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New York Zero-to-Three Network

Fostering collaboration among those who work with babies, toddlers and their families

March 2012

In This Issue

[Policy News](#)

[Power of Play Week in the Catskills](#)

[WIC: an important support in early childhood](#)

[10th Anniversary of Infant Toddler Forum](#)



sPOLICY NEWS:

Advocates for Children: Randi Levine, Staff Attorney, Advocates for Children (AFC), reports that the proposed changes for the Early Intervention Program in the Executive Budget were not included, for the most part, in the Assembly and Senate versions. It is now up to the Assembly, Senate, and Governor to reconcile the different versions. [Please see the action alert from AFC.](#)

Winning Beginning NY: Parents, Early Childhood professionals, and advocates came to Albany last month to support the [Winning Beginning Legislative Agenda](#). Key elements include money for QUALITYstarsNY, Child Care, Home Visiting, Prek, and After School Programs. Changes to Early Intervention and Special Education were also discussed. The coalition is urging follow-up

Happy Spring from the New York Zero-to-Three Network!

If you have a suggestion for a topic for us to cover in a future issue, please let us know. You can email us at newsletter@nyzerotothree.org.

Upcoming Events

Save the date for our Annual Spring Conference
Featuring Howard and Miriam Steele:
[Holding Babies in Mind-Using: Reflective Function to Transform Trauma and Build Relationships](#)
Friday, May 4, 2012
8:30 am-3 pm

Click [HERE](#) to see full Calendar of events

News

How WIC can help early childhood professionals support the children and families that they serve.

by Richard Kahn, PhD, RD

WIC, the nearly 40 year old Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, provides nutrition rich food to low-income pregnant, breast feeding, post-partum women and their infants and children who are under 5 years of age. Decades of research show that WIC enrollment is associated with improved nutritional status. As a developmentally oriented dietitian who has worked in WIC for over 15 years, I want early childhood professionals to understand why we should understand the embedded, developmental benefits of WIC.

Understanding begins with knowing that WIC is the largest early childhood program in the United States. WIC served 9 million low-income individuals in 2011. That includes 53% of the infants, and 25% of the children and mothers. That is a big potential audience for the early childhood educator thinking about America's most vulnerable children.

WIC foods are more than simple calories. The specific foods the program provides address common deficiencies in calcium, fiber, immune boosting vitamins A,C and D, and iron. WIC prescribed foods are associated with decreased rates of prematurity and, therefore, the lessened likelihood of developmental shortfalls associated with prematurity.

[calls on these issues.](#)

Citizen's Committee for Children: Released their analysis of the [NY City Budget and how it affects programs for children.](#)

A full schedule of workshops on implementing **QUALITYstarsNY** in each of the 10 economic development zones of New York State is now available. Visit [Early Care and Learning Council](#) to see the full calendar.

Greater Catskill ILC Planning POWER OF PLAY WEEK

The Infancy Leadership Circle in the greater Catskill region is planning to highlight the Power of Play for Infants and Toddlers this spring or early summer. Possible weeks being considered are the first week in May in time with Children's Mental Health Awareness Week and the federally sponsored Children's Mental Health Awareness Day on May 9, 2012 or later in the year.

Group members are currently preparing a Toolkit of low-cost homemade toys to be distributed to parents and caregivers. Member agencies will be displaying the toys and demonstrating how to use them to promote attachment between caregiver and child as parents visit local facilities and during service calls during the week chosen.

Publicity materials as well as the Power of Play Toolkit will be posted on the Internet at www.NYZTT.org in advance. Other ILC groups are encouraged to hold similar events during the week chosen around the state. If you would like to join this activity or want to contribute a suitable item for the toolkit, please contact :

leadershipcircles@nyzerotothree.org

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Another important WIC achievement at the intersection of development and nutrition lies in increasing the rate of iron sufficiency in low-income infants, children and the mothers. Iron-rich foods support cognitive development. For the developing child, iron is part of the biological foundation of learning in cognitive, emotional and motor domains. Untreated iron deficiency in the early years creates a long-term learning disability. Iron also supports the maternal end of attachment because iron helps the body regulate emotions. It is common for new mother's to be iron deficient after delivery due to nurturing the baby inside and from blood loss during delivery. Post-partum iron sufficiency is, according to some researches, part of the mental health picture that might prevent post-partum depression.

Finally, WIC has helped increase the rate of breastfeeding in low income women. As a group, non-immigrant low-income women were the least likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding. Now initiation of breastfeeding among WIC-enrolled mothers just about meets national goals.

For more details on WIC's documented successes in nutrition, go to www.nwica.org, the website of the National WIC Association.

Editor's note: Next month the newsletter will interview Richard Kahn and continue the conversation on WIC's support for breastfeeding and its role in supporting attachment and child development within the family.

10th Anniversary of the Infant-Toddler Forum at the New York State AEYC -

Interview with Evelyn Efinger, Infant & Toddler Program Coordinator, Early Care and Learning Council

NYZTT: Congratulations on the 10th Anniversary of the forum. Tell us about the history of this forum?

Evelyn: When the state first funded the [Infant Toddler Resource Centers](#) back in 2002, we wanted to make connections with existing organizations and quality improvement efforts. The [New York State AEYC conference](#) is an important professional development event SO we teamed up. We offered to strengthen the Infant-Toddler track of workshops and add an Infant-Toddler Leadership Forum to pre-conference activities. The first year was 2003, so this year will mark our 10th year.

NYZTT: What kinds of purposes did the forum serve over the years?

Evelyn: Our special focus on infants and toddlers built on the existing NYS AEYC focus on birth thru age 8. I think it helped create a statewide infancy movement with leaders in early education paying more attention to the foundations for learning. The Leadership Forum provides an annual opportunity to discuss cutting edge issues and motivate local action on behalf of babies.

The design of the Forum has stayed the same over the years - presentation of an issue and updates on infancy policies within the

We are a membership organization and need members' dues to continue to support professionals who work with infants, toddlers and their families.

If you are a current member:

THANKS!

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state followed by discussion and a call to action.

In the early years it was valuable just to come together. Now more formal working relationships have been established and there are [infancy leadership circles](#) cropping up across the state.

NYZTT: What is this year's topic and who might be interested in the forum?

Evelyn: This year we will be kicking off a NYS Campaign for Continuity to promote the need for stability of caregiving relationships in child care centers.

NYS will be coming out with regulatory language for child care centers that helps support primary caregiving assignments and encourages those relationships to be maintained as long as possible. Everyone involved in the child care industry will be interested in this Forum. Directors who will be in charge of implementing new staffing patterns, caregivers who need to understand the attachment needs of babies, and parents who will be enrolling their babies in child care all will benefit by hearing the research, being introduced to the new regulations, and examining the issues with each other.

NYZTT: Anything else you want our newsletter readers to know about the Forum?

Evelyn: This year, we will begin with announcements from the Governor's [Early Childhood Advisory Council](#). There is a lot of exciting news including new Quality Stars NY program standards and new Early Learning Guidelines for birth thru age 4. We will be exploring how all of these things fit together and what it means for child care practice.

NYZTT Network leaders Jackie Jones and Carole Oshinsky will be facilitating local discussions so that leaders can get connected to others from their area who share these concerns.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE INFANT TODDLER FORUM AT NYS AEYC AND HOW TO REGISTER [CLICK HERE](#).

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