



STATE AND COMMUNITY POLICY ROUNDUP:
PROGRESS ON INFANT-TODDLER ISSUES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES
JULY 2007

The ZERO TO THREE Policy Network works to keep members abreast of new and exciting infant-toddler legislation and initiatives happening across the country. This article summarizes state and community policy activities during the first six months of 2007 and provides updates on the progress states and communities are making in their efforts to serve infants, toddlers and their families.

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STATE POLICY UPDATES

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Makes Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Central to Quality Care

Arkansas is working to increase the integration of child abuse and neglect prevention in the state's early childhood system by including the use of prevention strategies as part of their quality rating system, and by increasing child abuse and neglect prevention training for providers throughout the state.

Recognizing that high quality care must include key aspects of family support in order to help reduce the risk of child maltreatment, Arkansas leaders have utilized the *Strengthening Families* self-assessment tool, which helps programs measure how they are implementing strategies specific to strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect, as a key part of their child care quality rating system. The state is working with ZERO TO THREE to develop an online training module that supports child care center directors in using this self-assessment tool. The online training is based on ZERO TO THREE's *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent-Provider Partnerships in Child Care* curriculum (PCAN), which prepares trainers to guide child care professionals in adopting proactive strategies in their programs to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect.

In addition to the online training, Arkansas is undergoing efforts to expand their child abuse prevention training network throughout the state. In early 2007, the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education supported a core team to attend a DC-based training of trainers on PCAN. Participants in this training formed the foundation cohort for an infant/toddler specialist network throughout the state. The infant/toddler specialist network will be expanded through Arkansas' participation in the new *State Partnerships for Prevention: Reducing the Risk of Maltreatment of Very Young Children* project at ZERO TO THREE. Through the training initiative, an additional 30 trainers will learn to use the PCAN curriculum in August 2007. These trainers will then deliver the curriculum to child care providers in community-based settings in seven counties throughout the state: Miller, Hempstead, Independence, Pulaski, Saline, Searcy, and Van Buren. Trainings will be done by multi-disciplinary teams that incorporate a local child welfare worker, a local child care licensing specialist, and a local early childhood mental health professional on each team. In addition to the teams in the seven counties, an eighth team of highly qualified trainers will be organized to deliver the curriculum at statewide conferences. Each member of this eighth team will also serve as a mentor to one of the seven community-based training teams. The training for child care providers is expected to be completed by July 2008.

For more information on the *Strengthening Families Initiative*, visit http://www.cssp.org/doris_duke/index.html. For more information on the PCAN curriculum, visit www.zerotothree.org/pcanbook. For information about PCAN training for trainers, and other ZERO TO THREE trainings, visit www.zerotothree.org and click Training.

CALIFORNIA

California Develops New Infant and Toddler Program Guidelines

To promote experiences that help children prosper and thrive, the California Department of Education (CDE) created *Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Program Guidelines*. Developed with the nonprofit research agency WestEd, this document complements California's *Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines*. Together, these guidelines offer a coherent framework for extending the benefits of high-quality care and education to all children.

The *Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Program Guidelines* present information about how to provide high-quality early care and education, including recommendations for program policies and day-

to-day practices, which will improve services to all infants and toddlers (children from birth to 36 months). The guidelines pay particular attention to the role of the family, the inclusion of children with special needs, and collaboration between programs and families. They are intended to provide a starting point for strengthening all programs that care for and educate infants and toddlers, including centers, family child care homes, and kith and kin care. For a free copy of the guidelines, go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fd/documents/itldproguidelines.pdf>.

The CDE is also continuing to develop the components of their Infant/Toddler Learning and Development System throughout 2007. Earlier this year, the CDE began implementation of the *Infant/Toddler Desired Results Developmental Profile – Revised (I/T DRDP-R)*, an observational assessment tool for documenting the developmental and learning progress of children birth through age three. The tool is intended to be used by infant/toddler teachers to help inform and strengthen the services they provide to the children in their care, and it is currently being used by all child care providers serving subsidized children statewide, as well as some Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Additionally, the *Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations* (which utilize current research on infant/toddler development to identify the development achievements of children birth to three) and the *Infant-Toddler Curriculum Framework* (which helps service providers meet the diverse development needs of the children) are currently being developed and will be released later this year. Finally, training materials on these tools and initiatives, including instructional DVDs, will be released by the end of the year.

Similar to the *I/T Program Guidelines* and the *Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)*, each of the new components of the Infant/Toddler Learning and Development System has a complement that is being used with preschool-aged children. As part of their efforts to provide coherent, high-quality services to children from birth through age five, the California Department of Education will also produce guidance to help service providers integrate their use of these tools for the two age groups.

INDIANA

Indiana Takes Local Quality Rating System Statewide

The administration of Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels announced plans earlier this year to create a statewide quality rating system for child care. The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and the state's Bureau of Child Care are planning to implement a quality rating system, which will be based on the local *Paths to QUALITY* system. This decision comes after the state legislature's 2006 increase in child care funding for low-income families, indicating that the state is focusing on the quality of care available, in addition to accessibility.

To develop their plan for a statewide quality rating system, the state convened a meeting of stakeholders and examined the models which already existed right in their own backyard. Following an in-depth investigation, they decided to expand the local model, *Paths to QUALITY*. *Paths to QUALITY* was created by the Child Care and Early Education Partnership, a group of local organizations that advocate for quality child care, and is currently being implemented by the Early Childhood Alliance in six northeastern counties. The four-tiered voluntary rating system aims not only to ensure that parents can make informed decisions about their child's care, but also to provide professional development incentives and opportunity for child care programs. The rating system includes an innovative one-on-one mentoring program for providers working toward increasing their quality of care.

The statewide *Paths to QUALITY* system will be launched in January 2008, funded through a public/private partnership including an estimated \$14 million from the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). The quality rating system will be administered by the Indiana Bureau of Child Care, and training for participating programs will be provided through the Indiana

Association of Child Care Resource and Referral. The state hopes that 50% of child care centers and 25% of home-based care providers will participate in the new system during the first year. Soon after, the state will launch an educational campaign informing parents and communities about the importance of quality care and assessment. Additionally, the state has plans to increase the coordination of services for young children from birth through kindergarten by aligning the quality rating system with Foundations for Education, Indiana's birth-to-five framework that promotes quality early childhood experiences.

For more information about Paths to QUALITY, visit www.pathstoquality.org. For more information about the Early Childhood Alliance, visit www.ecalliance.org.

IOWA

Iowa's Community Empowerment Is a Catalyst for Action

As Iowa's General Assembly completed its work for this year, programs that benefit young children and their families received new funding for FY 2008. In particular, the General Assembly passed bills which funded early childhood programs through the state's Community Empowerment Areas. Iowa Community Empowerment is a partnership between communities and state government to improve the well-being of families with young children. Established in the late 1990s, Community Empowerment created 58 Community Empowerment Areas statewide representing all 99 counties. Each area has a citizen-led board to promote collaboration and develop community early childhood systems. Community Empowerment is funded by the state and administered by the state Empowerment Board and the state Office of Empowerment. Grants are provided to the local boards to expand home visitation and parent education; improve the quality of child care and preschool programs; increase the availability of infant, shift care, and inclusive child care; and increase access to child care and preschools for low-income children.

For FY 2008, the General Assembly again funded School Ready Grants, which are community-based grants to support comprehensive services for children birth through five. As part of these grants, Community Empowerment Areas will receive funds to focus on family and parent support programs. For FY 2008, \$5 million of these funds will be used to target home visiting services to families expecting a child or with children up to age three, and \$3.4 million will be used for quality improvement in early care, health and education programs.

To further support the local boards, Iowa Community Empowerment recently created a new statewide position of Family Support Coordinator. The Coordinator convened a Family Support Leadership Advisory Group, composed of state level administrators of family support programs and chairpersons of statewide family support networks, to lend their expertise to improve the quality of family support programs across Iowa. Currently, the Leadership Advisory Group is working to create a peer review process through which Iowa family support programs can collaborate with other organizations to improve their quality of services. Pilots for the peer review process will begin in the fall of 2007. For more information about Community Empowerment and its structure, visit <http://www.empowerment.state.ia.us/default.asp>

MICHIGAN

Michigan Takes Innovative Approach to Early Learning Guidelines

Based on New Zealand's work in early childhood curriculum and theory, *Te Whariki* (literally "woven mat"), the Michigan State Board of Education recently approved innovative early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers. In the early childhood context, *Te Whariki* refers to the interwoven principles and strands that together form the "wahriki" or framework for each child's development and learning.

Using this framework to spur new thinking, Michigan's early childhood community began talking about weaving and braiding: that development is not linear but is interwoven, and that early developments contribute to later accomplishments. The result is a document with early learning standards and quality

program standards for infants and toddlers that align with the state's pre-kindergarten standards (see www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ECSQ-IT_Final_180649_7.pdf).

The early development and learning goals are organized around five strands: Well-Being, Belonging, Exploration, Communication, and Contribution. The document is not intended as another checklist of developmental milestones, but as a positive framework in which to view potential development and learning outcomes of infants and toddlers. The expectation is that the strands will guide practice so that caregivers become more responsive and intentional in their everyday work with infants and toddlers.

Early care and education will continue to be a priority in Michigan throughout the coming year. In June 2007, the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) selected Michigan as one of ten states to receive a \$10,000 grant to support a Governors' Summit on Early Childhood. The grants are intended to help governors advance a school readiness agenda for children ages birth to five in their state. The date of the Governor's Summit in Michigan has not yet been announced.

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Passes Budget to Support Young Children

The Minnesota state legislature demonstrated a commitment to early care and education in the 2007 legislative session with the passage of a budget that supports young children and their families. While the \$38.6 million dedicated to early childhood amounts to only 1% of the overall state budget, the law includes significant gains for infants and toddlers, such as funding to support home visiting, family friend and neighbor care providers, quality child care, early learning, and parent education. After initially vetoing the Health and Human Services and E-12 Education budget bills, Governor Tim Pawlenty recently signed into law revised bills that provide funding for 2008-2009.

The budget includes \$8.8 million for home visiting programs targeted for low-income families to foster healthy beginnings, promote school readiness, prevent child abuse and neglect, and promote positive parenting, among other outcomes. Funding for the initiative will flow to community health boards, which will be required to use a multidisciplinary, community-based approach to home visiting and begin the visits with families prenatally, where possible. The state Department of Human Services will also be required to set aside funding to provide training and technical assistance to the home visitors, including training on early childhood development from birth to age five. Funds for the initiative, taken from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal block grant, are also promised for 2010-2011.

Another large gain in the 2008-2009 budget includes \$750,000 for a family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care competitive grant program, marking the first time the legislature has provided money for this type of care. The grant program will fund community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribes working with FFN providers to connect them with community resources to support the families' health, mental health and developmental needs. The money may also be used to provide training, support and resources to the providers, as well as information on Minnesota's early learning guidelines, the requirements to become a licensed family care provider, and culturally appropriate training.

In addition to the significant funds dedicated to the home visiting initiative and the new FFN grant program, the budget will benefit infants, toddlers and their families by: restoring funding for Early Childhood Family Education (a parental education program), Head Start, and Early Head Start back to 2003 levels; reducing parent co-pays for child care; improving child care quality and facilities; and, improving access to professional development for child care providers.

For more information on Minnesota's early childhood budget gains, visit the Ready 4 K website at www.Ready4K.org.

NEW YORK

New York Gives Home-Based Child Care Providers the Right to Unionize

Freshman Governor Eliot Spitzer signed an historical executive order on May 8, 2007 that gives an estimated 60,000 home-based child care providers the right to unionize. The executive order allows all licensed and registered family child care providers to organize, as well as family, friend, and neighbor care providers serving families whose children are receiving child care subsidies. New York is the eighth state in the country to give this right to home-based providers, joining Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and Wisconsin.

The drive to unionize these providers in New York has been ongoing for the past two years, largely pushed by groups such as the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). CSEA, which organizes many state employees, has been working to organize home-based providers in multiple counties statewide, while UFT and ACORN worked to organize subsidized child care providers in New York City. (See NWLC's report, *"Getting organized: Unionizing home-based child care providers."*) Additionally, the state legislature passed legislation in the spring of 2006 that allowed home-based providers to organize and collectively bargain with the state. This bill was vetoed by former governor George Pataki on the basis that providers would be considered state employees and therefore afforded the same benefits. The executive order signed by Governor Spitzer clearly outlines that these providers are not considered public employees, but will be able to organize and negotiate with the state.

Based on the experiences of other states, the new unionization in New York creates the opportunity for home-based child care providers to negotiate for higher pay, health benefits and increased professional development opportunities, which may increase the number of providers who remain in the child care field. These implications will consequently impact the children and families being served.

For more information on the unionization of home-based child care providers across the country, visit the National Women's Law Center (www.nwlc.org) and read their report, *"Getting organized: Unionizing home-based child care providers."*

OHIO

Ohio Brings State Agencies Together in New Early Childhood Cabinet

Ohio Governor Ted Strickland fulfilled a campaign promise this year by establishing a new Early Childhood Cabinet that brings together key state agencies working with children, from prenatal through age six. The formation of the new cabinet is a follow-up to Governor Strickland's State of the State address in which he highlighted early education and child care programs, and is evidence of the new governor's commitment to Ohio's youngest children.

The establishment of the new cabinet acknowledges the need for a consistent system of care for Ohio's children, so that they can receive the services they need to be healthy and safe, and have positive early learning experiences. The new cabinet is charged with setting and coordinating state policy and programs for young children and aims to lessen the challenges families face when seeking services from multiple agencies. The Early Childhood Cabinet is comprised of leaders from six state agencies: Job and Family Services, Education, Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, and Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

The cabinet is building upon existing infant-toddler initiatives in the state, including Build Ohio, Groundwork, the School Readiness Solutions Group, and the Ohio Family and Children First Council. The cabinet is also building upon recommendations from a team of early childhood stakeholders convened to serve as a resource for early care and education during Governor Strickland's transition into his first term.

Ohio's state budget for 2008-2009 included more than \$253 million in new funding for early care and education. Provisions that will impact infants and toddlers include \$12.5 million per year targeted toward Ohio's quality rating system, Step Up to Quality, as well as \$1 million targeted for behavioral health treatment for children birth to age seven. Ohio's GroundWork Campaign estimates that this will serve an additional 1,000 children. In addition to allocating more funds to early care and education, the budget also includes several policy provisions, such as changing the child care subsidy requirements, which will now allow families with an income at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to be eligible. Finally, the budget included language to support the development of a fiscal model for a comprehensive early care and education system in Ohio.

For more information on Ohio's early care and education budget gains, visit:

http://www.groundworkohio.org/email/pub_detail.cfm?article=122.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Launches Office of Child Development and Early Learning

Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell announced the creation of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) earlier this year. This office brings programs involved with early learning and child development, previously located in the departments of Education and Public Welfare, together in one office. Programs include Head Start, pre-kindergarten programs, early intervention (Part C programs and preschool early intervention programs), child care, family support, and similar programs.

This innovative Office of Child Development and Early Learning is represented on the organizational charts of both the Department of Education and the Department of Public Welfare. The structure encourages collaboration and creates a consistent system of services for Pennsylvania's children and families. In particular, shared governance enhances service coordination and eases the challenges faced by families seeking access to multiple services. This strategy recognizes that families seek the support of a wide range of government agencies in raising young children and helping them become ready for school.

OCDEL and Pennsylvania's young children fared well in the state budget for 2007-2008. After an effective advocacy effort by early childhood professionals, law enforcement, business and school leaders, and more, the recently completed budget significantly invests in children under five. Components that affect infants, toddlers and their families include a \$9 million increase for Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania's child care quality initiative, a \$74 million increase for the subsidized child care program, Child Care Works, and a significant increase in funds for early intervention for young children with disabilities. To learn more about OCDEL, visit

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/General/AboutDPW/DPWOrganization/OCDEL/>.

WASHINGTON

Washington Makes Young Children and Their Families a Priority

In the first half of the year, Washington State made great strides for infants and toddlers through various policy actions. In early May, Governor Chris Gregoire signed paid family leave legislation into law, making Washington the second state in the country, in addition to California, to ensure that workers receive paid leave to care for newborn and newly adopted children. Additionally, a new law was created to improve children's mental health services, and the final state budget for 2007-2009 includes increased investments to support the healthy development of infants and toddlers and their families.

The broad-based Washington Family Leave Coalition, led by the Economic Opportunity Institute, has been working since the late 1980s to promote paid family and sick leave in the state. During the 2007 legislative session, they worked closely with Senator Karen Keiser (D-33), Representative Mary Lou

Dickerson (D-36), and Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown (D-3), to champion the paid family leave bill through the state legislature. The new law provides up to five weeks of paid family leave per year and a weekly stipend of \$250 for workers to care for a newborn baby or newly adopted child. Additionally, the law requires that employers with more than 25 employees hold workers' jobs while they are on leave. While the Senate version of the legislation funded the program through a payroll tax and included paid leave to care for seriously ill family members, the legislation that was passed into law did not determine how the program would be funded and omitted leave for seriously ill family members. A task force consisting of a bipartisan group of legislators, representatives from the business, labor, and family leave communities, as well as a governor's appointee, will be formed and given six months to look at financing options. Family leave benefits for Washington's workforce will start in October 2009, covering all employees and all employers, as well as self-employed workers who elect to participate.

Representative Mary Lou Dickerson (D-36) also helped to champion infant-toddler mental health during this past legislative session. Due in part to her leadership to move the bill forward, in July a law went into effect to improve the delivery of children's mental health services, marking the first time Washington has passed legislation containing language that pertains to infant-toddler mental health. The law, 1088, has a focus on early identification, intervention, and prevention, and recognizes the need for developmentally appropriate services for children and their families.

Finally, in early May the state legislature passed its final budget for 2007 through 2009 and again showed a commitment to family support, as well as early learning. The budget includes funds for parent-support workshops, voluntary home visiting for pregnant mothers and new parents, incentives for higher education and wages for child care workers, and a new voluntary quality rating system for child care programs, to be piloted in at least four counties. Additionally, the state budget includes funds to fulfill a new collective bargaining agreement with family child care workers, as well as parity for licensed child care centers not included in the agreement, to include rate increases for those providers caring for subsidized low-income children, and higher payments for infant care.

For more information on the paid family leave law, visit <http://www.eoionline.org>.

For more information on the 2007-2009 state budget, visit <http://www.childrensalliance.org>.

WYOMING

Wyoming Passes Legislation to Implement Quality Care System

In early 2007, the Wyoming Legislature approved legislation to implement a quality care system that will improve the lives and futures for Wyoming children and families. This legislation built upon both the recommendations of the Wyoming Children and Families Initiative, launched by Governor Dave Freudenthal and the Wyoming state legislature in 2004, as well as two comprehensive studies that examined the quality of child care across the state, the capacity in care facilities, and Wyoming's anticipated need for child care in the next ten years. The passage of the quality child care system legislation followed two years of consistent and coordinated advocacy efforts by citizens across the state, which played a critical role in garnering support for the initiative.

Specifically, the proposed quality child care system provides for:

- An increase in child care subsidy payments to families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level at the 75th percentile of the 2006 market rate;
- An additional payment of \$1.40 per hour subsidy payment for families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level for infant care (children birth through twelve months);
- An additional payment of \$1.00 per hour subsidy payment for families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level for toddler care (children twelve months to twenty-four months);

- A professional development scholarship program for child care providers who provide care to low-income families;
- A family strengthening program;
- Technical assistance to child care providers; and
- A parent education/public awareness program.

The system is being implemented in July 2007 and will support low-income working families in the state through subsidy payments, supplemental subsidy payments for families who have infants and toddlers, and through the opportunity to participate in family strengthening programs. Child care providers will be given the opportunity to increase their skills and knowledge through a substantial training and educational scholarship program. In addition, child care homes and centers will receive support to improve the learning environment through technical assistance.

The passage of this legislation was a success for advocates and a significant step forward for Wyoming's children and families. However, noticeably missing from this legislation is a quality rating system that would ensure families have the information they need to locate a high quality child care program for their children. Advocates across the state will spend the coming year continuing to develop a proposal for this quality rating system that can be presented to the legislature in the 2008 session.

COMMUNITY POLICY UPDATES

CABELL, WAYNE, AND MASON COUNTIES, WEST VIRGINIA; LAWRENCE COUNTY, OHIO; AND BOYD COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Community-Based Brain Zone Project Brings Early Childhood Awareness to New Parents and Caregivers

Communities in West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky are preparing new parents and caregivers for the early years by providing them with information through the innovative "Brain Under Construction ZoneSM" project. Using the [12 Messages for Raising a Healthy Child](#) created by the United Way of the River Cities' Success by Six initiative (West Virginia), the Brain Zone project brings knowledge about healthy early childhood development to families, beginning prenatally. The Brain Zone project is currently being implemented in Cabell, Wayne, and Mason Counties in West Virginia, Lawrence County in Ohio, and Boyd County in Kentucky.

Families and caregivers can access the Brain Zone messages in numerous ways. In Cabell County, West Virginia, the primary Brain Zone location is the Cabell Huntington Hospital. Parents who pre-register at the hospital for the birth of their baby receive a Brain Zone bag, which contains child development information, an overview of the project, and an article on prenatal brain development. The hospital also has a Brain Zone kiosk outside the Mother/Baby Unit, which creates an easily accessible opportunity for families and visitors to learn about healthy child development. This kiosk focuses on one of the twelve messages each month, displaying in-depth materials and information on community partners and resources. Families delivering a baby are offered the opportunity to meet with a Brain Zone trained volunteer about early brain development and receive portfolios that include detailed information on the twelve messages for healthy development, the effects of second-hand smoke, fatherhood, building connections with your baby, and more.

The Brain Zone project was implemented in 2005 through funding from the Cabell Wayne Early Childhood Council and the ERASE Barriers to Early Learning initiative, which is a broad-based partnership that focuses on enhancing early childhood services and coordination across agencies. The nineteen child care centers participating in the ERASE initiative have "mini" Brain Zone sites, and

disseminate information on the twelve messages of healthy development monthly to families. From 2005 through 2007, over 2,300 families received Brain Zone visits at Cabell Huntington Hospital, and 2,000 children had access to the messages through their child care center.

While the project is currently being implemented in a few counties in West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky, it will soon see expansion throughout West Virginia. Starting in the fall of 2007, Brain Zones will be available at participating Head Start and pre-kindergarten centers, as well as kindergartens. Additionally, Brain Zone kiosks will be opening in hospitals in five regions throughout the state, made possible through a collaborative partnership with the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) office, West Virginia Hospital Association, New Horizon's for Learning's "Day One" program, United Way, TEAM for WV Children, and West Virginia Family Resource Network. For more information on the Brain Zone project, visit: http://unitedwayrivercities.org/Sx6_BUCZ.html

HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

Hampton, Virginia Supports Families of Young Children in Public Libraries and Beyond

The *Hampton Healthy Families Partnership* in Hampton, Virginia is a team effort in which city and community agencies joined together with public and private organizations such as hospitals, restaurants, businesses, and banks to help the families in their community become healthy, happy, and self sufficient. Healthy Families Partnership delivers a broad range of services that are coordinated through an interagency leadership group, including research-based home visiting programs, parent information and education, early literacy, a fatherhood program, newsletters, and other family support activities.

The Healthy Families Partnership focuses on public libraries as one effective way to reach out to a city's population. These facilities are easily accessible, offer established procedures, have a professional and helpful staff, and are visited by about 70 percent of the city's residents during any given year. Collaboration between the city's libraries and the Healthy Families Partnership resulted in the formation of *Young Family Centers* in each of the city's four libraries and its Bookmobile van. Each center functions as a family resource and lending library, providing parents and other caregivers with educational material on child growth and development, parenting and family management, life skills and home economics, children's crafts and activities, and a variety of other topics. The centers also offer audiovisual aids, a play area with toys that stimulate development, parent-child early literacy activities, and information on other parenting resources available in the community.

In addition to the *Young Family Centers*, Healthy Families Partnership offers a variety of other free services to Hampton's families through their extensive partnerships with community agencies including public schools, hospitals, and faith-based organizations. Families with infants and toddlers have access to comprehensive classes that address issues such as parent-child interaction and bonding, parental expectations, and child development and growth; a child development newsletter, *Healthy Stages*; and a two-day regional child fair that provides family-friendly information on early intervention, community resources, and parenting education.

Healthy Families Partnership provides multiple models of research-based home visiting programs that offer parents support and information on their child's growth and development. Programs offered include *Healthy Start*, a comprehensive and intensive program that begins prenatally and continues until the child enters kindergarten, and *Welcome Baby*, a program that provides visits in the hospital to all new parents in the Peninsula area. By offering a variety of family support services through a diverse group of community partners, Healthy Families Partnership has been able to provide services to an estimated 85% of Hampton's children under the age of 19. For more information, visit www.hampton.va.us/healthyfamilies/.

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

Trenton, New Jersey Comes Together to Improve Child Health and Development

The Children's Futures initiative in Trenton, New Jersey is galvanizing the community to work together to improve child health and development outcomes for families and their children ages zero to three. With major funding provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Children's Futures built a broad-based partnership among organizations, public agencies, and private providers who work together to strengthen parenting, improve child care and primary care systems, and integrate community supports in Trenton.

To accomplish this, Children's Futures implemented a diverse array of family support services and initiatives, such as a comprehensive home visiting program and new treatment services for maternal depression. They also created neighborhood family support centers, provided training and technical assistance programs to Trenton nonprofit organizations to help them better serve Trenton's children and families, and partnered with area physician practices to improve immunization and lead screening rates. The program is already seeing success. In 2006, 100% of children in home visiting programs through the Children's Futures' collaborative had health insurance and were linked to a primary care provider, while 93% were immunized.

Recently, Children's Futures joined with several organizations to launch the implementation of a pilot quality rating system in New Jersey. As part of their work as a core partner in Build New Jersey, Children's Futures participated in efforts that led to the creation of the Build Blueprint for an early childhood system in New Jersey, including a call for a statewide quality improvement rating system. In response, a broad-based group of Build New Jersey stakeholders created a five-step quality rating system that addresses six areas: program and learning environment, family involvement, health and safety, professional development, personnel, and business practices.

Children's Futures is leading a Trenton-based pilot of this quality improvement rating system (QIRS). Children's Futures is working with Child Care Connection, the Mercer County Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, the Association for the Children of New Jersey, and the Build New Jersey Lead Agency to implement this project. For more information about Children's Futures and the full array of their services, visit www.childrensfutures.org.

For more information about infant-toddler policies in states and communities, visit <http://www.zerotothree.org/policy> and click on "state policy updates" and "community policy updates."

The 2007 State and Community Policy Updates were written by Elizabeth DiLauro, Lynn Jones, and Florence Nelson of the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center, with contributions from numerous partners in the featured states.