

Improving Access to High-Quality Training for Infant/Toddler Caregivers

Lessons from Implementing the
Program for Infant Toddler Care in
Three Midwest States

Presenter Information

- Douglas Powell, Department of Child Development and Family Studies, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
- powelld@purdue.edu
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Training matters

- Review of studies from 1980 to 2005 shows positive effects of specialized training on the competencies of child care providers
- Professional development is a proven pathway toward improving the quality of infant and toddler experiences and outcomes in child care settings

Bush Foundation initiative

- Make infant-toddler caregiver training available to all caregivers in every region of Minnesota and the Dakotas
- Employed a train-the-trainer model
- Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) was basis of training
- Intensive training of trainers in region and in each state

PITC

- Nationally recognized model (part of Early Head Start training)
- Relationship-based care that helps caregivers get “in tune” with each infant they serve
 - Become sensitive to infants’ cues, connect with family and culture
- Videos and guides show how to study infants, reflect on and record information about child interests and skills, set the stage for child’s next learning encounters

Accomplishments and ripple effects

- New or improved systems of training delivery
- Dispersion of trainers and training throughout region
- Adaptations and leadership for diverse cultural communities
- Innovative approaches to deepening the impact of training

New or improved systems of training delivery

- Child care resource and referral agencies strengthened their training capacity
- New regional system of Early Childhood Enrichment Centers established in SD
- Major form of faculty development at tribal colleges with ECE programs

Dispersion of trainers and training throughout region

- PITC training is readily accessible in the 3-state region, including reservations
- 430 professionals became trainers who in turn conducted approximately 3,000 trainings involving some 30,000 individuals
- Home-based providers are most common participants in trainings
- Efforts targeted at licensing staff

Dispersion of trainers and trainings throughout the region (cont)

- Significant increase in availability of training in rural areas, including reservations through tribal and technical colleges
- Nearly half of home-based caregiver participants indicated they would increase the number of infants and toddlers served

Adaptations and leadership for diverse cultural communities

- PITC adapted and translated in 6 languages (Arabic, Ethiopian, Hmong, Laotian, Somali, Spanish)
- Infant/toddler trainers served as cultural mediators, helping caregivers complete forms and secure children's play items
- Tribal leaders developed a resource on Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people: *Wakanyeja WoAwanka* (Caring for our sacred children)

Innovative approaches to deepening the impact of training

- Consultation model: Quality Enhancement Project
 - Consultant works with a center, beginning with an assessment of infant-toddler classroom using ITERS
 - 6 hours of training for center director
 - Consultant, teachers, and director formulate a quality improvement plan
 - Follow-up assessment every 6 to 12 months

Implications for Indiana

- Learn from what made a difference:
 - Strategic focus
 - Adaptation to contexts
 - Learning mode
 - Long view

Implications for Indiana (cont)

- Strengthen existing infrastructure for training systems
- Maintain a clear focus on infants and toddlers
- Maximize state's extensive infant/toddler expertise, including higher education
- Ambitiously support a cadre of early childhood professionals to serve as trainers

Implications for Indiana (cont)

- Broaden public awareness of the importance of birth to 3
- Support caregiver knowledge and skills, including commitment to professional development
- Engage in outreach to informal providers

Contact information

- powelld@purdue.edu