



Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers

State infant/toddler specialist networks are networks of professionals who provide training and technical assistance to the infant/toddler workforce to increase their skills and knowledge. This assistance may include extensive training on infant/toddler issues, provision of resources, and mentoring and coaching to support practice change. With a specific set-aside of quality dollars targeted to infant/toddler work, many States use these monies to help fund an infant/toddler specialist network that can enhance the quality of infants' and toddlers' experiences in out-of-home care. The following table highlights States' and Territories' efforts related to infant/toddler specialist networks, as captured in their 2016–2018 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plans.

The following are direct excerpts from the 2016–2018 CCDF Plans. Minor edits have been incorporated to enhance readability. States and Territories are only included in this table if their Plans address infant/toddler specialist networks.

7.3.1 What activities are being implemented by the State/Territory to improve the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers?

State	Description of Work (taken from state implementation plan)
Alabama	The Alabama Infant Toddler Professional Development Network began as a support for programs participating in the Alabama Quality STARS pilot. It has been expanded to include support to infant toddler teachers in the Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership Program. The Infant Toddler Professional Development Network offers technical assistance, modeling, mentoring, and professional development support to infant toddler teachers. The program develops a professional development plan with each teacher.
Alaska	The Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office, provides Infant/Toddler Targeted Funds to Alaska's statewide child care resource and referral network, via a grant. <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Provides on-site consultation focused on caring for infants and toddlers.◆ Provides quality initiative projects which include technical assistance and mini-grants to facilities on The Amazing Years from Birth to Three.◆ Provides on-site consultation on any specific needs of the facility, including supports around infants and toddlers, either upon request of the facility or by recommendation from Alaska's Child Care Licensing Program.◆ Uses methods to customize quality supports of the needs of individual programs, including program improvement plans and technical assistance on the use of program assessment tools.
Arizona	First Things First (State Advisory Council) First Things First provides training and professional development to promote and expand child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers. Through Quality First, coaches provide the introduction to the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines, and provide written Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) and Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring Systems™ (CLASS™) reports.



State	Description of Work (taken from state implementation plan)
	<p>Arizona Department of Education</p> <p>The Arizona Department of Education – Early Childhood Education (ADE- ECE) provides in-depth professional development on each of the domains of the Infant Toddler Developmental Guidelines. Each module is four hours in length and covers these domains: social-emotional, approaches to learning, language development and communication, cognitive development, and physical and motor development.</p> <p>Arizona Department of Economic Security, CCDF Lead Agency</p> <p>Infant/toddler training as mentioned in section 6.2.1(a) offers comprehensive training that provides a specific focus on infant/toddler education. The follow-up technical assistance is available to child care providers that attend training to implement concepts learned in training.</p>
Arkansas	<p>Coaching and technical assistance for infant and toddler providers is offered through contract with a state network of qualified infant-toddler specialists to provide site visits upon request and offered at no cost to the provider.</p>
California	<p>California utilizes the Program for Infant/Toddler Care Regional Partners for Quality to have a system of qualified infant-toddler specialists. These partners have a system to extend their reach to certification processes for additional trainers that are part of their service delivery, but who are not on their staff.</p>
Colorado	<p>The Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler (EQIT) Initiative is focused on increasing the quality and availability of respectful, responsive infant and toddler care across Colorado while supporting local communities to expand their capacity to support infants, toddlers, and their families. One of the primary activities is the EQIT 48-hour course of training, conducted locally with support from the state EQ Initiative. These courses are aligned with the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines. The Expanding Quality in Infant and Toddler course increases knowledge and awareness of Colorado’s Early Learning and Development Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers. In addition, the EQ Infant Toddler Specialists receive additional training on the Early Learning and Development Guidelines, Colorado’s early learning standards.</p> <p>The Colorado endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health (IMH-E ®) is an overlay onto a person’s professional credentials that recognizes achievement of knowledge and training in the area of infant and early childhood mental health. The Endorsement is one of the first and most comprehensive efforts in the country to identify best practice competencies at multiple levels and across disciplines and to offer a pathway for professional development in the infant, early childhood and family field. The Endorsement materials provide potential candidates with a process for developing a professional development plan, and suggests a ladder of steps for required and supplementary training and experiences to adequately prepare one for work in the infant and family field. Targeted and ongoing training for the professionals from the multiple disciplines that work with infants and young children and their families is essential to ensure that professionals understand infant and early childhood mental health and are equipped to promote positive practices to support these children, prevent problems when risk is identified, and intervene when necessary.</p> <p>Colorado Shines offers a coaching model that supports all five quality standards for this statewide quality rating and improvement system. This model incorporates practice-based coaching which focuses on planning and goal setting, focused observation, reflection and sharing teaching practices. Coaches are required to hold a coaching credential to coach within this framework.</p>



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Connecticut	The Quality Improvement System (QIS) will ensure that infant-toddler care specialists are trained and available to provide individualized support to programs seeking licensure, accreditation, or increasing their ability to serve the most vulnerable infants and toddlers.
Delaware	Coaching and counseling is also provided through the Delaware Stars and Capacity Building programs.
District of Columbia	The District provides ongoing professional development opportunities for infant and toddler professionals. In FY15, the district conducted over 150 professional development trainings specific to infant and toddler teachers and administrators free of charge. The District also has approximately 100 Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)-approved professional development trainers that are certified in the infant and toddler development content area.
Florida	<p>Infant/Toddler Specialists are located at each coalition to provide coaching and technical assistance regarding care and education of infants and toddlers to early learning providers. As noted in 6.2.3, Florida has built significant capacity to provide high-quality coaching and mentoring to early childhood professionals in centers and family child care homes through the certified early childhood coaches. While this capacity was built as a part of Early Learning Florida, coalitions and their partners report using the certified coaching capacity widely throughout their other quality improvement initiatives, including their work to improve infant and toddler care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Coalitions use program assessment scores to offer targeted technical assistance using tools such as the Infant and Toddler CLASS tools. ◆ Blended models of training are offered through the Early Learning Florida program, which offers online training blended with technical assistance and/or communities of practice. ◆ Each early learning coalition is staffed with an Infant/Toddler Specialist who serves as a coach for providers serving infants and toddlers. ◆ Some early learning coalitions offer quality mentors who provide technical assistance to the teachers involved in the Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership grant on a bi-weekly basis.
Georgia	<p>The Lead Agency supports a network of qualified infant toddler specialists through the Georgia Program for Infant Toddler Care (GAPITC). This program is funded using CCDF dollars and is the structure the state uses to deliver all training and technical assistance related to high-quality infant toddler care. Components of the program include professional development, coaching, mentoring, technical assistance, mini-grants, and an interactive website to support early childhood educators working with infants and toddlers to improve the quality of care for children ages birth to three.</p> <p>Services from GAPITC are available to all staff in all licensed child care learning centers, family child care learning homes, Early Head Start, and other early learning programs.</p> <p>Technical assistance plans are developed based on the results of assessment with the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scales and on topics based on the six essential policies of the Program for Infant/Toddler Care.</p> <p>Technical assistance is designed to help providers understand and practice a model of relationship-based care that is respectful and responsive to each child's individual needs.</p> <p>In addition, the child care resource and referral agencies provide technical assistance to improve infant toddler care.</p>
Guam	The Lead Agency will be utilizing the mentors and coaches from other programs as an intervention in the process of addressing children with developmental disabilities after assessments (Ages and Stages Questionnaire/ASQ) are completed. In the process, and as a



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	result of the ASQ assessment, there may be cost involved which may require the Lead Agency to blend funds to support the networks of qualified infant-toddler specialists.
Idaho	Coaching is available through the regional child care resource and referral offices by Quality Child Care Consultants and Child Care Health Consultants to support caregivers with implementation of best practices for caring for and teaching infants and toddlers.
Illinois	Infant Toddler Child Care Specialists are housed in each child care resource and referral agency. They provider consultation, training, and technical assistance to child care providers serving infants and toddlers in their respective service delivery areas and assist providers in preparing and applying for ExceleRate levels of quality.
Indiana	The Lead Agency contracts with local child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies to employ regionally based Infant/Toddler Specialists to provide a high level of training and technical assistance to child care providers across the state. They are able to consult with programs that need a more intense level of technical assistance around infant/toddler care. The specialists are available to work with individual teachers to coach and model different teaching techniques in an infant/toddler classroom. The Infant/Toddler Specialist works with the Paths to QUALITY Coaches to consult with programs, providing feedback and resources to increase the quality of infant and toddler programming. The Infant/Toddler Specialists assist the Paths to QUALITY Coaches around developmentally appropriate infant and toddler practices. The technical assistance (TA) training blend is an additional method that can be used to increase infant/toddler quality within child care programs. Once professional development is provided, child care programs will have access to the Infant/Toddler Specialist or one of the Paths to QUALITY Coaches who specialize in infant and toddler care, to provide additional onsite assistance. Programs who want to support successful breastfeeding of infants in their care have access to the Infant/Toddler Specialist to aid them in achieving the breastfeeding designation certification. The Infant/Toddler Specialist and Paths to QUALITY Coaches who specialize in infant and toddler care also provide support to programs interested in practicing continuity of care and primary caregiving.
Iowa	Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) and child care resource and referral child care consultants with infant and toddler expertise.
Kansas	The lead agency will contract with a training and technical assistance entity to provide a statewide infant-toddler specialist network which will improve the quality and availability of child care and early education. A new contract is targeted for July 1, 2016.
Kentucky	The Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), its internal agencies, and sixty (60) child care resource and referral network Regional Coaches are available to all licensed and certified child care providers to provide infant-toddler coaching and technical assistance.
Maine	The Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) offers ongoing training and technical assistance to early care and education providers that meets the needs of a variety of providers ranging from those who are new to the field, to higher-level trainings such as leadership trainings for directors. Opportunities for training and technical assistance are assessed bi-annually and evaluated to ensure that they reflect current research and knowledge of best practice. PDN technical assistance (TA) providers have access to a range of resources and materials including national best practice guidance on serving infants and toddlers. All TA is free and providers can request and receive TA on any topic.
Maryland	The CCRCs improve the child care services for infants and toddlers through specialized training and technical assistance for infant and toddler care providers through regional infant-toddler specialists based on the Healthy Beginnings Guidelines.



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Massachusetts	Educator and Provider Support (EPS) Grantees provide coaching and technical assistance to providers of all age groups. Coaches specialize in program and age types according to their qualifications.
Michigan	Quality Improvement Consultants are receiving statewide infant toddler training to directly support providers serving infants and toddlers.
Mississippi	Agency staff who are conducting trainings and technical assistance to providers caring for infant and toddlers are required to obtain an infant/toddler credential through the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS).
Missouri	Child Care Aware of Missouri provides technical assistance/support for Missouri child care programs in response to specific needs presented by Missouri child care programs through the contract with the Lead Agency. Technical assistance/support includes, but is not limited to, providing educational resources and materials and assistance with information on child care-related topics including infant and toddler care.
Nevada	Nevada is in the process of developing a network of infant toddler specialists. The specialist services will be part of a comprehensive CDA program and the quality rating and improvement system.
New Hampshire	An established cross-sector Technical Assistance Community of Practice, which includes qualified infant and toddler professionals, is working to build systemic capacity and strengthen supports to infant and toddler professionals. In addition these infant/toddler technical assistance specialists are providing coaching and mentoring to program staff to increase their competencies in meeting the unique needs of infants and toddlers.
New Jersey	<p>The Division of Family Development (DFD) contracts with three agencies to implement the First Steps initiative. First Steps is our infant toddler specialist network. Through this network there are nine Parent Infant Toddler Care [sic] (PITC)-trained Infant Toddler Specialists that provide onsite technical assistance, coaching and training to providers that care for infants and toddlers.</p> <p>Providers receive a pre and post Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)/ Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) conducted by the Infant Toddler Specialist, a quality improvement plan is developed in partnership with the program director to address areas needed to raise the ITERS/FCCERS score, and 17 hours of intervention are provided to the program to address the areas of need. In addition, the Infant Toddler Specialist offers training on topics specific to the age group’s needs (i.e., SIDS, child development, primary caregiving, room arrangement).</p>
New Mexico	<p>FOCUS Consultation</p> <p>One of the unique aspects of FOCUS Professional Development is that consultants provide on-site (in context) training and coaching as well as facilitate regional trainings throughout the state. These same consultants, then, spend time in child care homes or centers in the classrooms with teachers and work one-on-one with program administrators.</p> <p>This ensures that teachers and program administrators implement what they have learned in their training. Children, Youth and Families Department FOCUS Consultation offers enhanced support to FOCUS educators serving high-needs communities and families.</p>
New York	The Office of Children and Family Services has infant/toddler specialists in each region of the state providing technical assistance to promote an understanding of the importance of and strategies for improving the quality of care for infants and toddlers in order to meet their unique needs.



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North Carolina	<p>Infant/Toddler TA Specialists are required to have specialized training, including ITS-SIDS, Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale, SEFEL/IT, and Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC). Specialists must also attain certification from WestEd as PITC trainers.</p> <p>Under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Transformation Zone Project, the Infant-Toddler Expansion Program was designed to support programs to implement high-quality early learning experiences for infants and toddlers resulting in the addition of 125 4- or 5-star infant-toddler slots in the Transformation Zone. Child care programs with less than 4 stars serving infants and toddlers on subsidy applied to receive technical assistance support and improvement grants in support of the goal of a 4- or 5-star rated license. Programs eligible for this program had the support of an IT Specialist who worked only in Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, and Hyde Counties, with a limited caseload and goals not only to support quality enhancement, but also quality maintenance. Participating programs that achieved a 4- or 5-star rating might have also received enhanced subsidy rates for infants and toddlers through the RTT-ELC grant. NC Babies First (NCB1) was a new part-day infant toddler program designed to offer high-quality early learning experiences to positively impact the development for 110 infants and one-year-olds at-risk for developmental delays due to environmental and/or biological factors. Part-day services are being offered until November 2016, so that more children benefit from high-quality early learning experiences at these tender ages and their families have access to child development information and supports provided by highly qualified infant-toddler teachers. NCB1 is offered in 4- and 5-star programs Beaufort, Bertie, and Hyde counties, approved through an application process as meeting NCB1 Program Requirements. An Infant Toddler Program Specialist provides on-site technical assistance support for start-up and continuous quality improvement activities and conducts ongoing quality assurance monitoring of each NCB1 site.</p>
North Dakota	<p>Intense technical assistance is received by child care providers in a center-based setting through Child Care Aware of North Dakota's quality infant toddler focused initiative Winning Ways for Infants and Toddlers. Programs commit nine months to complete assignments and receive face-to-face technical assistance to assure understanding and that implementation of what they have learned is happening. Technical assistance is provided by Child Care Aware staff that have completed North Dakota's face-to-face and online training of Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC).</p>
Northern Mariana Islands	<p>CCDF will provide coaching and technical assistance as part of its quality rating and improvement system.</p>
Pennsylvania	<p>Pennsylvania supports technical assistance related to infants and toddlers in 3 ways. The first is Child Care Health Consultation, which support the integration of health and safety practices in infant toddler rooms. The second model, STARS technical assistance (TA), can address general practices and supports around program structure and the infant toddler environments. The third model, infant toddler technical assistance is a more in-depth TA to further enhance the activities and relationships in the provider's setting and with relationships with the parents.</p>
Rhode Island	<p>In addition to offering an expanded repertoire of professional development opportunities on the content and application of best practice for working with infants and toddlers, the Center for Early Learning Professionals provides technical assistance services to all administrators and education coordinators who are committed to quality improvement within their program. All programs serving infants and toddlers are eligible to participate in technical assistance services through the Center.</p> <p>The Center has created multiple service system delivery options to increase the number of high-quality programs accessible for this very young population. Technical assistance (TA) services are provided by experts in the field. The Technical Assistance Specialist works</p>



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	<p>closely with the administrative leadership to increase his/her competencies in overseeing services to infants and toddlers that reflect best practice and research in the field and providing support to teaching staff to hone their own skill and competencies in serving our youngest children in developmentally appropriate ways. Individualized technical assistance is provided to programs on site to address the unique needs of each program in this area. Program leaders work with their TA specialist to create quality improvement plans based on the newly adapted RI Early Learning and Development Standards that provide a descriptive continuum of the development of infants and toddlers and the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Teachers, which explicitly outlines the levels of knowledge and competencies a teacher should have when working with infants and toddlers.</p> <p>Additionally, all program leaders are offered the opportunity to engage in community of practice discussions in small group settings throughout the state. The community of practice forums are designed to support the leaders of programs serving infants and toddlers by discussing challenges, common concerns, and creating strategies and new and innovative ways to address the needs of this population.</p> <p>Child Care Health Consultants are available to licensed child care providers providing infant-toddler care, and provide an alternative means of meeting the licensing requirement that mandates that programs serving infants have a nurse on the premises a minimum of three hours per day.</p> <p>The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is contracted by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to operate the RI Child Care Facilities Fund, which provides facility-related technical assistance to address health and safety and quality issues impacting centers, many of which serving infants and toddlers.</p> <p>Student enrolled the 12 college credit Early Childhood Education and Training Program at the Community College of Rhode Island receive on-site coaching and mentoring, some of these students are infant/toddler teachers.</p> <p>The Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation model, called SUCCESS, provides on-site assistance supporting the social emotional competencies and behavioral health needs of identified children in child care programs.</p>
South Carolina	<p>The South Carolina Program for Infant/Toddler Care (SCPITC) provides training paired with coaching strategies that encourage self-reflection and build on the strengths of individual programs and teachers to promote a responsive, relationship-based approach to infant/toddler care. Professional development topics focus on enhancing teachers' knowledge of child development and building strategies that support a relationship-oriented understanding of children's behaviors and learning. All infant/toddler specialists who deliver these intensive services, have earned PITC certification, are considered certified trainers by the Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD), and have experience working in early care and education settings.</p>
South Dakota	<p>In each of the five Early Childhood Enrichment (ECE) offices, there is an identified Infant and Toddler Specialist who utilizes the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) philosophy and resources in the delivery of technical assistance to providers who care for infants and toddlers. ECE staff providing coaching services have completed the Child Care Aware Training Academy's Improving the Quality of Child Care Programs through Coaching course.</p>
Tennessee	<p>Infant/toddler specialists are available statewide through the child care resource and referral agency.</p>
Utah	<p>The Lead Agency provides statewide technical assistance to assist programs in addressing the unique needs of infants and toddlers. Specifically, the Lead Agency contracts with the Children's Center, Kids on the Move, and CAC-Weber State University to employ five Infant Toddler Specialists to provide statewide technical assistance. These specialists work with child care programs receiving the Lead Agency's birth-to-three grants. A variety of technical</p>



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	<p>assistance approaches are used with these programs, including: observation and feedback regarding current practice, problem solving and sharing appropriate recommendations, coaching and modeling of best practices, facilitating small group workshops, sharing room arrangement ideas, selecting needed materials and equipment, facilitating director support groups, working with children who exhibit difficult behaviors, supporting age-appropriate guidance techniques, and listening and reflecting concerns of program staff.</p>
Vermont	<p>The Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors Infant Toddler Development courses (45 hour/3 college credits) for all apprentices and enrolled child care providers. All the apprentices have mentors who help their apprentices implement the knowledge and skills learned in these classes.</p> <p>Vermont contributed to the development of the Administration for Children and Families/Head Start resource <i>A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers and their Families: Core Knowledge and Competencies and Dispositions</i> and this work has informed the emerging statewide system of mentoring coaching and consulting that is called "MATCH." We anticipate implementation of a MATCH registry in late 2016 and early 2017. Qualified infant toddler mentors and coaches will be identified in the MATCH registry, this will assist in providing infant toddler coaching and overall technical assistance. MATCH infant toddler mentors will also provide some of the support for providers to obtain an infant toddler credential which itself will be aligned with the new Vermont Early Learning Standards birth through 8. This targeted expertise will enhance the current general expertise of the child care resource and referral agencies.</p>
Virginia	<p>The Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network, operated by Child Development Resources and sponsored by the Lead Agency, offers on-site consultation including mentoring and support using quality improvement plans. The program is assessed using Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition (ITERS-R), or Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (FCCERS-R). The goal of this statewide service for child care programs offering care to infants and toddlers is to improve the quality of care.</p>
Washington	<p>The Department of Early Learning (DEL) provides interdisciplinary infant/toddler early learning coaching through a regionally-based, statewide network of qualified infant/toddler specialists. Coaching is provided to licensed child care centers and family child care homes within the state quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers. Infant mental health consultation will be conducted during onsite visits within the statewide network of infant-toddler specialists within the state QRIS. Focus areas may include developmental screening, reducing expulsion, connecting families with referral resources and strategies for inclusion. Health consultation will be available for family child care providers and toddler classrooms through the statewide network of infant-toddler specialists within the state QRIS. Focus areas may include immunizations, infectious disease prevention, developmental screening, nutrition and physical activity. DEL also uses Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FIND), a video coaching program for parents and other caregivers of high-risk children that employs video to reinforce naturally occurring, developmentally supportive interactions between caregivers and young children. This simple, practical approach emphasizes caregivers' strengths and capabilities. FIND is currently implemented through some regions in the statewide network of infant-toddler specialists within the state QRIS.</p>
West Virginia	<p>WV has an Infant Toddler Specialist Network to provide coaching and technical assistance. Specialists are certified trainers in the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) and have attended other trainings including the Pikler Intensive Institute, CLASS for Toddlers, ITERS-R, Infant Massage and Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos.</p>
Wisconsin	<p>Currently the YoungStar QRIS provides funds through T.E.A.C.H. for scholarships to child care staff to take the Infant Toddler Credential provided by area universities and colleges.</p>



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	<p>These funds are also available for the Family Child Care Credential.</p> <p>SFTA and Wisconsin's child care resource and referral agencies improve the ability of parents to access transparent and understandable information about high-quality child care. This information is also available in a number of FRCs throughout the state. Furthermore, the YoungStar website contains a child care search engine with tools for evaluating child care and each program's quality rating for families seeking child care options.</p> <p>Through YoungStar, providers (including family providers) are allocated up to 10 hours of free, on-site technical assistance to be used around activities to improve the quality of their programs. Many providers specifically request technical assistance around the infants and toddlers in their care. The YoungStar staff may provide assistance with room arrangement, curriculum or daily activity planning, ideas for staff professional development, developmentally appropriate practices for these young children, among many other options for assistance. Additionally, YoungStar provides training in literacy and very early literacy to meet the needs of infants and toddlers.</p>

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