



Infant Toddler State Self-Assessment Update July 19, 2017

What is the infant toddler state self-assessment toolkit?

The toolkit, designed by Zero to Three®, provides a template to create a statewide snapshot of infant-toddler data relating to health, family support and early learning and to assess the presence of state policies and systems that specifically support families with infants and toddlers. The design of the tool prompts compilation of a set of targeted data points and related narrative, and includes a set of surveys to collect feedback from early learning stakeholders, including families of young children.

How did Oregon become interested?

Oregon's Early Learning Division was introduced to Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment Toolkit for States through work with Zero to Three® Specialist Jamie Colvard several years ago. In the spring of 2016 The Research Institute at Western Oregon University and Oregon's Early Learning Division Office of Child Care received a six-month technical assistance grant through the BUILD Initiative and the National Center of Early Childhood Quality Assurance to establish an infant-toddler peer learning group to examine Oregon's infant-toddler state systems and identify areas for growth. The group was comprised of infant-toddler stakeholders in the field of childcare, early childhood policy, health policy and home visiting. The peer learning group completed one section of data in the Zero to Three® Infant Toddler Assessment toolkit to test the feasibility of using it. Through this work the Early Learning Division identified the value of collecting this data and followed by confirming interest in the tool from the Best Beginnings Committee of the Early Learning Council and key cross sector partners such as the Oregon Health Authority and the Children's Institute.

The Purpose

The goal of Oregon's Infant Toddler State Self-Assessment effort is twofold:

- 1) To use the Zero to Three® Self-Assessment Toolkit to collect data and information to better understand the policy picture for infants and toddlers in Oregon, and
- 2) To use an analysis of the assessment results to inform a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening Oregon's infant and toddler policies and service delivery systems across sectors. Recommendations will drive the body of work for the new ELD Infant and Toddler Specialist position, as well as areas of work for early childhood system partners.

The Process

After completing a test-run of data collection for one section of the tool and affirming the need for, and value of, the self-assessment process and subsequent creation of state recommendations, a group of key stakeholders met in January 2017 to further assess interest and available resources for completing the Infant Toddler Assessment tool. Attendees included members of the peer learning group; staff from the Early Learning Division, Oregon Health Authority the Department of Human Services and other cross-sector partners. They expressed a strong interest for an inclusive, cross- sector process. Additional key stakeholders and partners were identified and a work group of all the identified partners was formed. Meredith Russell and Elisabeth Underwood were identified as project leads from the Early Learning Division. As the peer learning grant came to a close, the opportunity presented itself for the project to become one of a set of five child care-related projects receiving technical assistance (TA) through a three-year technical assistance grant awarded to the Oregon's Office of Child Care through an Impact grant. This has allowed for continuing expert technical assistance for the work since February 2017. In an effort to ensure a cross-sector and cross-agency lens for this work, Liz Stuart was added as project lead from Oregon Health Authority in April 2017. Project leads have continued to collect and compile secondary data in response to the questions in the self-assessment tool. The work group has met twice since January 2017 to provide guidance and feedback to the data collection process.

The Work Plan

The self-assessment process is designed to be completed in three phases. The first phase of the process includes engagement of stakeholders, the collection of population and policy data and narrative from families and stakeholders. To date, the collection of population and policy data is nearly complete. Best Beginnings Committee members and a broad range of stakeholders were invited to review the first draft of this data on April 6th, 2017 in a meeting facilitated by the Impact grant TA consultants. At the meeting 27 stakeholders representing coordinated care organizations, the Oregon Health Authority, early childhood mental health, the Department of Human Services, early learning hubs, Early Head Start, Children's Institute, home visiting programs, 211 and the Oregon Center for Career Development reviewed the first draft of data collected, provided feedback about the data points and identified areas for possible inclusion in stakeholder and family surveys. The data collected thus far can be viewed in the Zero to Three[®] tool attached.

The second step of data collection is to obtain feedback from stakeholders and families. Proposals for gathering stakeholder and family feedback are under development, and will be vetted by the work group and data experts before work on survey design can begin. Following development of the surveys and an implementation plan, a community engagement process will take place to collect family and stakeholder feedback.

The final phase of completing the process is the analysis of the data and vetting of the final results, assembling a summary report, and the development of recommendations to strengthen Oregon's infant and toddler systems. To include feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders, the intent is to continue

community engagement and invite a large number of stakeholders to meet and vet assessment results, helping to inform a set of preliminary recommendations for Best Beginnings to review and finalize.

Next Steps

Currently under consideration is the adoption of this work by the Best Beginnings Committee, and for the work group to become an ad hoc work group of the Committee. This will allow Best Beginnings to advise the assessment process and review work group recommendations. Based on data from the assessment, the Committee will be able to make recommendations to the ELC for policy and systems change priorities to improve infant-toddler systems and services. The Best Beginnings Committee is scheduled for a presentation on the assessment process and an opportunity to review the data collected to date on July 25th 2017.