**Best Beginnings Committee Action Summary**

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) AND STAFF PRESENTING ACTION: Elena Rivera and Elisabeth Underwood

CONTACT: Elisabeth Underwood

Summary of Recommended Committee Action

ISSUE: A group of cross-sector state agency staff and other early childhood stakeholders (Dawn Woods, ELD; Nakeshia Knight-Coyle, ELD; Benjamin Hazelton, Oregon Health Authority; Keary Cassidy Norton, Oregon Health Authority; Laurie Theodorou, Oregon Health Authority; Nancy Johnson-Dorn, Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education-Oregon Department of Education; Elena Rivera, Children’s Institute and Best Beginnings Vice-Chair, Kimberly Porter, Black Parent Initiative; Annie Manning, ELD; Dawn Myers, Department of Human Services-Self-Sufficiency; Karen Collette, Department of Human Services – Self-Sufficiency; Sarah Scott, Oregon Center for Career Development; Ashley Oakley, Native American Youth and Family Center; Tom George, ELD; Julie Weatherston, Region X Infant-Toddler Specialist; Robin Hill-Dunbar, Ford Family Foundation; Donalda Dodson, Oregon Child Development Coalition; Ingrid Anderson, Portland State University Infant Toddler Certificate Program) has been working since January 2017 to conduct a statewide assessment of infant and toddler policies and programs, using the Zero to Three Statewide Self-Assessment Toolkit. Project leads represent the Early Learning Division are Meredith Russell, Program Development Lead; Elisabeth Underwood, Healthy Families Home Visiting Specialist and representing the Oregon Health Authority is Liz Stuart, Child Systems Collaboration Coordinator.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The establishment of an Infant-Toddler Ad Hoc Workgroup of the Best Beginnings Committee to continue this work for the duration of one year (May 2017 – May 2018) to ensure that recommendations for improving outcomes for infants and toddlers are moved to action and embedded within the Best Beginnings Committee work plan and Early Learning Council’s Strategic Plan. The Infant Toddler proposes that there be an overlap in membership, with several Best Beginnings Committee members participating in the Infant Toddler Ad Hoc Workgroup.

BACKGROUND:

* Infants and toddlers and their families need comprehensive and family-centered supports to ensure healthy development and a solid foundation for future success.
* However, a broad cross-sector snapshot of the policies and programs in place for infants, toddlers and their families in Oregon is currently lacking. In order to prioritize action to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers, Oregon needs a cross-sector picture of the data available on health, early learning and family support policies and services and feedback from stakeholders and families to inform continued infant toddler system development.
* Through a technical assistance grant to the Early Learning Division in Spring 2016, a group of stakeholders formed a peer learning group to complete the [Zero to Three Infant-Toddler Self-Assessment Toolkit](https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/359-infants-and-toddlers-in-the-policy-picture-a-self-assessment-toolkit-for-states). As that peer learning group came to a close in October 2016, the stakeholders continued to meet to work on collecting data outlined in the Toolkit that addresses policy and services for infants and toddlers and their families in the areas of health, early learning and family supports. Membership in the group continued to grow to reflect the cross-agency, cross-sector nature of infant and toddler needs. To ensure alignment with ELC goals and procedures, and that priority recommendations that emerge from the data collection and analysis process are moved to action, we are requesting formal designation as an ad hoc workgroup of Best Beginnings.
* The Best Beginnings Committee is well-suited to oversee this work as it aligns with the Committee’s purpose of providing governance and support for prenatal to age 3 state policy and programming. In addition, Best Beginnings has the capacity to drive cross-sector and cross-agency collaboration, ensuring that the work is not limited to one particular agency or silo.
* The role of this ad hoc workgroup is to complete the Zero to Three Infant-Toddler Self-Assessment Toolkit, in partnership with diverse stakeholders. This will include collecting the data points outlined in the Zero to Three Self-Assessment Toolkit and conducting the family and stakeholder surveys, reviewing assessment results, and developing a set of recommendations to address priority needs which will be proposed to the Best Beginnings Committee for approval and adoption.