



Social and Emotional Wellness

Relationship-Based Care for Infants and Toddlers: A Training for Trainers Professional Development Strategy

Overview

The free *Relationship-Based Care for Infants and Toddlers: A Training for Trainers* series is offered by the Child Care State Capacity Building Center's Infant/Toddler Specialist Network via a request from the state, territory, or tribal Child Care and Development Fund Administrator. The series provides rationale and guidance for implementing relationship-based care in family child care homes and early care and education centers that serve infants, toddlers, and their families.

The content is based on the understanding that relationships are essential for healthy development. Responsive, nurturing relationships with caring adults provide safety and support for infants and toddlers to develop a sense of security and discover the world around them. Group care for infants and toddlers should be organized to promote the development and strengthening of relationships between caregivers, infants, toddlers, and families.

The training for trainers (TFT) relies on the essential program practices for relationship-based care described by the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) (Lally & Mangione, n.d.). PITC offers these six essential program practices as a framework for relationship-based care:

- 1. Primary caregiving** is the practice in which the care of each infant or toddler is assigned to one specific caregiver who is principally responsible for caring for that child in the care setting and communicating with the child's family.
- 2. Continuity of care** is the practice in which primary caregivers and children stay together for as long as possible—preferably for the children's first 3 years—creating opportunities for caregiver-child, caregiver-family, and child-child relationships to develop and deepen over time.
- 3. Small group care** is the practice in which primary caregivers provide care for infants and toddlers in discrete groups, creating an intimate setting for interactions, care routines, and exploration.
- 4. Individualized care** is the practice of being responsive and adapting to each infant's and toddler's interests, needs, and abilities to support their healthy development.

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- 5. Culturally responsive care** is the practice of caring for children from culturally diverse families in ways that are consistent with their home practices and values.
- 6. Inclusive care** is the practice of actively including infants and toddlers with disabilities or delays in group care settings, with appropriate accommodation and support.

PITC's program practices create an opportunity for responsive interactions that can lead to deep, nurturing relationships between the caregivers and the infants and toddlers over time.

In addition to the six program practices, this series includes an introductory session, a philosophical foundation for relationship-based care, and an overview of adult learning and planning for next steps. The sessions are designed to be facilitated by training and technical assistance professionals, including trainers, consultants, specialists, coaches, college faculty, program monitors, and mentors. State, territory, and tribal leads may also participate in this training, as appropriate. Each session includes a slide deck, resources, learning activities, video links, and a detailed facilitator's guide. Facilitators can tailor the sessions to the needs, interests, and availability of the participants.

Implementation Strategies

Training Format

This TFT is typically offered as a 2-day, in-person event. It can also be offered as an online virtual training or a hybrid training—a combination of in-person and virtual learning. Contact your regional Infant/Toddler Specialist at the Child Care State Capacity Building Center to individualize the training format to the needs and interests of your state, territory, or tribe. Contact information for Infant/Toddler Specialists can be found in the [Infant/Toddler Resource Guide](#).

Recommended Preparation

The series is designed for training and technical assistance professionals who have a background in infant and toddler learning, development, and care. There is a substantial amount of content and guidance in the materials; however, the facilitator should be knowledgeable and capable of responding to questions and concerns not covered in the materials.

Requirements for Participants and Implementation Support

Participants in the TFT commit to facilitating the training in their own communities within a certain time frame. They receive ongoing implementation support from the Infant/Toddler Specialist. The specific time frame is defined by the participants; the Infant/Toddler Specialist; and the state, territory, tribe, or host agency. Most frequently, the time frame is 6 months. Participants have the flexibility to individualize aspects of the training to meet the interests and

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needs of the infant and toddler caregivers they support. When participants develop their own training, they will work with the Infant/Toddler Specialist to maintain fidelity. Participants will receive continued individualized support from the Infant/Toddler Specialist as they move toward broader implementation.

Implementation support can be tailored to include the following:

- ◆ A community of practice
- ◆ Coaching
- ◆ Consultation
- ◆ Office hours with the Infant/Toddler Specialist

Implementation Example

Michigan has adopted relationship-based care as part of the infrastructure of its infant and toddler child care learning communities. After participating in *Relationship-Based Care for Infants and Toddlers: A Training for Trainers*, the infant and toddler specialists in Michigan began using this training as a foundation for the professional development offered in their newly formed learning communities. The training components have been added as approved trainings to the Michigan registry. The state now includes this training within the scope of work for Michigan's Infant/Toddler Specialist Network and learning communities as an ongoing requirement.

Oregon is currently working to align the *Relationship-Based Care for Infants and Toddlers: A Training for Trainers* curriculum with its professional development system's Core Knowledge and Competencies. In addition, Oregon is adding the training into its registry system in anticipation of the TFT in which Oregon's Infant/Toddler Specialists will participate at the beginning of 2021.

Reference

Lally, J. R., & Mangione, P. L. (n.d.). *About the Program for Infant/Toddler Care*. WestEd; California Department of Education. <https://www.pitc.org/about>

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