

# An Essential Program Practice for **Infant and Toddler Relationship-Based Care**



## 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.

### Home-Based Care

The recommended group size is one caregiver for no more than six children, of which no more than two are under age 2

### Center-Based Program

- May include up to six infants (under 12 months of age) with an adult-child ratio of 1:3
- No more than eight children (ages 13-36 months) are recommended, with an adult-child ratio of 1:4

## Why is Small Group Care important?



- Increases opportunities for one-on-one interactions
- Infants and toddlers form caring relationships with adults and other children
- Supports regulation of environmental stimuli
- Provides personalized care
- Increases positive staff interactions
- Offers fewer distractions and less overstimulation

## How do I implement in my program?

- Develop a system of maintaining small groups with low ratios
  - Use group size criteria outlined above
  - Include policies and facility planning to consistently maintain group size, indoors and outdoors
- Create job descriptions that include expectations for small group care practices
- Strengthen professional development of caregivers and administrators to sustain small groups and low adult-child ratios
- Use an intentional review process to continually strengthen small group care

## Positive Child Outcomes



Cognitive development



Problem-solving skills



Better focus



Emotional development

## Learn More!

### Small Group Care

<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/infant-toddler-resource-guide/small-group-care>

### Source

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



CHILD CARE

State Capacity Building Center

Infant/Toddler Specialist Network