

Principal Investigator: Sheri Osborne

Institutional Affiliation: Child Development Resources

Study Title: *Evaluation of the Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialist Network*

Term of IRB Approval: September 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 (continuation; FY 2011)

Study Completed: April 6, 2011

Summary or Abstract:

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 July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. 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 implemented through eight regional offices across the state, 12 infant and toddler specialists and one consultant with oversight and support by Child Development Resources. Compared to the previous contract year, this is an additional 50% specialist, an additional 50% consultant and an increase of .3 FTE by one specialist. The Leadership Council provided ongoing support & guidance and was expanded to include representatives of three additional organizations.

Publications included an updated Network flyer and an issue brief entitled “Quality Matters: Setting the Stage for Life for Virginia’s Infants and Toddlers,” which was sent to 5700 programs and individuals. In addition, the following information was disseminated: 4,000 copies of the Celebrating Babies and Tots 2010 round table resources; 1,092 copies of *Baby Play*; and 2,398 copies of *Toddler Play*. There were over 2,000 visitors to the Network website each month.

Services for infant and toddler caregivers/teachers involved 2,613 events (technical assistance, training, etc.) for 11,395 participants for 6,714.9 hours. This included:

- 1,607 technical assistance events for 80 child care centers and 46 family child care homes (total of 248 classrooms) participating in on-site services for 5,060.5 hours. Health & safety, PITC - group care, and PITC - learning & development were focus areas of the consultation. Each program developed a quality improvement plan. Centers received a minimum of 40 hours of technical assistance for at least 5 months, and family child care homes received a minimum of 32 hours of technical assistance for at least 4 months;
- 638 trainings for 7,650 participants for 1,400.7 hours. Much of the training focused on PITC – learning & development, health & safety, PITC – group care, and PITC – social-emotional growth. This included:
 - an infant and toddler track at the Virginia Alliance of Family Child Care Associations conference, the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education

- (VAECE) conference for 65 participants, and the Virginia Head Start Association (VAHSA) conference for 75 participants;
 - 51 director forums for 307 participants; and
 - 4 audio conferences for 353 participants;
- Stipends for 120 participants;
- 130 linkages, referrals, marketing, and networking activities for 183 participants; and
- 4 Celebrating Babies and Tots (CBT) 2011 institutes for 370 participants.

Results of on-site technical assistance services:

- mean participant rating was 4.65 with 5 being the highest rate of approval;
- mean pre-ITERS-R score was 2.82 or “minimal quality”; mean post-ITERS-R score was 3.98 or “minimal to good”;
- mean pre-FCCERS-R score was 2.82 or “minimal quality”; mean post-FCCERS-R score was 3.81 or “minimal to good”;
- 791 goals, or an average of 6 goals per program, created with 762 (96.3%) of these goals accomplished; and
- For 17 programs receiving pre and post health & safety checklist, 16 programs increased their score with an average improvement of 39.8%.

Training increased participants’ knowledge on the training topic by an average of 11.9% (76.1% to 88%). Results of training evaluations based on a highest possible score of 5:

- mean participant rating of trainings was 4.87;
- mean participant rating of the infant and toddler track at the VAECE conference was 4.5;
- mean participant rating of the infant and toddler track at the VAHSA conference was 4.43;
- mean participant rating of audio conferences was 4.38; and
- mean participant rating of the CBT 2011 institutes was 4.76.