

# Infant and Toddler Workforce Competencies: Frameworks and Professional Development Supports Across Care Settings

CCEEPRC Breakout Session E3

April 18, 2019





# Goals

- To provide an overview of the early care and education (ECE) workforce competencies articulated for those caring for infants and toddlers across ECE settings
- To consider how competency frameworks for the ECE workforce are implemented within states



# Presentations

- Pia Caronongan, Mathematica Policy Research
- Julia Torquati, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Kelley Perkins, State Capacity Building Center Infant/Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN)
- Tamara Halle, Child Trends, *Discussion Facilitator*

# **Existing Competency Frameworks for Infant/Toddler Teachers and Caregivers**

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**Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium Annual  
Meeting  
Washington, DC**

**April 2019**

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Pia Caronongan • Mikia Manley • Katherine Niland  
Sally Atkins-Burnett • Emily Moiduddin

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# Background

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- The first three years of a child's life are a distinct developmental period
- Little information is available about the specific knowledge, skills, and other attributes (that is, competencies) that are essential to teaching and caring for infants and toddlers
- Identifying essential competencies may offer a common language for assessing job performance and provide a clear structure for professional growth and development

# **The Infant Toddler Teacher and Caregiver Competency (ITTCC) project**

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- **Key foundational activities:**
  - **A scan of existing competency frameworks (today's focus)**
  - **Literature review to examine associations between competencies and outcomes**
  - **Scan of measures aligned with competencies**
  - **Examination of other fields that have developed and implemented competency frameworks**

# Key definitions

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- ✓ **Competency:** a piece of knowledge (K), a skill (S), or an attribute (A) essential to the practice of teaching and caring for infants and toddlers.
  - ✓ **Knowledge** is information that may be applied to practice.
  - ✓ **Skills** are strategies or abilities that may be applied to practice.
  - ✓ **Attributes** are attitudes, beliefs, or other characteristics that may influence the application of knowledge and skills to practice.
- ✓ **Competency framework:** a compilation of competencies intended to convey the range of knowledge, skills, and attributes essential to a particular area of practice, job, or profession.

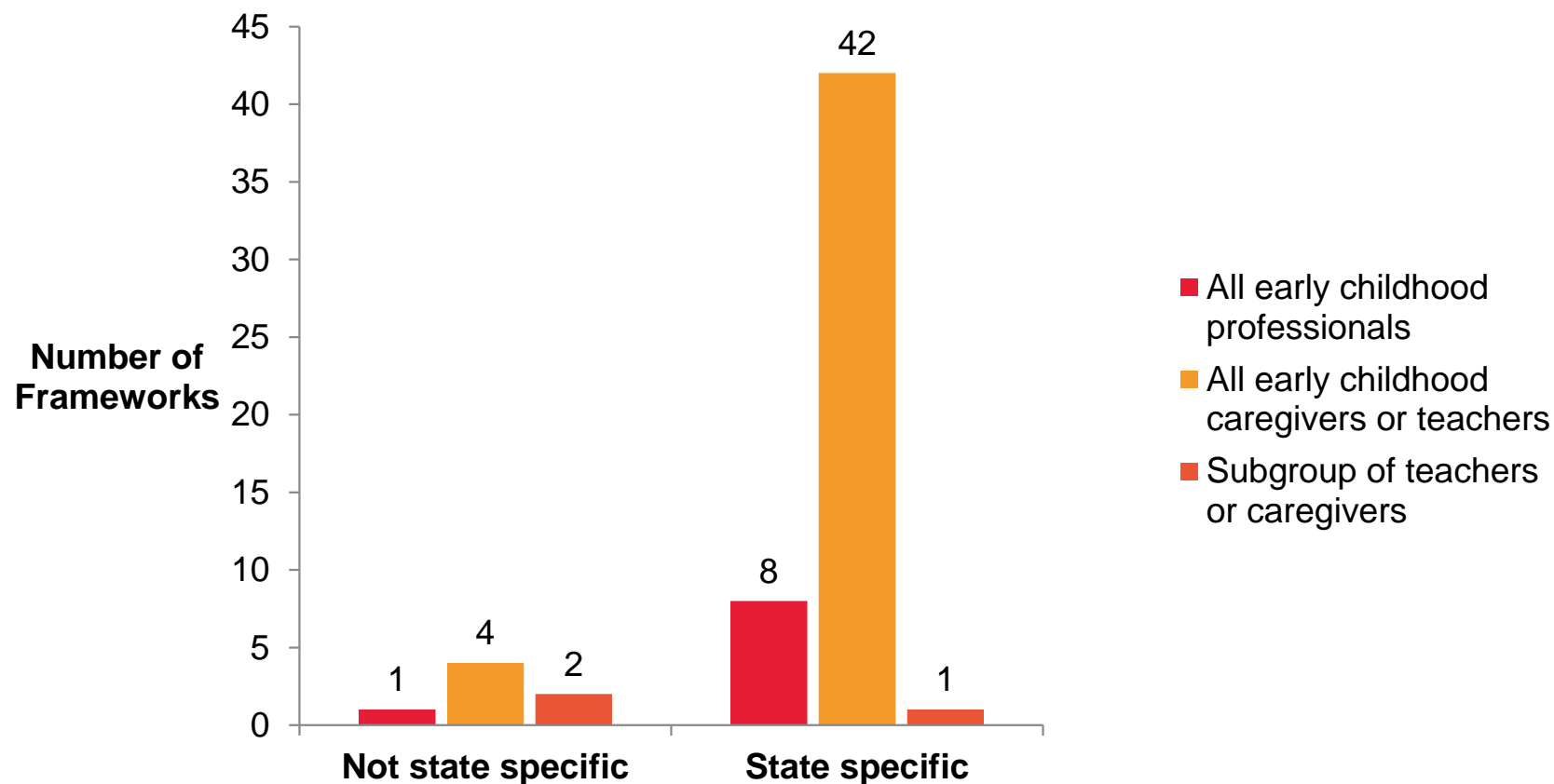
# What are the existing competency frameworks?

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- We conducted an internet search and identified 58 frameworks relevant to infant and toddler (I/T) teachers and caregivers working in centers and family child care (FCC) homes
- Framework developers
  - 51 developed by state agencies or organizations
  - 5 developed by a national organization
  - 1 developed by a federal agency
  - 1 developed by academic researchers
- Alignment
  - 29 described by authors as aligning with other existing frameworks or standards



# Target audiences of the frameworks



Source: ITTCC Scan of Competency Frameworks

# **Specificity to I/T teachers and caregivers**

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- 29 frameworks broadly focused on children from birth to age 5
- 15 frameworks included 1 or 2 I/T specific competencies
- 14 frameworks included 3 or more I/T specific competencies (including frameworks targeted exclusively to I/T caregivers)
  - Focus of the next steps of analysis

# Types of competencies included in frameworks

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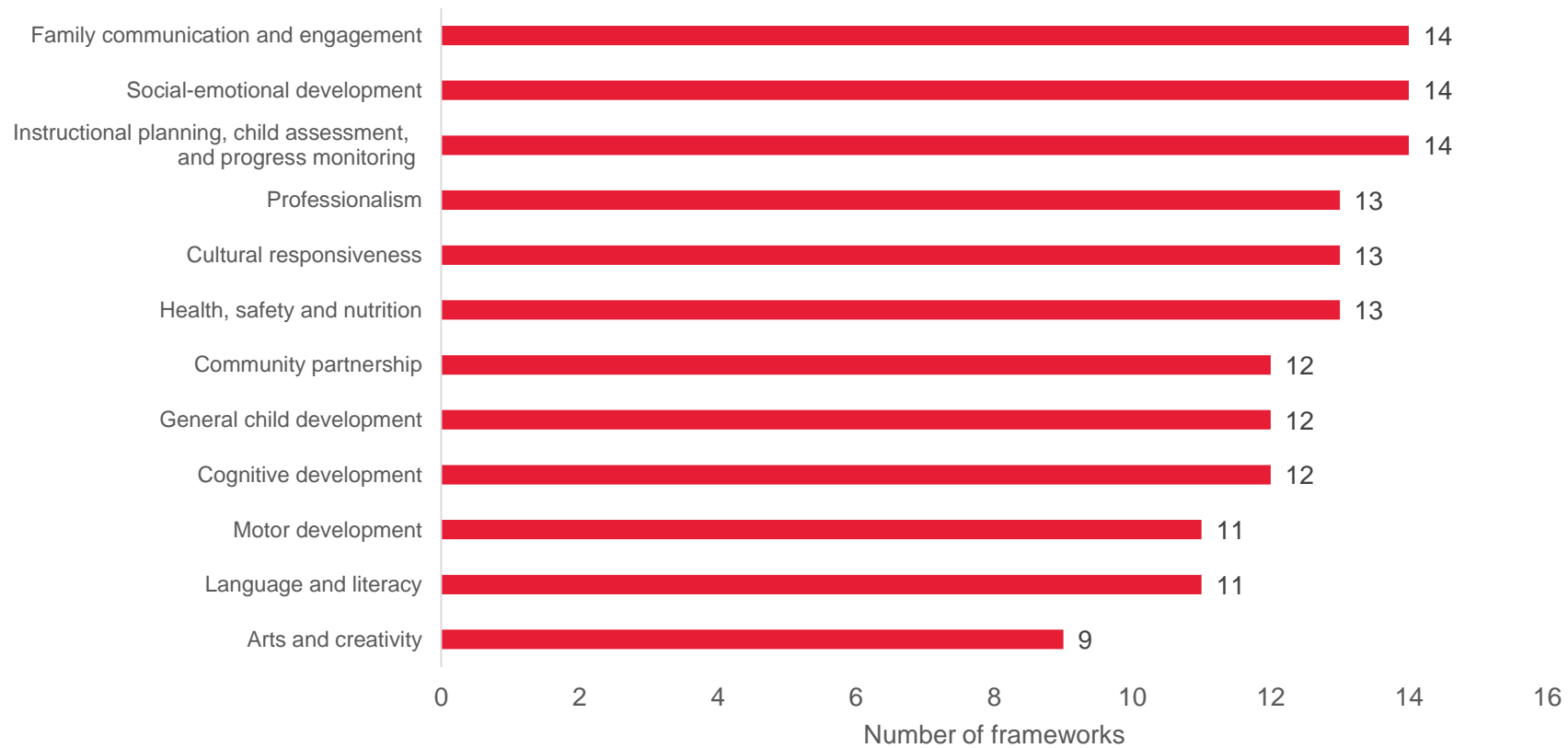
- All 14 I/T specific frameworks include knowledge and skill-based competencies
- 11 of the 14 frameworks include attribute-based competencies

# Content of competencies included in frameworks

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- Frameworks organize and refer to competencies in different ways, for example:
  - Framework A: all competencies related to family engagement presented as one group
  - Framework B: family engagement competencies integrated with other aspects of practice
- Developed a list of domains to code content of competencies, for example:
  - Competency: “Recognize the importance of engaging frequently with children through both verbal and non-verbal communication”
  - Coded domain: Social-emotional development

# Domains of competencies included in frameworks



Source: ITTCC Scan of Competency Frameworks

# Key findings

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- **There are many existing competency frameworks**
- **Competency frameworks vary in specificity to I/T teachers and caregivers**
- **I/T specific frameworks include a wide range of content**
- **Skills and knowledge are typically included in frameworks**
- **Considerable alignment in the domains covered by competencies in the I/T specific frameworks**

# What's next for ITTCC?

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- **Design a study to learn more about how competencies are being implemented and assessed on the ground**
  - Experiences of states, institutions of higher education, and/or professional organizations implementing competency frameworks
  - Learn about whether and how center directors, teachers/caregivers, and family child care providers use competency frameworks

## For more information

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- <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/infant-toddler-teacher-caregiver-competencies>
- Pia Caronongan - [pcaronongan@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:pcaronongan@mathematica-mpr.com)
- Emily Moiduddin [emoiduddin@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:emoiduddin@mathematica-mpr.com)
- Laura Hoard - [Laura.Hoard@ACF.hhs.gov](mailto:Laura.Hoard@ACF.hhs.gov)
- Kathleen Dwyer - [Kathleen.Dwyer@ACF.hhs.gov](mailto:Kathleen.Dwyer@ACF.hhs.gov)
- Jenessa Malin - [Jenessa.Malin@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Jenessa.Malin@acf.hhs.gov)



# Defining Domains of Competency for the Infant/Toddler Workforce

A Model of Knowledge, Dispositions, and Skills to Work Effectively with Infants, Toddlers, and their Families

Julia Torquati on behalf of Rachel Chazan-Cohen, Claire Vallotton,  
and the Collaborative for Understanding the Pedagogy of Infant-Toddler Development (CUPID)



## Collaborative for Understanding the Pedagogy of Infant & Toddler Development

- Collaborative formed in 2013, led by Claire Vallotton at Michigan State University
- ~ 50 researchers from 25 universities
- Goals:
  - Improve practice in infant/toddler care and education
  - Study and improve our own teaching
  - Strengthen university curricula
- Objective:
  - Identify domains of professional competencies for the infant/toddler workforce
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) effort to better prepare and support the infant-toddler workforce via higher education

# Developing Competencies

- Scholars nominated competencies based on research literature
- Categorized and organized competencies
- Gathered additional input from practitioners and scholars
- Aligned with other competencies and adjusted
  - Examined multiple state standards & licensure requirements
  - Professional organizations (Zero to Three; CEC-DEC; NAEYC; MI-AIMH)



# Revised CUPID Competency Domains

Reflective Practice

Building & Supporting Relationships

Supporting Development & Learning

Guiding Infant/Toddler Behavior

Partnering with and Supporting Diverse Families

Assessing Behavior, Development, & Environments

Including Infants/Toddlers with Special Needs and their Families

Mentoring, Leadership, and Supporting Competencies in Adults

Professionalism

# Organization of Categories within Each Competency Dimension

## Building & Supporting Relationships

### Knowledge

- Centrality of relationships
- Attachment concepts

### Dispositions

- Valuing relationships
- Comfort with emotional expression

### Skills: Environment

- Co-constructing routines
- Co-constructing rituals

### Skills: Interaction

- Sensitive responses
- Fostering peer interactions

## Supporting Development & Learning

### Knowledge

- Milestones
- Individual differences

### Dispositions

- Patience to let babies do things at their own pace, in their own way

### Skills: Environment

- Structure environment to promote exploration

### Skills: Interaction

- Verbal communication
- Developmental stimulation

## Guidance of Infant/Toddler Behavior

### Knowledge

- Appropriate expectations
- Guidance strategies

### Dispositions

- Patience with challenging behavior
- Empathy with babies' perspectives

### Skills: Environment

- Structure environment to reduce conflict

### Skills: Interaction

- Support for autonomy
- Structure and limit-setting

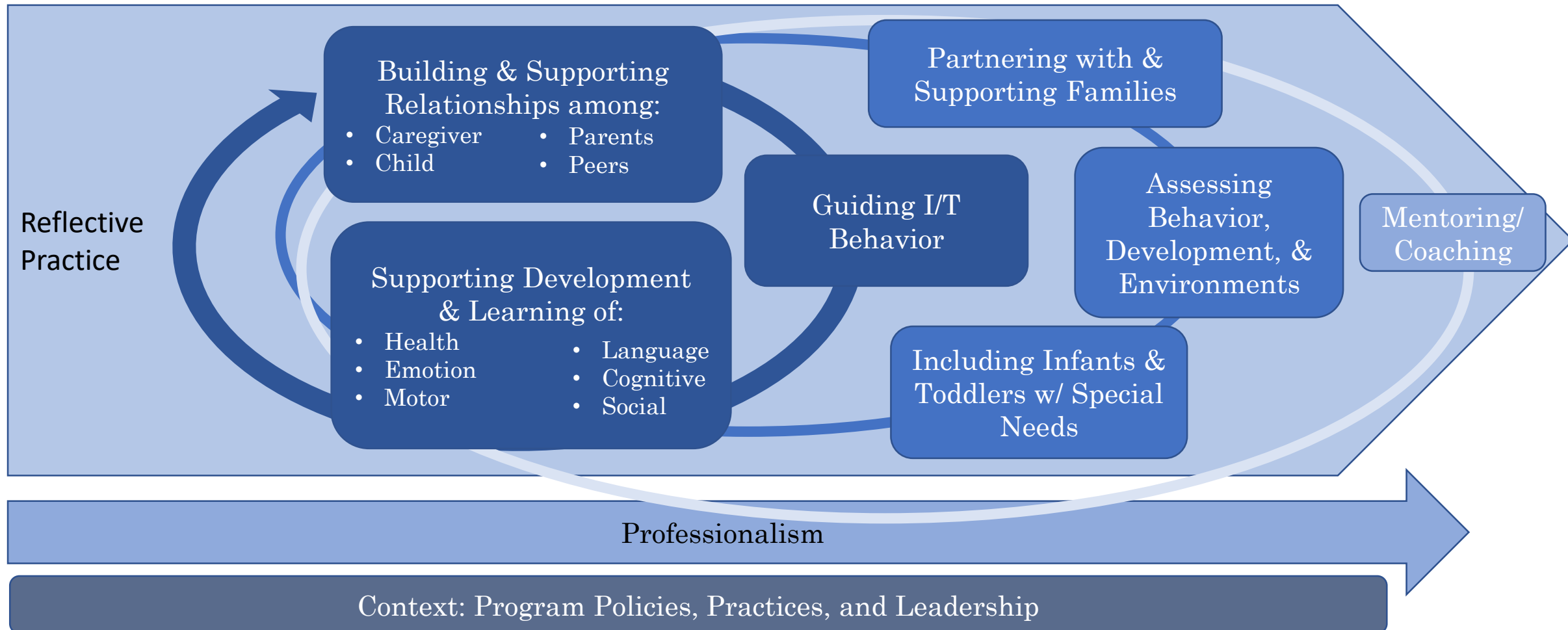
# Levels within Competencies: Building & Supporting Relationships

	Foundational Level	Advanced Level
Knowledge	Centrality of Relationships to Child Development	Attachment Theory Concepts & Research
Dispositions	Valuing Relationships with Children	Respecting Children's Contributions to Relationships
Skills: Interactions	Sensitive Responses to Children's Needs	Fostering Positive Peer Interactions to Support Social Development
Skills: Environments	Constructing Routines to Support Relationships	Co-Constructing Routines & Rituals with Children

# Competencies for Different Roles: Group Care Providers and Home Visitors

Building & Supporting Relationships	All Roles	Group Care	Home Visiting
Knowledge	Attachment Theory Centrality of Relationships in Development	Developmental progression of child-peer interactions	Parent-child relationships
Dispositions	Valuing Relationships with Children	Comfort with physical contact & affection	Respecting the primacy of the parent-child relationship
Skills: Interactions	Engaging in supportive and responsive interactions with children	Fostering Child-Peer Interactions	Coaching parent-child interactions to support relationship
Skills: Environments	Constructing Routines & Rituals with Children	Constructing Routines to Support Relationships b/w children and others	Helping parent Co-Construct Routines & Rituals with Children

# CUPID Comprehensive Competencies for the Infant/Toddler Workforce





# Thank you to CUPID Collaborators!

## Collaborator Affiliations





**CHILD CARE**

State Capacity Building Center

# Implementation In Action: Examples of States Using Competency Frameworks for the Infant/Toddler Workforce

Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium, 2019



# CHILD CARE

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## State Capacity Building Center



**Kelley Perkins**

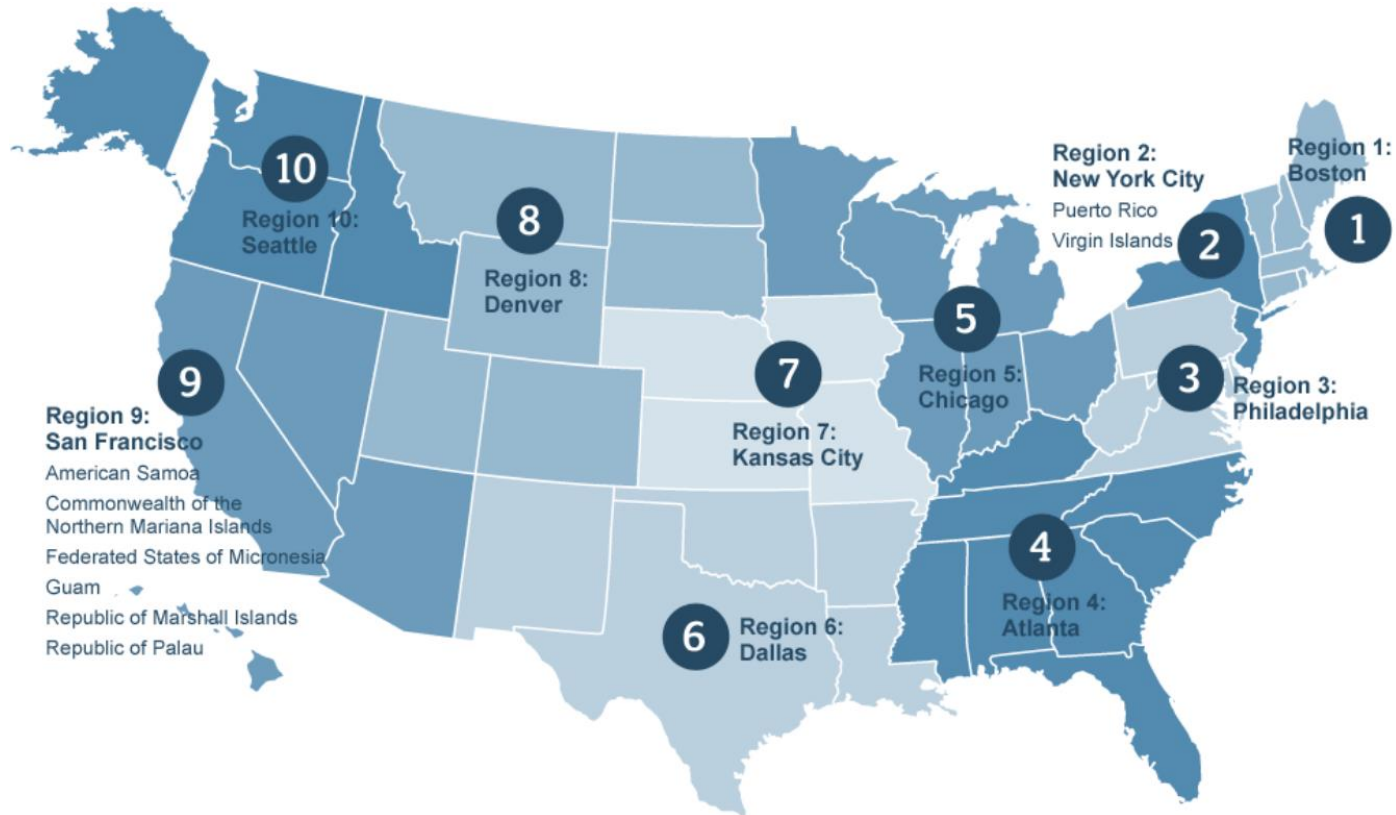
Managing Director,

Infant/Toddler Specialist Network

Child Care State Capacity Building Center

Email: [Kelley.perkins@icf.com](mailto:Kelley.perkins@icf.com)

# State Capacity Building Center's (SCBC) Infant/Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN)



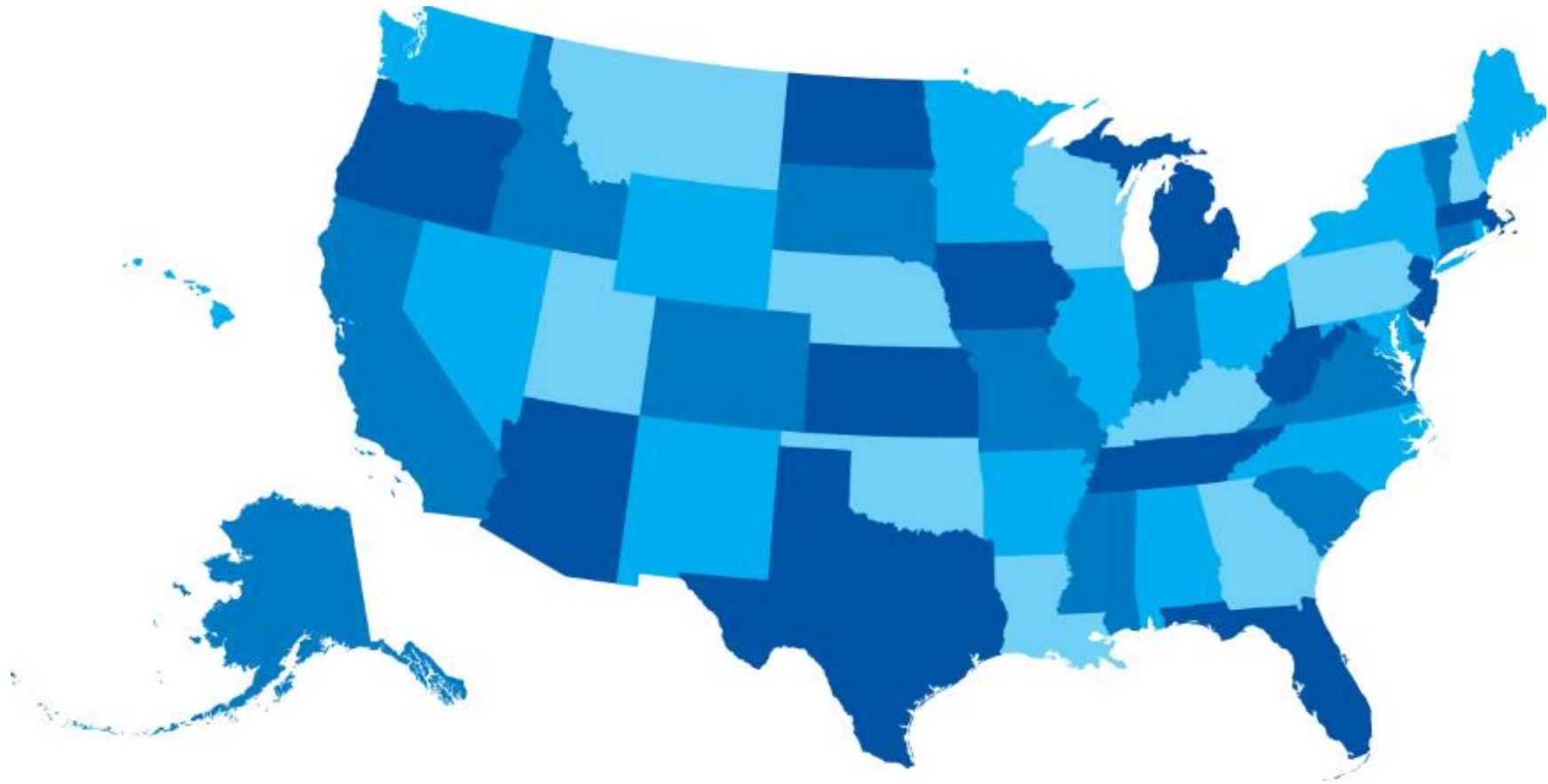
Office of Regional Operations, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). Regional offices [Web page]. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro/regional-offices>



# Data from SCBC's ITSN Quality Scan

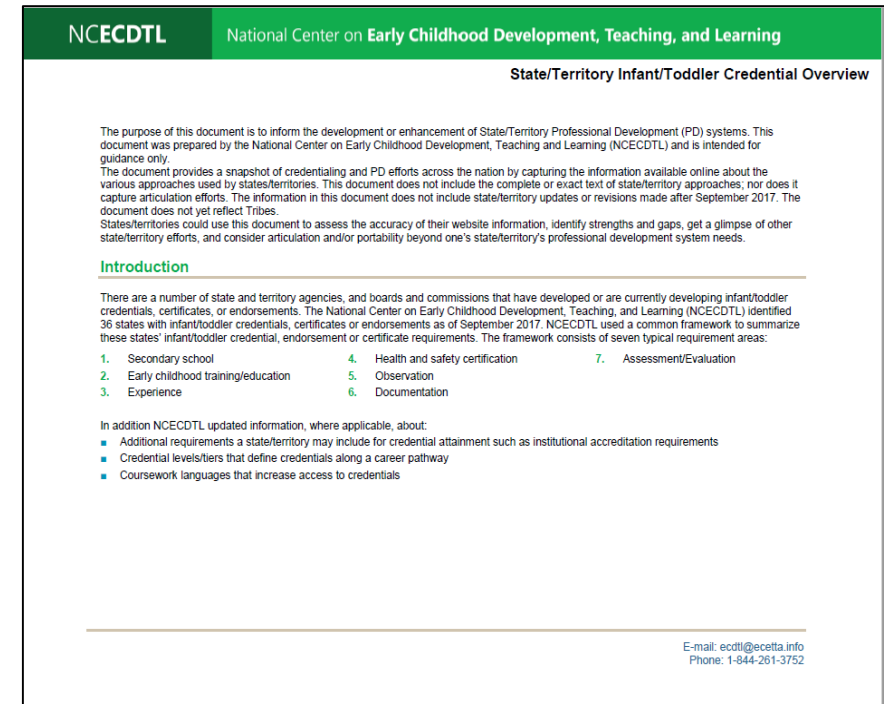


# State Examples



# State/Territory Infant Toddler Credential Overview

- ◆ Compilation of state/territory credentials, endorsements, or certificates
- ◆ 35 examples included in a table
- ◆ Includes criteria areas and criteria requirements for each example



# Infant/Toddler Resource Guide

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
 Administration for Children & Families
 Office of Child Care (Main Site)
 Office of Child Care (TA Network)
 Infant-Toddler Resource Guide

# Office of Child Care

## Infant/Toddler Resource Guide

[Home](#)
[State Level Policy Professionals](#)
[PD & TA Professionals](#)
[Infant/Toddler Care Providers](#)
[Infant/Toddler Care Video Clips](#)

### The Program for Infant/Toddler Care Six Essential Program Practices for Relationship-Based Care

These papers promote evidence-based program practices that support infant/toddler care.

### About the Infant/Toddler Resource Guide

**What is the purpose of this guide?**

This Resource Guide offers a host of materials to support the development and implementation of policies and practices for high-quality care for infants and toddlers. Whether you are a Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Administrator developing policies, a child care provider seeking information and guidance, or a professional development provider seeking innovative training materials, this site is for you. Development of this guide is new and actively growing, so check in frequently to see what resources have been added to support your work with infants, toddlers, and their families.

**Who are the intended users?**

We are including resources for three primary audiences:

- CCDF Administrators, staff, and state policy professionals
- Child care resource and referral administrators, training organization directors and trainers, higher education institution administrators and early childhood/child development faculty, and technical assistance organization administrators and providers
- Infant and toddler teachers, center directors, and family child care providers

### Regional Infant/Toddler Resources Information

Select a region to connect to an Infant/Toddler specialist in your area

Child Care State Capacity Building Center. (n.d.). Infant/toddler resource guide [Web page]. Washington, DC: Office of Child Care. Retrieved from <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/infant-toddler-resource-guide>



**State Capacity Building Center,  
A Service of the Office of Child Care**

9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22031

Phone: 877-296-2401

Email: [CapacityBuildingCenter@ecetta.info](mailto:CapacityBuildingCenter@ecetta.info)

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# Discussion

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# Discussion Questions

- How do these frameworks compare to frameworks for providers caring for older children? What distinguishes competencies for the infant/toddler workforce from general ECE workforce competencies?
- How do we define the infant/toddler workforce? Does this include the infant/toddler specialists who work within states to provide technical assistance to providers? If we broaden the definition of the workforce, does this affect how we think about competencies?
- What data do we have and what data do we need for understanding whether infant/toddler providers possess these competencies? How can we obtain these data? Are there existing measures of these core competencies?



# Discussion Questions

- How can we collaborate across state agencies, researchers, institutes of higher education, and practitioners to collect and use data about ECE workforce competencies?
- What professional development supports – both pre-service and in-service – does the infant/toddler workforce need to develop competencies and improve ECE quality? How do we address this within a state PD system?
- Given the recent NiTR preconference on infant/toddler *provider wellness*, have you thought about wellness and self-care for ECE providers and how this relates to competencies?

# THANK YOU!

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*The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*