



Baby Talk: Resources to Support the People Who Work With Infants and Toddlers

Issue No. 58 March 2016

Teaching Babies to Pay Attention

Scientists have known that infants' early learning experiences may positively affect later development through processes called "developmental cascades." For example, walking and fine motor skills have been associated with vocabulary size and later language development. These cascades have been commonly theorized, but until now evidence supporting them has been largely correlational. A new study demonstrates a powerful link between training infants to reach for an object and later heightened interest in objects and focused attention. <http://www.futurity.org/babies-reach-attention-1087312/>

Having a Working Mother is GOOD For You

Contrary to what some may say, growing up with a working mother is unlikely to harm children socially and economically when they become adults, new research by a Harvard Business School professor concludes. The "working mother effect" actually improves future prospects, especially for adult daughters of mothers who worked outside the home before their daughters were 14 years old, according to recent findings based on a comprehensive survey of 50,000 adults aged 18 to 60 in 25 nations worldwide in 2002 and 2012. <http://www.hbs.edu/news/releases/Pages/having-working-mother.aspx>

Put Down Your Smartphones When Caring For Babies!

That's the message from University of California, Irvine researchers, who have found that fragmented and chaotic maternal care can disrupt proper brain development, which can lead to emotional disorders later in life. The findings imply that when mothers are nurturing their infants, numerous everyday interruptions -- even those as seemingly harmless as phone calls and text messages -- can have a long-lasting impact.

<http://news.uci.edu/health/put-the-cellphone-away-fragmented-baby-care-can-affect-brain-development/>

Infant/Toddler Quality Resources from ZERO TO THREE

[*Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment Toolkit for States*](#). This toolkit is intended to help state policy leaders and advocates assess the current status of services for infants, toddlers, and their families and set priorities for improvement. Through an online format, state leaders can easily collect state-level data on how infants and toddlers are doing, make comparisons with national averages, and examine whether recommended policies and funding are in place. ZERO TO THREE has also provided survey questions that can be used to gather the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as state and local agency staff and direct service providers.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/self-assessment-toolkit.html>

Survey for Families with Children under 3 Years Old, a survey tool that policy leaders and advocates can use to better understand families' experiences accessing health, early learning, and family support services. This brief survey is designed to inform policymakers in developing policies and programs that meet families' needs and in crafting effective family engagement strategies. Survey questions are available in the [additional resources section](#) of our state policy self-assessment web page, as either a fillable PDF or Survey Monkey template. ZERO TO THREE recommends that policy leaders work with service providers or other partners to disseminate the survey to families with young children.

Go to <http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/self-assessment-toolkit.html>, then scroll down to Additional Resources.

If your state is interested in using the family survey or the full self-assessment toolkit, please contact ZERO TO THREE staff at StateAssessment@zerotothree.org.

Baby Talk is a free, one-way listserv that is distributed monthly. Each issue features resources that are high quality, readily available and free. To join the listserv, send an email **with no message** to

subscribe-babytalk@listserv.unc.edu To suggest resources, please contact
Camille Catlett at camille.catlett@unc.edu or (919) 966-6635.