



Improve the Quality of Infant/Toddler Care

Winning Beginning NY urges New York State to address the needs of the infant/toddler system, a critical component of the larger child care system. Research clearly documents the importance of the first three years of life in shaping the emotional, social, and cognitive development of children. Approximately 55% of all children in New York aged zero to three are in child care. Child care programs are responding to this increased need by expanding programs to include infants and toddlers—who require a higher level of care. Therefore, there are compelling reasons to focus specific resources on the State’s very youngest learners.

Winning Beginning NY is calling upon New York to add \$2.4 million in funding this year to improve quality for families with infants and toddlers. As the Centers have had no increase in funding for five years, the State should:

- increase funding of the Regional Infant/Toddler Resource Centers;
- strengthen the infrastructure and expertise of the Infant/Toddler Resource Network; and
- assess the impact of Center interventions in improving quality.

Increase Funding of the Infant/Toddler Regional Resource Centers

Winning Beginning NY urges an addition of \$1.7 million in funding to provide a minimum grant of \$300,000 to six regions and a total of \$1 million for New York City to expand on each of the goals established for the Centers.

The seven Regional Infant/Toddler Resource Centers are located across the State and work in every county to promote excellence in Infant/Toddler services in all settings. Each Center has Infant/Toddler specialists with training in the best practices supported by research for Infant/Toddler services. The Centers offer direct services to the early care and education community such as intensive technical assistance, training, coaching, resource information, and linkages to other social and community supports. They also serve as a best practice information center for parents, the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) network, the regional Office of Children and Family Services child care licensing office, and other professionals working with this age group.

Strengthen the Infrastructure and Expertise of the Infant/Toddler Resource Network

Winning Beginning NY urges the addition of \$500,000 in funding for the New York State Child Care Coordinating Council (NYSCCCC) to upgrade program coordination and to provide comprehensive training for trainers across the State. NYSCCCC has supported and guided best practices in each of the Regional Infant/Toddler Resource Centers, mentored and trained the Infant/Toddler specialists, and helped set statewide goals and guidelines for further development. Currently the Council receives \$100,000 in funding for this coordination work.

The requested increase in funding provides for the following critical components:

- \$200,000 for project coordination
 - Train and support the network—in-service training, website resources on best practices, facilitation of listserv and other networking strategies, site visits and regional training.
 - Research best practices nationwide to stay abreast of other states' strategies and to serve as a clearinghouse of this information.
 - Research support/data collection on the impact of the network; work with the local CCR&Rs, the Regional Infant/Toddler Resource Centers, and the evaluation partner to determine benchmarks; and monitor the progress and impact of the network.
 - Collaborate with Early Head Start (EHS), which provides a model for the type of comprehensive services and supports needed by families with infants and toddlers. Explore opportunities to create partnerships between EHS, child care, and providers of family support services. Develop community-level pilots as a model for others.
- \$300,000 for certification of 100 trainers in the Program for Infant/Toddler caregivers (PITC), a nationally recognized model of best practices. Infant/Toddler specialists and representatives/trainers from the CCR&R networks, Early Head Start, Early Intervention, and higher education would be included in the pool of trainees.

Assess the Impact of Center Interventions

Winning Beginning NY urges the addition of \$200,000 for the creation of an evaluation pilot to develop common measures for assessing the impact of the Regional Infant/Toddler Resource Centers. Currently there is no coordinated approach to evaluation. Each region uses its own logic model to set strategies and analyze outcomes. Funding would support the selection of a university partner to design and implement an evaluation model in coordination with NYSCCCC.