



**Meeting the Developmental Needs of Infants and Toddlers in the Child Welfare System**

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ZERO TO THREE  
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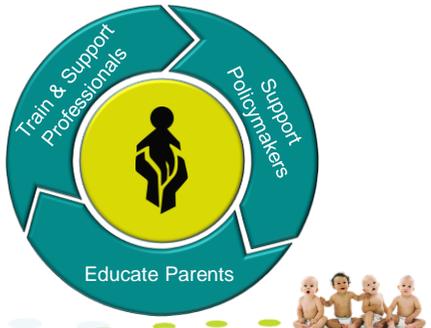
**ZERO TO THREE**



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**What We Do**



Train & Support Professionals  
Support Policymakers  
Educate Parents

**Today's Workshop Objectives**



Participants will:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the importance of early social and emotional development and the impact of adversity on infants and toddlers;
2. Gain understanding of the developmental approach to child welfare services; and
3. Be able to identify at least two evidence-based or promising practices that can reduce the impact of maltreatment on the development of infants and toddlers.

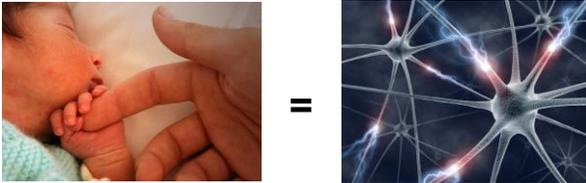
### Babies Gain Knowledge at a Staggering Rate



**700 New Connections Every Second**

newborn    1 month    3 months    6 months

### Early Experiences Shape Brain Development



### What is “Infant Mental Health”?



Infant-toddler social-emotional development is the **developing capacity** of a child to:

- Experience, regulate and express emotions;
- Form close and secure interpersonal relationships;
- Explore the environment and learn;

All in the context of **family, community and cultural expectations** for young children.

ZERO TO THREE Infant Mental Health Task Force, in Parlakian and Seibel, 2002.

### Who are the children involved in child welfare?

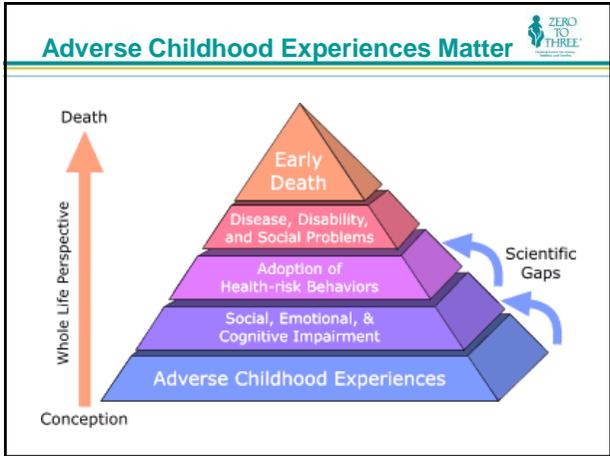
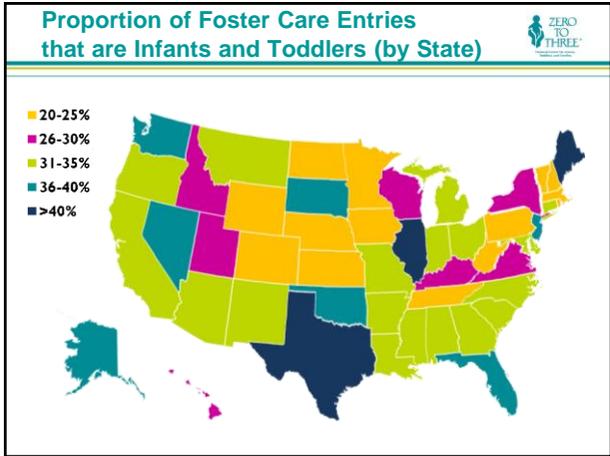
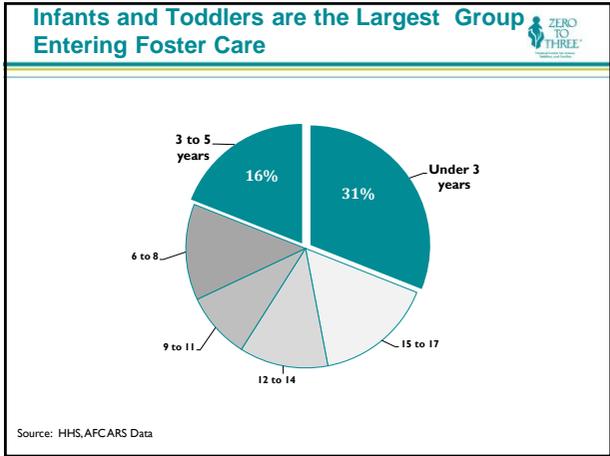
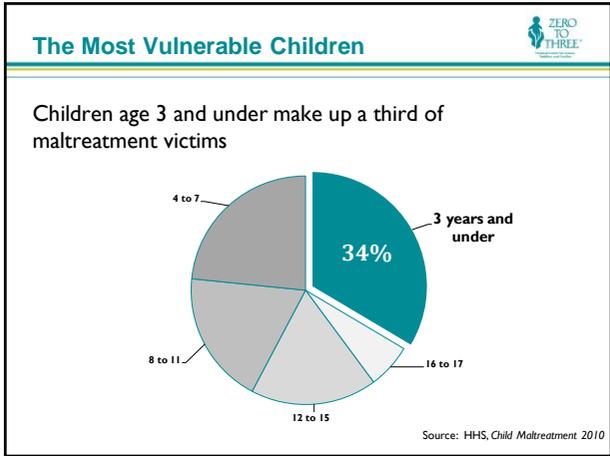


**25% of abused and neglected children are infants and toddlers**

**Every 7 minutes an infant or toddler is removed from their home due to alleged abuse or neglect.**

**Infants and toddlers are the largest age group entering foster care**

**Once in the system infants and toddlers stay in 50% longer**



## Impact of Adverse Child Experiences



- **The higher number of ACEs, the greater the likelihood of:**
  - Severe and persistent emotional problems
  - Health risk behaviors
  - Serious social problems
  - Adult disease and disability
  - High health, behavioral health, correctional and social service costs
  - Poor life expectancy



## It's All About Relationships



As babies, the way we are held, talked to, and cared for teaches us about who we are and how we are valued.



## Early Experiences from the Baby's Point of View: Heart Start Vignette



## Hope Through Action: A Unique Window of Opportunity



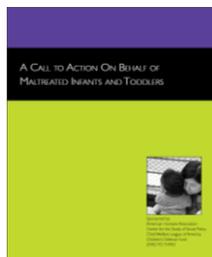
The early years present an unparalleled opportunity to intervene effectively.

### Framework for a Developmental Approach to Child Welfare Services for Young Children

The early years present an unmatched opportunity to effectively intervene with at-risk children



### Using what we know from the science to change what we do for vulnerable babies



[www.zerotothree.org/acalltoaction](http://www.zerotothree.org/acalltoaction)

American Humane Association  
The nation's voice for the protection of children & animals

Center for the Study of Social Policy

CWLA  
Protecting Abused Children and Families a National Priority

1996-2014  
10 YEARS OF  
PROGRESS  
FOR CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES

ZERO TO THREE  
National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

### What is a developmental approach?

A focus on infants, toddlers, and their families that builds guiding principles for infant and toddler development into child welfare systems and practices



### Turn and Talk

What are the top three barriers you face in working with infants and toddlers involved with the child welfare system?

### What does this look like?

#### Five Key Elements:

- Decisions guided by knowledge of early childhood development
- An emphasis on fostering stable, caring relationships
- Ensuring access to a range of services from the start
- Cultivation of family and community partnerships
- Using data and research to guide policy and practice

### Elements of a Developmental Approach

#### Key Element One:

Decisions and services are developmentally appropriate and have the explicit goal of enhancing the safety, permanency, and the developmental well-being of infants and toddlers.

1

### Decisions Guided by Knowledge of Early Childhood Development

- Child welfare workers, judicial personnel and all stakeholders educated in the science of early development
- Developmental services built into case plans
- Child welfare agencies and courts share responsibility in overseeing developmental services and steps to permanency

1

### Elements of a Developmental Approach

#### Key Element Two:

All infants and toddlers in the child welfare system have the opportunity for stable, caring relationships essential for healthy development.

2

### A Renewed Effort to Foster Stable, Caring Relationships

#### For infants, toddlers, and their families:

- Assessments of the child, the parents, and child-parent relationships
- Understanding parents' issues
- Assessment of risk and protective factors
- Family-centered practices to support family strengths and positive parenting

2

### A Renewed Effort to Foster Stable, Caring Relationships

#### For infants and toddlers placed in foster care:

- Careful transitions: Pre-removal conferences and stability in care
- Commitment to concurrent planning
- Foster/adopt homes with ready support
- Frequent, supportive parent-child contact
- Frequent case review and court monitoring
- Concept of care beyond traditional boundaries

2



### Supporting Parents in Child Welfare: Innovative Practices



### Elements of a Developmental Approach

#### Key Element Three:

Intervention procedures and services are accessible from the start to prevent the consequences of early adversity in infants and toddlers.

3

### Ensure Access to a Range of Intervention Services From the Start

#### Providing physical, mental, emotional, developmental, and family assessments and services such as:

- Preventive health services
- Infant and early childhood mental health services, including parent-child therapy
- Assessment and services for parents

#### Collaboration between Part C services and child welfare agencies

3

### Children with Special Needs in Child Welfare

Infants and toddlers in child welfare:

- Show higher rates of need for Part C early intervention services than U.S. children overall.
- Many of those in need never received an IFSP or an IEP.

### Implementation Issues: Part C and CAPTA

- Variability in implementation strategies
- High ineligibility among CAPTA referrals
- Lack capacity for infant-early childhood mental health services

### Ensure Access to a Range of Intervention Services From the Start

#### Building Relationships with the Early Childhood System

- **Priority given to infants and toddlers in:**
  - Early Head Start
  - Early childhood home visiting programs
  - High-quality child care

3

### Elements of a Developmental Approach

#### Key Element Four:

Families and communities should work as key partners to ensure the well-being of every infant and toddler.

4

### Cultivation of Family and Community Partnerships

- **Collaboration between child welfare and community systems for a web of services for infants, toddlers, and families.**
- **Use community resources to help families build informal support systems and foster protective factors.**

4

### Elements of a Developmental Approach

#### Key Element Five:

Ensure there is a focus on infants, toddlers, and their families in administrative functions such as data collection, research, and attention to special populations.

5

### Informing Services with Ongoing Data and Research

- **Data collection** gives direction to planning and program development for infants and toddlers
- **Practices** adopted that reflect infant-toddler needs
- Pull it all together for infants and toddlers in **state child welfare plans**

5

## What does this look like?

### Five Key Elements:

- Decisions guided by knowledge of early childhood development
- An emphasis on fostering stable, caring relationships
- Ensuring access to a range of services from the start
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## Turn and Talk

What are the top three resources available to infants and toddlers in your community who are facing adversity?

What will you do to implement a development framework in child welfare in your community?

## Resource for State Planning



Available at [www.zerotothree.org/childwelfaretool](http://www.zerotothree.org/childwelfaretool)

## Resources



Supporting Infants, Toddlers and Families Impacted by Caregiver Mental Health Problems, Substance Abuse, and Trauma: A Community Action Guide (2012)  
<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA12-4726/SMA12-4726.pdf>

Infusing a Developmental Framework into Child Welfare – Self-Assessment for States and Counties (2012) [www.zerotothree.org/childwelfaretool](http://www.zerotothree.org/childwelfaretool)

Nurturing Change  
<http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/pdf/nurturing-change.pdf>

ACE Study [www.acestudy.org](http://www.acestudy.org)

Safe Babies Court Teams: Building Strong Families and Healthy Communities  
[www.zerotothree.org/maltreatment/safe-babies-court-team/safe-babies-products.html](http://www.zerotothree.org/maltreatment/safe-babies-court-team/safe-babies-products.html)

50-State Child Welfare Survey (2013)  
<http://www.zerotothree.org/policy/changing-the-course-for-infants-and-toddlers.html>