

The Baby Monitor: Zero to Three Policy and Advocacy News

February 16, 2010

President Obama Proposes Significant Funding Increases for Infants, Toddlers, and their Families

On February 1st, the President released his annual [Budget Request](#), indicating his priorities for funding for the fiscal year that runs October 1, 2010-September 30, 2011. The \$3.8 trillion budget request includes \$1.415 trillion in overall domestic discretionary funding. While the budget request largely freezes domestic discretionary funding for the next three years, it does include some notable increases for programs and services for infants and toddlers, including an increase of \$1.6 billion for child care, a \$989 million increase in Head Start/Early Head Start, and an increase of \$1 billion for child nutrition. Furthermore, the President has proposed a near doubling of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit which helps working parents afford the costs of child care.

The budget request also builds on the work of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) by proposing continued supports for struggling families. For example, the President proposes to temporarily continue the enhanced federal match rate (FMAP) for expenditures related to Medicaid and Title IV-E foster care services. The budget request proposes temporary extensions of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) supplemental grants and the TANF Emergency Fund, both of which were part of ARRA. In a tough economic climate, the fact that the President's budget includes increased funding requests for services and programs benefitting infants, toddlers, and their families is clear recognition of the importance of these services to the future of our families and our nation.

[Click here](#) for funding details and descriptions of all the programs listed above!

The House and Senate Budget Committees will take the President's Budget Request under consideration as they begin work on the Congressional Budget Resolution. Stay tuned to *The Baby Monitor* for opportunities to take action and ensure that these increases for infants, toddlers, and their families make it through to the final budget.

Resources on High Quality Child Care for Infants and Toddlers

President Obama's proposals to expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and funding for child care services have the potential to significantly impact families with very young children. As you advocate for high quality child care for infants and toddlers throughout the budget season, be sure to utilize the resources below!

- ZERO TO THREE's [Early Experiences Matter Policy Guide](#) features an issue brief, [Seizing the Potential: Quality Infant-Toddler Child Care](#), which outlines policy recommendations, the research supporting those recommendations, and fast facts about high quality child care for infants and toddlers.
- [The National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative @ ZERO TO THREE](#), a project of the Child Care Bureau, produces materials and resources on infant-toddler child care supply, investments, and initiatives, including a [database](#) of infant-toddler child care initiatives and [profiles](#) for each state and territory.
- The Center for Law and Social Policy's [Charting Progress for Babies](#) highlights state policies that support the healthy growth and development of infants and toddlers in child care settings.

State Policy Update

Pennsylvania's OCDEL Receives Early Head Start Expansion Grant

As part of their efforts to create a continuum of high quality early childhood services, Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is beginning to provide Early Head Start to infants, toddlers, and pregnant women. In December, OCDEL received a federal Early Head Start grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which provided \$1.1 billion specifically targeted to expand the high-quality program throughout the country. The ARRA funds will be used to create more than 1,700 new Early Head Start slots in Pennsylvania, 128 of which will be managed by OCDEL. Services are slated to begin this spring.

Since funds for Early Head Start usually flow directly from the federal Office of Head Start to local grantees, awarding the grant to Pennsylvania's state agency showcases an innovative new model of service delivery that will help the state to better integrate infant toddler services into its early childhood system.

[Read the full state policy update now!](#)

Publications & Resources

Birth to Five Policy Alliance Launches New Website

The Birth to Five Policy Alliance recently launched a [redesigned website](#), including tools on policy, research, and advocacy for young children. The Alliance, established in 2005, works as a vehicle to shift the odds in favor of young children at risk for poor outcomes. It promotes innovative and successful policies with the funding necessary to achieve positive early learning, strong families, and good health for vulnerable children birth to age five. ZERO TO THREE is a national grantee organization of the Alliance.

Call for Proposals for ZERO TO THREE's National Training Institute

ZERO TO THREE invites proposals for presentations at the 25th National Training Institute (NTI), December 8th through 11th, 2010 in Phoenix, Arizona. These presentations may be field, case, or poster presentations. Both field and case presentations should focus on best practices and innovations from practice, research, or public policy in the infant-family field. The submission deadline is March 5, 2008. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Early Childhood Mental Health Services in Four States

In December, [Project Forum](#) at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) released Early Childhood Mental Health Services: Four State Case Studies, which discusses early childhood mental health services in Connecticut, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois.