



## Overview of the VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network

The VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network strives to achieve excellence in early care by increasing the knowledge level and skills of those who care for infants and toddlers in family homes and in centers.

Fifteen highly qualified infant and toddler specialists work in nine regional offices across the state. The specialists provide three levels of service designed to strengthen the capacity of early care and education programs to deliver high quality services.

**Level 1:** On-site consultation services including mentoring and support using quality improvement plans.

**Level 2:** Training and technical assistance to groups of caregivers, teachers, and directors.

**Level 3:** Resources and linkages to existing professional development opportunities.

Programs receiving services from the VA ITSN have achieved measurable outcomes that indicate improved quality of care for infants and toddlers.

## Resources

Web-based resources for early care providers in centers and family care homes are available on the VA ITSN website, [www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org). Resources include links to national website such as Centers for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Child Care Aware of America, and state websites such as VA Department of Social Services and 211 United Way.

## Quarterly e-Newsletter

A quarterly e-newsletter, *Network News*, is emailed to all providers and key stakeholders. The e-newsletter contains a feature article, resources, and professional development opportunities.

Visit [www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org) to find the infant and toddler specialist and regional office closest to you or for more information, call (757) 566-3300.

VIRGINIA  
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST  
NETWORK

The VA ITS Network is a program of Child Development Resources, and is supported by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Grant #93.575, with funds made available to Virginia from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Achieving  
Excellence

IN EARLY CARE

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## Level 1 Services

Level 1 on-site consultation services include mentoring and support using quality improvement plans (QIP) which are created as a result of the infant and toddler specialist (ITS) completing an assessment of each program using either an Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale or Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale.

Participating programs receive:

- A minimum of 40 hours of on-site training and technical assistance (T/TA) services for a minimum of five months for center-based programs.
- A minimum of 32 hours of on-site T/TA services for a minimum of four months for family care homes.
- Resources and materials related to their specific QIP.
- Individualized T/TA services which include consultation, targeted training, classroom-focused mentoring and feedback to support application of new knowledge and practice of new skills through modeling, reflective practice, and resources.
- A final visit to discuss the program's pre and post-service assessment scores and present a certificate of participation.



## Trainings

Group trainings and directors' forums may be offered to clusters of early caregivers/teachers and directors/owners on topics assessed regionally by the ITS.

## 1-2-3 READ!

1-2-3 READ! training is an interactive, practical two-day training designed for teachers, caregivers, and directors who work with infants and toddlers, birth to 36 months, in a group setting. The training is designed to build emergent literacy in infants and toddlers through a carefully planned set of experiences that lay the foundation for reading and writing success. After completing the training, participants may be eligible to receive 10 hours of follow-up on-site coaching and additional literacy materials to help staff plan for and use the 1-2-3 READ! information and curriculum materials received during training.

## Audio Conferences

Audio conferences and webinars are offered quarterly with one specifically designed to support directors in the areas of staffing and group design to promote continuity of care, child/caregiver attachment, and positive learning experiences for infants and toddlers. Participants receive a certificate of training.



## Celebrating Babies & Tots Institutes

These exciting, statewide professional development opportunities for early care providers are held annually to focus on increasing effectiveness through new skills, strategies, and ideas for providing high quality services for infants and toddlers. Some previous topics have included:

- Program Observation and Improvement
- Developmental Screening
- Early Math for Infants and Toddlers
- Quality Early Care Environments
- Responsive Caregiving
- Importance of Play
- Developing Inclusive Environments

Each informative, interactive institute is a full-day training. Participants receive a certificate of training and CEUs are available.