children.

COMING SOON!

Building for Babies: A State Policy Self-Assessment Tool

The ZERO TO THREE state policy team is wrapping up a pilot of our new infant and toddler policy self-assessment tool. The final tool is set to be released in August, however, if your state is interested in a "Sneak Peak" to help you think about this application, simply send us an email and we can set up a time for a preview with interested state teams.



The new tool features recommended policies in four key areas:



Good Health



Strong Families



Positive Early Learning Experiences



Collaboration and System Building

Additionally, the resource features a racial equity rubric. This type of evaluation is valuable because it can be used to reduce racial inequities or draw attention to the potential effects of policies that could negatively or disproportionately affect communities of color.

We are happy to share the tool or any piece that interests you prior to the official launch in late summer if it will aid in your application process. To set up a sneak preview call, email Jamie Colvard at jcolvard@zerotothree.org.

Activity 2 - Update Comprehensive Statewide B-5 Strategic Plan

ZERO TO THREE has many resources to consider as you explore how well your mixed delivery system is reaching underserved children and families, especially those involved in the child welfare system:

- [Strengthening Families with Infants and Toddlers: A Policy Framework for States](#): This policy framework includes 11 recommendations for states and communities that aim to advance equitable outcomes supporting the health and well-being of very young children and their families, including those who are in, or are at risk of entering, the child welfare system. The framework outlines a collaborative approach to family strengthening and child welfare prevention in which communities work with public health and other early childhood leaders to promote the healthy development and well-being of children and families.
- [What The Data on Infants and Toddlers Tell Us: The Intersection of Parental Substance Use and Child Welfare](#): An effective public health approach to family strengthening requires partners in early childhood systems to address the factors and conditions that affect families as early as possible to prevent more significant, negative long-term outcomes. This brief describes policy options to support families impacted by parental substance use that address the needs of the whole family and prioritize the safety and well-being of the children. The policies highlighted in this brief disrupt stigma and promote non-punitive responses to substance use that can otherwise harm the parent-child bond and create barriers to appropriate services.
- [Foundations of Well-being: Policy Strategies for Integrating Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health into Child Welfare](#): This brief highlights the importance of IECMH for families in child welfare. It covers key components of the IECMH continuum of care and the importance of integrating [ZERO TO THREE's IECMH Guiding Principles and Best Practices](#) for family support and reunification. Additionally, it suggests policy strategies for states to enhance collaboration between IECMH, child welfare, and other early childhood systems.

Activity 3 - Maximize Family Participation and Engagement in the B-5 System

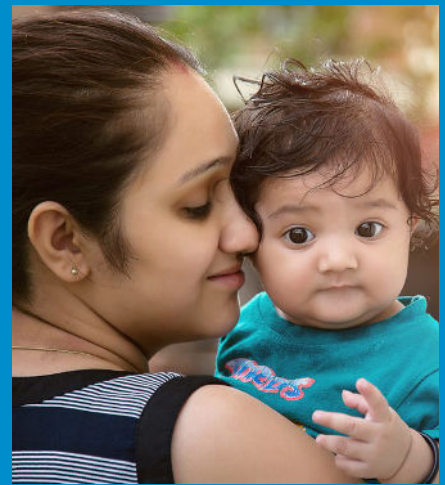
Families' lived experience gives them critical expertise in the services and support they need for their children to thrive. Too often, the policymaking process fails to authentically include those who are most directly impacted by policies designed to serve infants, toddlers and their families. Centering their voices in policy design, advocacy and implementation results in policies that are more reflective of the needs of children and families — and therefore more effective. The ZTT resources here will help you to think about how to best engage families in shaping and utilizing your early childhood system.

- [Strengthening Connections: State Approaches to Connecting Families to Services](#): State agencies can be leaders in developing approaches to better connect families to services, but there is no one-size-fits-all solution. ZERO TO THREE wrote a series of state profiles that illustrate how states have used policy levers to strengthen families' connections to services. This companion brief describes the approaches being taken by five states at both the state and community levels, highlighting innovative partnerships and initiatives.

- [Engaging Families in Policy Change](#): Recognizing the expertise of families based on their lived experience and providing the resources and support to enable them to participate fully in the policymaking process are critical components of effective efforts to disrupt systemic racism and advance equity through improved policies for babies and their families. This brief provides an overview of strategies for engaging families in the policy change process.
- [Applying Trauma-Informed Principles to Work with Family Advocates](#): While this resource is designed for advocacy organizations, any agency hoping to engage parents and family members as partners in developing policy solutions will find the information useful. Organizations sometimes struggle with how to build these partnerships in ways that are collaborative and share power. In addition, programs often observe that families come to the table with a history of trauma—experiences that often drive their commitment to speak out. What responsibility do programs have to those family partners? This resource represents an initial effort to outline trauma-responsive practices that organizations can use when recruiting, developing, and sustaining relationships with families.

State Spotlight: Centering the Voices of Families and Communities for Better Policy in Colorado

From the beginning, Raise Colorado conveners identified robust engagement of those most impacted by policy as essential for advancing equitable policies for infants, toddlers, and their families. Operationalizing this commitment has been an ongoing process which has evolved over time and continues to evolve as approaches to engagement are refined and informed by those with lived experience. [This brief](#) focuses on the experiences, lessons learned, and results of the coalition’s efforts to center the perspectives of those most impacted in policy advocacy.



Activity 4 - Support the B-5 Workforce

State policies and funding should support recruitment and retention of a qualified, well-compensated and racially, culturally and linguistically diverse ECE workforce serving infants and toddlers, including program staff across all program types. The ZTT resources below can help you think of the multiple ways you can support the B-5 workforce in your state.

- [PERSPECTIVES: Work in Progress: Intentional Pursuit of Early Childhood Education Excellence](#): Over the course of 3 years, this initiative developed a comprehensive roadmap with and for the profession: the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession. In 2021, the Commission on Professional Excellence in Early Childhood Education was launched to oversee the implementation of this framework and to serve as a unified voice for the profession. Implementation progress will take time and perseverance to advance the needed systemic changes. But we’ve built a pathway and sustainable progress is happening across the country with each small and big step we take together.

- [The ZERO TO THREE Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators™](#) suite of professional development products and services helps educators build the essential knowledge and skills they need, in flexible and user-friendly formats. Our competency model defines the specific knowledge and practices required for infant-toddler educators to be successful now, to support the future of our children.
- [Putting the Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators™ Into Practice](#): To understand more about the impact of the critical competencies, we sat down with Andrea Walton, Education Manager for United 4 Children, to talk about how she uses them to nurture young minds.
- [Early Childhood Teachers' Well-Being: What We Know and Why We Should Care](#): Poor teacher well-being and suboptimal working conditions threaten the early childhood workforce and limit their potential to offer the high-quality care and education that research shows can transform young children and support families and our collective future. This article offers research based program, policy and system level recommendations to better support the workforce.

“ The curriculum helps early childhood educators use evidence-based practices to bring more intentionality and more thoughtful connections to support children’s social emotional, cognitive, and language development.

Lauren Bond, Early childhood consultant and trainer



- [Cross-Sector Allies Together in the Struggle for Social Justice: Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children, and Families](#): This article presents a revised and expanded edition of the Diversity-Informed Infant Mental Health Tenets. The authors introduce a new name—Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children, and Families—and describe the productive struggles, deepened understandings, sustaining alliances, and critical insights that brought this edition into being.
- [Race, Equity, Bias, and Early Childhood: Examining the Research](#): In this article, Dr. Andrew Meltzoff describes his research concerning the ways that young children pick up bias from everyday experience, and Dr. Walter Gilliam discusses racial bias exhibited by early childhood educators. Dr. Brenda Jones Harden, expands on her research in the article, “Racial Discrimination and Parenting: Implications for Intervening With African American Young Children and Families”.

Activity 5 - Support Program Quality Improvements

Resources in this section can help you think about how state policies, systems and funding support the provision of Early Intervention services in settings families prefer (home, child care, etc.), providing necessary training and infrastructure policies to support collaboration and integration of services as needed.

- [Developmental Screening Follow-up Practices and Policies](#): We know that states and communities cannot do this work alone, and that investment and support from the federal level is needed. A well coordinated comprehensive early childhood system ensures that babies, young children and their families receive the services and supports they need and want. This paper was developed jointly by ZERO TO THREE and the National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ) as part of our work on the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (ECCS CoIIN).
- [Our Youngest Learners: Increasing Equity in Early Intervention](#): In this report from The Education Trust, The National Center for Learning Disabilities and ZERO TO THREE, the authors identify the strengths of state approaches and opportunities for increasing equity in providing early intervention services.

State Spotlight: Delaware Bill Ensures Access to Developmental Screening for All -

Beginning in July 2023, all child care programs in [Delaware](#) were required to provide annual developmental and social emotional screening to children under the age of five who are not enrolled in kindergarten.

- [Collaborating for Better Outcomes in Early Intervention and Child Welfare Developing Effective and Ethical Coordination of Services for Children and Families](#): Families are diverse, and so are children's needs. For children in the child welfare system, there are many layers of regulations that serve to protect the family and child. These regulations can be challenging to navigate when a child is referred to early intervention services. The authors describe how their coordination team collaborated with internal departments and external entities to identify barriers and put processes into place that would lead to effective, efficient, and ethical coordination of services for children and families referred for early intervention services by the Office of Children and Youth Services.
- [Supporting High-Quality Early Care and Education from Birth to 5: State Strategies to Strengthen Infant-Toddler Care as Public Pre-k Expands](#): This brief outlines strategies to protect and expand access to a full continuum of high quality care and education in the context of pre-k expansion.



- [Envisioning Your Home Visiting Expansion Infographic](#): This home visiting expansion infographic and companion resources are designed to help you engage in a collaborative and inclusive planning effort to:
 - Envision home visiting expansion in your state or community
 - Ensure your home visiting expansion centers equity and community voice
 - Determine next steps toward expansion
- [Places for All Babies: Home-Based Child Care is an Essential Part of the Solution](#): This brief highlights the value of increasing and strengthening both of these child care options. We also include examples of state strategies and recommendations that policymakers can explore in building a truly robust mixed delivery system that embraces both FCC and FFN as essential components in an array of high quality options for all families of infants and toddlers.

Activity 6 - Subaward (Subgrant) to Enhance Quality and Expand Access to Programs and Services

States have used recent federal funding opportunities to offer subgrants for a variety of infant and toddler services. You can read more about pilots and programs in the two resources below.

- [States are Leveraging ARPA to Move the Needle for Infants and Toddlers](#): States across the country leveraged American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to meet the needs of infants and toddlers, and their families. They made strategic investments across programs and systems upon which families rely, with the aim of providing immediate relief to real-time needs brought about by the pandemic. States also took the opportunity to invest in the development of stronger systems for the long term. The companion brief and state profiles are based on interviews with state agency staff, community partners, and advocates in 8 states in early 2023.



- [Infant-Toddler Focused Strategies](#): This brief from the BUILD Initiative, Start Early and ZERO TO THREE is a part of the collection [In Brief: Learning from the New Round of PDG B-5 Systems Building Grants](#). You will find examples of subgrant opportunities focused on infants and toddlers in several sections.

Bonus Option 1 – Increase Workforce Pay and Benefits

Do your state policies and funding address compensation disparities within the ECE mixed delivery system for those working with children from birth through age 5? (Particular attention should be paid to infant-toddler educators who typically earn less than those working with older children). The ECE workforce should receive wages/benefits that meet or exceed those provided to educators with similar skills/experience who work in pre-k and kindergarten. Learn more about how other states are doing this and how to make the case in your state below.

- [The Case for Better Compensation of Early Educators](#): Studies consistently show quality early childhood programs result in reduced rates of grade repetition, special education, and juvenile delinquency, leading to long-term cost savings for society. Furthermore, children who receive quality early education are more likely to graduate high school, pursue higher education, and secure higher-paying jobs in the future. By providing better pay and compensation to early childhood educators, we promote the delivery of high-quality programs, maximizing these long-term economic benefits.

State Spotlight - Maine Invests in Monthly Stipends for Early Care and Education

Providers: Maine Governor Janet Mills signed a bipartisan budget bill that includes \$12 million in state general funds to provide [\\$200 monthly stipends](#) for direct early care and education (ECE) workers.

State Spotlight - Rhode Island Cross-Sector Compensation Report Drives Legislative

Action: The 2022 Rhode Island [Early Educator Investment Act](#) calls for the children's cabinet to create and implement a plan to improve compensation of the early childhood workforce.

State Spotlight - Kentucky Offers Early Care Staff Protected Status for Child

Care Subsidies: In an effort to stabilize programs, encourage staffing, and help child care staff who simply do not receive adequate compensation for the work they do, Kentucky leaders have added child care employees as a [protected population](#) to the Child Care Assistance program.

Bonus Option 2 - Support Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health.

State policies and procedures should provide equitable access to a comprehensive continuum of infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) services inclusive of promotion, prevention, developmentally appropriate assessment/diagnosis and treatment. The resources in the section can help you think about how to use PDG B-5 funds to bring your state closer to this goal.

- [Foundations of Well-being: Policy Strategies for Integrating Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health into Child Welfare](#): This brief highlights the importance of IECMH for families in child welfare. It covers key components of the IECMH continuum of care and the importance of integrating [ZERO TO THREE's IECMH Guiding Principles and Best Practices](#) for family support and reunification. Additionally, it suggests policy strategies for states to enhance collaboration between IECMH, child welfare, and other early childhood systems.
- [Centering Babies and the Adults Who Care for Them: States Explore Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Financing and Policy](#): This overview shares examples of the core practices and policies that are essential for embedding IECMH into child and family serving systems and draws attention to progress made by states that have been part of this work. It outlines goals for those that are just beginning, summarizes "sticky issues," and calls out the need to confront systemic racism, and concludes with lessons learned as inspiration for continued progress.
- [Cost Effectiveness of Prevention Approaches to Support Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#): This brief from the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Technical Assistance Center at Georgetown University, ZERO TO THREE, and Oppenheim Consulting explores prevention approaches and short and long term cost savings.

State Spotlight - The Growth of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Supports in Georgia: [This brief](#) focuses on the advances made in GA's IECMH system by the IECMH subcommittee and are a success story of commitment and collaboration across advocates, legislative champions, and state agency staff.



Learn more at zerotothree.org