

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 July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

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 and 13 infant and toddler specialists with oversight and support by Child Development Resources. The Leadership Council provided ongoing support & guidance.

Services for infant and toddler directors and caregivers/teachers and other individuals involved 2,518 events (technical assistance, training, etc.) for 10,661 participants for 6,935.8 hours. This included:

- 1,546 technical assistance events for 125 child care programs with 238 classrooms participating in on-site services for 5,096.6 hours. Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) - group care, health & safety, and PITC - learning & development were focus areas of the consultation. Each child care program developed a quality improvement plan. Centers received a minimum of 40 hours of technical assistance over a period of at least 5 months, and family child care homes received a minimum of 32 hours of technical assistance over a period of at least 4 months;
- 696 trainings for 7,091 participants for 1,406.7 hours. Much of the training focused on PITC – learning & development, PITC – group care, health & safety, and PITC – social-emotional growth. This included:
 - an infant and toddler track or workshop session at the Virginia Alliance of Family Child Care Associations conference for 43 participants, the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education (VAECE) conference for 168 participants, and the Virginia Head Start Association (VAHSA) summit for 61 participants;
 - 56 director forums for 466 participants;
 - 8 1-2-3 READ! trainings for 215 participants,
 - 3 statewide audio conferences and 1 webinar with 387 participants submitting evaluations; and
 - 4 Celebrating Babies and Tots (CBT) 2012 institutes for 202 participants from center based programs;
- 276 post-environment rating scale assessments conducted by specialists, assessment debriefs following on-site technical assistance, marketing, networking, etc. for 410 participants.

Additionally 139 post environment rating scale assessments were conducted by contractors.

The following information was disseminated:

- *Behavior Has Meaning* Wheels, *Grow with Me* posters, and *Baby Stages* wheels to 1651 family care home programs;
- the book *Simple Transitions for Infants and Toddlers* to 2218 licensed and religious exempt center-based programs;

- the resource *Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups* to programs that completed on-site technical assistance the previous year; and
- the first and second editions of the Network e-newsletter to 3660 providers and others.

The Network website typically had over 2,000 visitors each month.

Results of on-site technical assistance services:

- mean participant rating was 4.80 with 5 being the highest rate of approval;
- mean pre-Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ITERS-R) score was 2.84 or “minimal” quality; mean post-ITERS-R score was 4.00 or “minimal to good” quality, which yielded an extremely statistically significant increase between ITERS-R pre and post assessment scores;
- mean pre-Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised (FCCERS-R) score was 2.86 or “minimal” quality; mean post-FCCERS-R score was 3.91 or “minimal to good” quality, which yielded an extremely statistically significant increase between FCCERS-R pre and post assessment scores;
- 695 goals, or an average of 5 to 6 goals per program, were created with verification that 652 (93.8%) of these goals were accomplished; and
- pre- to post-health & safety checklist scores increased 20% for 12 of the 14 programs.

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

- mean participant rating of trainings was 4.88;
- mean participant rating of the director forums was 4.85;
- mean participant rating of the infant and toddler track at the VAFCCA conference was 4.8;
- mean participant rating of the infant and toddler track at the VAECE conference was 4.64;
- mean participant rating of audio conferences and a webinar was 4.39; and
- mean participant rating of the CBT 2012 institutes was 4.76.

Trainings, in which a pre- and post-test was administered, increased participants’ knowledge on the training topic by an average of 13.8%.