

Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network. The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Development, had a contract with Child Development Resources to implement the Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network (www.va-itsnetwork.org). The contract period was September 15, 2008 through June 30, 2010.

The Network strives to achieve excellence in early care by increasing the educational level and skills of those who care for infants and toddlers, whether in family homes or in centers. It also serves to link existing community resources that support healthy, safe, and nurturing care for infants and toddlers.

The Network was established during the initial months of the contract; this included eight regional offices across the state and a Leadership Council. Infant and toddler specialists and two coordinators became PITC (Program for Infant and Toddler Care) certified in all four modules and achieved reliability on the ITERS-R (Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale – Revised) and FCCERS-R (Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale – Revised) instruments. Publications included a Network flyer, eight regional snapshots on infant and toddler early care and education and professional development, and an issue brief on Virginia’s infant and toddlers in care and the caregivers/teachers who care for them.

Services for infant and toddler care providers during the last 11 months of the contract period involved 3,004 events (technical assistance, training, stipends, etc.) for 12,126 participants for 6,570.3 hours. They included:

- 620 trainings for 6,968 participants for 1,359.6 hours. Much of the training focused on PITC – social-emotional growth, PITC – learning and development, health & safety, and PITC – group care. There was an infant and toddler track at the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education conference and the Virginia Head Start Association conference;
- 1,832 technical assistance events for 121 child care programs participating in on-site services for 4,715.8 hours. Health & safety was a focus of the consultation followed by PITC – group care, PITC – learning and development, and PITC social-emotional growth;
- Stipends for 544 participants; and
- Eight (8) Celebrating Babies and Tots (CBT) 2010 institutes for 639 participants.

Results of training **evaluations** based on a highest possible score of 5:

- mean participant rating of on-site trainings was 4.83;
- mean participant rating of audio conferences was 4.3; and
- mean participant rating of CBT 2010 institutes was 4.75.

Results of on-site technical assistance, in which each program developed a quality improvement plan and received at least 40 hours of on-site technical assistance for at least 5 months:

- mean participant rating was 4.5 with 5 being the highest rate of approval;
- mean pre-ITERS-R score was 2.78 or “minimal quality”;
- mean post-ITERS-R score was 3.51 or “minimal to good”;
- mean pre-FCCERS-R score was 2.94 or “minimal quality”;
- mean post-FCCERS-R score was 3.55 or “minimal to good”; and
- 709 goals, an average of six goals per program, were created, and 573 goals (81%) were accomplished.