



Dear Audioconference Participant:

We are so glad that you will join us for *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families* on Thursday, November 1 from 2:00 – 3:30 pm EDT. Information on how to access the call will be sent to registered participants by email or fax.

To make the most of this training experience, use the attached handouts, copies of faculty biographies, and the audioconference evaluation. If you are listening in a group, copy this packet for each participant. Also, each participant should:

- **Complete the attached *Boundaries Pre-Activity* before the conference begins.**
- **Review pages 1-3 before the conference begins.** These handouts are designed to help you prepare for the audioconference.
- **Schedule some time for reflection and/or discussion after the audioconference.** Use the *Applying the Information* handout (p. 12) individually or with your team. Discussing information, strategies, and ideas as a team is a great way to think about what is already in place in your program. Team discussions can also help you think through next steps about how your team addresses boundaries.
- **Use additional handouts** to discuss and share new information and to plan for the future.

After the call, please fill out and return an evaluation! *Your ideas will help ensure that future audioconferences will be meaningful and helpful to you.* There are two options for submitting your feedback. Go to <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e6igcj8hh8bxb0or/start> or fill out the form at the end of this packet and return evaluations to:

Amanda Perez  
Early Head Start National Resource Center  
1225 23<sup>rd</sup> St, NW, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20037  
fax: (202) 638-0851

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me. My phone number is (202) 638-1144 x2061. Enjoy the program!

Sincerely,

Amanda Perez  
Senior Training Specialist

## Boundaries Pre-Activity

Setting boundaries is not always easy – at home or at work. This audioconference will focus on professional boundaries. Faculty will talk about the connection between setting boundaries with your own family and friends and setting boundaries with the children and families you serve. To prepare for the audioconference, please take a few minutes to consider how you set and maintain boundaries using the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers! Your responses are private, and will not be shared with anyone else.

**Boundaries mark the difference between your responsibility or role and someone else’s responsibility or role. They identify the lines you should not cross with others. They also identify the lines you will not allow others to cross in their interactions with you.**

**1. Give an example of a personal boundary you have established (with a family member or friend).**

Ex: I am not responsible for cleaning my children’s room. That is their responsibility.  
My friends have to knock before they enter my apartment.

**2. How do you feel when you set that boundary?**

**3. Give an example of a professional boundary you have established.**

Ex: I take my scheduled breaks during the day.  
I do not talk about my own children with the families I serve.

**4. How do you feel when you set that boundary?**

\*We will not collect your responses, but would like to get your comments about it. Please send comments about this activity or questions you hope faculty will address to Amanda Perez at [aperez@zerotothree.org](mailto:aperez@zerotothree.org)



## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### Objectives

During this call, panelists will:

1. Identify the importance of professional boundaries in Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs between staff and families;
2. Recognize the challenge of establishing and maintaining boundaries in relationship-based work with expectant families and infants and toddlers and their families;
3. Offer strategies and approaches to support setting and maintaining appropriate boundaries between staff and families.



## Faculty

### Amanda Perez, Moderator



Senior Training Specialist  
Early Head Start National Resource Center

### Angie Godfrey



Infant/Toddler Program Specialist  
Office of Head Start

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### Becky Carter-Steele



Family and Community Partnership Coordinator  
University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) Early Head Start

Rebecca L. Carter-Steele has worked with children, families and early childhood staff for over 20 years in child abuse prevention, parent education, and child care. In her current role, Becky supervises both home visitors and child care providers in Reno's Early Head Start program. Before that, she spent eight years developing a unique network of licensed family child care providers in Reno, offering training and technical assistance, as well as regular visits and a mobile toy library. Becky is a PITC-certified trainer and has taught numerous workshops and college courses on children and families. She has a Bachelor's degree in social work and a Master's degree in Human Development and Family Studies.

## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### **Faculty (cont'd.)**

#### **Janet Humphryes**



Early Childhood Education Specialist  
American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start Training and Technical Assistance

Janet Humphryes has more than 35 years of experience working with children, teaching staff and parents as a teacher, director, child development specialist, adjunct faculty and private consultant and coach. Before joining the Head Start training and technical assistance system in 2004, she directed an 18 classroom center-based Early Head Start program in Denver, CO. Through all of her professional experiences, Janet has recognized and celebrated the pivotal role of staff working with the youngest children and their families. Janet has co-authored four books focused on connecting, inspiring and transforming the lives of those involved with young children. She has a M.A. in Early Childhood Education, a B.A. in Behavioral Sciences, and an international AMI Montessori teaching credential.

#### **Anntoinette McKee**



Early Head Start Deputy Director  
Next Door Foundation  
Milwaukee, WI

Anntoinette McKee's expertise in home visiting, family support, parent education, and child development is supported by over 20 years of leadership experience in early intervention, Early Head Start, and K12 programs. She currently serves as the Deputy Director at the Next Door Foundation, responsible for implementation and design of an urban home-based Early Head Start serving 202 families. Anntoinette is a published author and a frequent trainer, offering trainings ranging from infant massage to the Family Service Credential. She is also trained as a doula. She holds a Bachelors of Science degree in Educational Policy and Community Education and a Masters in Theology.

## ***Relevant Head Start Program Performance Standards***

### **§ 1301.31 Personnel policies.**

(a) Written policies. Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and implement written personnel policies for staff, that are approved by the Policy Council or Policy Committee and that are made available to all grantee and delegate agency staff. At a minimum, such policies must include:

- (1) Descriptions of each staff position, addressing, as appropriate, roles and responsibilities, relevant qualifications, salary range, and employee benefits
- (3) Standards of conduct (see 45 CFR 1304.52(h))

### **§ 1304.40 Family partnerships.**

(a) Family goal setting.

- (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must engage in a process of collaborative partnership-building with parents to establish mutual trust and to identify family goals, strengths, and necessary services and other supports.

### **§ 1304.52 Human resources management.**

(a) Organizational structure.

- (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must establish and maintain an organizational structure that supports the accomplishment of program objectives. This structure must address the major functions and responsibilities assigned to each staff position and must provide evidence of adequate mechanisms for staff supervision and support.

(b) Staff qualifications--general.

- (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that staff and consultants have the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to perform their assigned functions responsibly.

(i) Standards of conduct.

- (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that all staff, consultants, and volunteers abide by the program's standards of conduct. These standards must specify that:

- (ii) They will follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other staff members.

**Principles for Practice**  
**Setting and Maintaining Boundaries with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families**

1. **Start with the Standards.** The *Head Start Program Performance Standards* require programs to establish clear roles and responsibilities for staff and Standards of Conduct that include attention to confidentiality.
2. **Understand the value and importance of professional boundaries.** Professional boundaries in Early Head Start (EHS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs protect the well-being of children, families, and staff. They define the work that staff and families will do together, honor the differences in the roles they will play, and preserve the objectivity of staff.
3. **Acknowledge that boundaries can be fuzzy!** While professional boundaries are vital, they are not always clear – to children, families or staff. Staff have a responsibility to define them, and, in relationship-based work, it can be challenging to recognize and maintain them. Use the tips in this audioconference to support you and others on your staff.
4. **Start with the personal.** Many people have trouble setting boundaries, even at home! Consider how you define and maintain boundaries in your personal life.
5. **Celebrate your profession!** The staff in EHS and MSHS programs are knowledgeable, skilled professionals. By setting and maintaining boundaries, you honor your expertise and the value of your work.
6. **Define roles early and often.** Initially, families may not understand your program and the services you provide. Define your role with each family early in your relationship. As you get to know one another and work together, revisit those roles regularly.
7. **Consider the family’s perspective.** Imagining how another person is feeling or thinking gives you an opportunity to think objectively about their behaviors and interactions with you.
8. **Support families in building/identifying informal support networks.** Sometimes, the families in EHS and MSHS programs are isolated from friends and family. By helping families identify and develop friendships and family relationships, you take a professional role in helping families find the support staff can’t provide.
9. **Remember your goals!** Consider your goals in all of your work with families. One common goal is to help them build skills in problem-solving, negotiating resources, and developing a sense of themselves as capable. Be cautious of helping so much that you undermine that goal and others. In addition, be intentional. Consider why you are working with families in the way that you are. When you act with clear direction, it is easier to maintain boundaries.

## Principles for Practice

### Setting and Maintaining Boundaries with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families (cont'd.)

10. **Reflect.** The day-to-day work with young children and their families can move fast! In the rush, it can be hard to consider your work. How do you feel about your work and what do you think about? Are there interactions that are worrying or nagging at you? When you recognize early signs that a situation is getting uncomfortable, it is easier to address those issues.
11. **Remember your team!** Work with expectant families and families with infants and toddlers can be isolating. It is easy to feel like you are the only person who can help a family. EHS and MSHS programs are designed to provide comprehensive services through a team of people. How can staff in your program work together to share expertise, support one another, and offer the best to children and families?
12. **Offer reflective supervision.** Reflective supervision – offered on a regular basis - allows staff to consider their interactions with families in a safe space with a caring, objective supervisor. This can be a crucial support and protection for children and families.
13. **Prioritize staff development.** Setting and maintaining boundaries can feel unnecessary, unhelpful, and even threatening to people who are committed to helping families. In addition, staff who are unpracticed at setting and maintaining boundaries might need to build and practice those skills. Orientation and ongoing training on boundary setting and maintenance offer staff a critical foundation in building effective helping relationships with children and families.
14. **Attend to repair.** In intimate, relationship-based work, even when staff attend to boundaries, they can be crossed. In extreme circumstances, a particular staff person and family may need to stop working together. However, working with families to develop mutual trust includes repairing boundaries and relationships when appropriate. Whenever possible, maintaining relationships can be valuable learning experiences for both staff and families. Staff can work with supervisors and mental health consultants to talk with families about what happened, identify the consequences, and think about how you can continue your work together.
15. **Develop policies and procedures.** Offering clear policies and procedures around particular issues can offer staff and families certainty when they are unsure. Consider which issues (e.g., social media, cell phone use) could be addressed in policies that support staff and families.



## Important Terms

### **Professional Boundaries:**

“Limits which protect the space between the professional’s power and the family’s vulnerability.”

- Peterson, 1982.

### **Burnout:**

"A state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations."

– Malakh-Pines, Aronson and Kafry, 1981

### **Secondary Trauma:**

“The natural behaviors resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by (someone else). It is the stress resulting from wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.”

– Figley, 1995

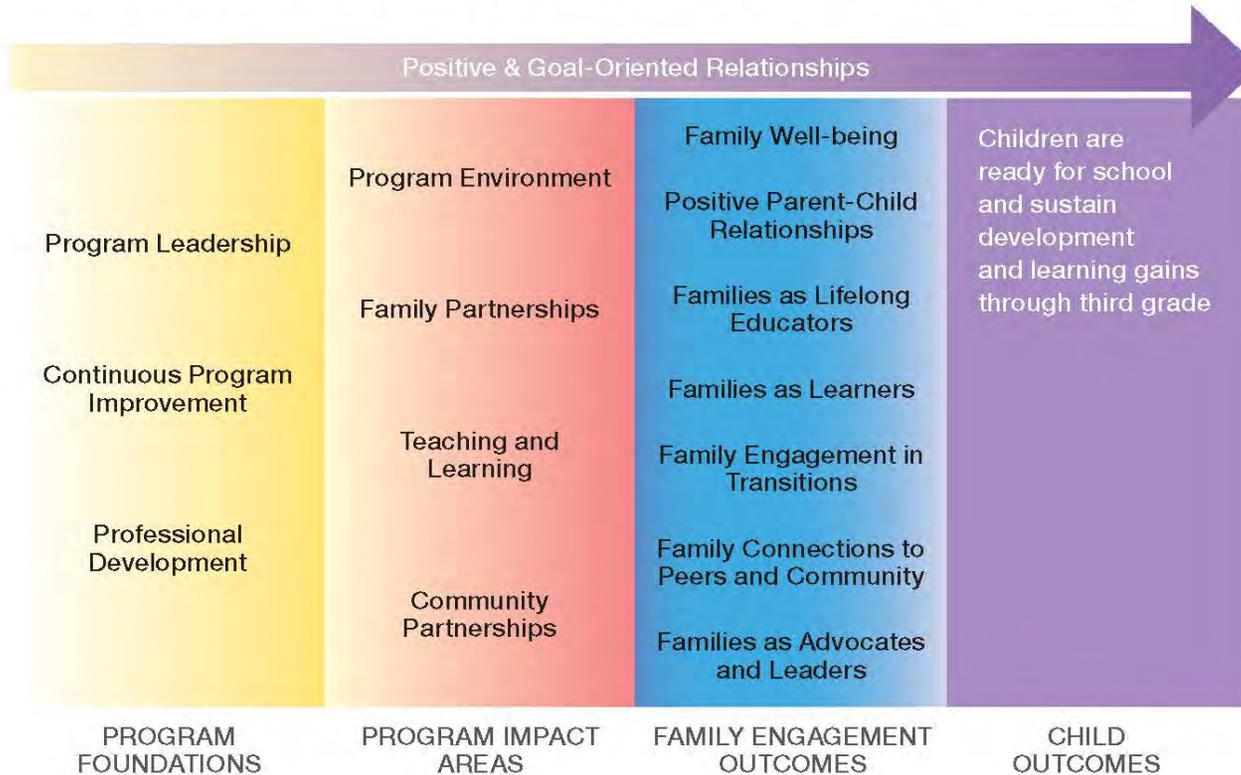
## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: Professional Boundaries**

The National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (NCPFCE) published this framework to help staff consider how they support engagement in their programs. This audioconference focuses on the purple arrow.

#### **PARENT, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

When parent and family engagement activities are systemic and integrated across program foundations and program impact areas, family engagement outcomes are achieved, resulting in children who are healthy and ready for school. Parent and family engagement activities are grounded in positive, ongoing, and goal-oriented relationships with families.



## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### **Possible Warning Signs**

It is not always clear – even to seasoned professionals! - when boundaries are crossed. Reflecting on your relationships and interactions with children and families is a key strategy for maintaining boundaries.

Faculty suggest you consider:

1. What you are **THINKING** about your interactions and relationships with particular children and families;
2. What you are **FEELING** about those children and families and your work together; and
3. What and how you are **MAKING DECISIONS** about your work together.



The following questions might also alert staff to a possible boundary concern.

**When thinking about or working with a particular child or family, do you find yourself:**

- Treating them differently than other children and families? How and why?
- Losing objectivity in your work? How and why?
- Thinking about them as friends? How and why?
- Keeping secrets about them or your work with them from colleagues or supervisors? How and why? Telling them secrets or confidential information about others?
- Feeling uncomfortable? How and why?
- Borrowing money from them or lending them money? How and why?
- Offering them gifts that you wouldn't offer other children and families you work with? How and why?
- Feeling as if no one but you has interest in that child and/or family? How and why?
- Feeling no one but you will be able to help that child and/or family? How and why?
- Feeling responsible for a client's progress or failure? Or "owning" a client's successes or failures? How and why?
- Confiding personal or professional issues or troubles to them? How and why?

Adapted from Katherine M. Roberts and Bobbie Lesesne. "Clarifying and Establishing Boundaries in SCDMH Peer Delivered Services" (presentation accessed October 3, 2012 at

[http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/client\\_affairs/establishing\\_boundaries.ppt](http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/client_affairs/establishing_boundaries.ppt)

## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### **Possible Policies**

The *Head Start Program Performance Standards* require programs to establish personnel policies that include Standards of Conduct for staff. Confidentiality, in particular, must be addressed in those Standards of Conduct. Programs may decide to develop additional policies to offer clarity to staff and families in setting and maintaining boundaries. Across the country, programs are working with people who have different cultural ideas about the meaning of things like physical contact between staff and families, offers of food and drinks, etc. Programs also may operate in areas that present challenges in getting required services, leading to potential boundary concerns such as driving families to appointments, etc. Topics that challenge people in one community may not challenge people in others. **Policies, then, are individualized to meet the needs of your community.** Work with your staff, families, and Policy Council to consider the list of possible policy topics below. Consider what other topics would be important for policies to address. **What boundary issues challenge the staff and families in your program? What are the challenges? What can happen to relationships with families if staff do or do not do the following:**

- Have physical contact with families (e.g., greeting with hugs or kisses)
- “Wear” a child in a sling or baby carrier during the day
- Accept food or drink from families (e.g., on home visits)
- Interact with families via social media (e.g., friending a family on Facebook)
- Attend family functions (e.g., birthday parties)
- Serve people who they already know in a different capacity (e.g., family members, friends, neighbors, etc.)
- Drive families to appointments or other places

**Use this list as a starting point to consider which policies make sense in your program and community.**

## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### **Applying the Information**

The questions below are meant as a guide for either personal reflection or group discussion. Ideally, teams will work together to consider their program's personnel policies and approach to addressing boundaries.

1. Consider the preactivity that you completed as part of this event. Had you ever thought about boundaries before? Many people in Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs are likely to find it hard to set boundaries. Why do you think that is? Is it hard for you? Talk with a colleague or supervisor. What professional boundaries does s/he think you set well? What boundaries does s/he think you are challenged by? Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. Do you think it is particularly hard to maintain boundaries with expectant families and infants and toddlers and their families? If so, why?
3. Look at the *Standards* identified on page 4. How do you think these *Standards* relate to professional boundaries?
4. Review the *Principles for Practice* on pages 5-6. In what ways are you already using these ideas in your program? What strategies did you hear that might enhance your work around professional boundaries?
5. Faculty talked about the fuzziness of boundaries. How is it difficult for families if boundaries are not clear? How is it difficult for staff? What strategies are you using in your program to make boundaries clear for staff and families? What strategies did you hear today for clarifying boundaries that you can implement in your program/practice?
6. How do you ensure that your relationships with families are “positive and goal-oriented” as described in the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework on page 8?
7. Faculty identified reflection as a key to maintaining boundaries with the youngest children and families. How are you able to use reflection in your work? How is it helpful to maintaining boundaries? Consider the Warning Signs (and reflective questions) on page 9. What other signs might concern you? How can you use those questions/that tool in your work?
8. How are staff provided professional development and ongoing support in this work? How does that support allow staff to set and maintain boundaries with the children and families you serve?
9. Review the possible policy topics listed on page 10. Work together to address the questions on that page. What policies related to boundary setting and maintaining are already established at your program? Do they/how do they help? Are there others that would be helpful? What issues would they address? Once policies are established, how do you share them with families early in the relationship?

## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### Resource List

For more information, see the following resources:

- Barron, Carol, and Nichole Paradis. 2010. "Infant Mental Health Home Visitation." *Zero To Three*, 30(6): 38-43.
- Figley, Charles. 1995. *Compassion Fatigue: Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorders from Treating the Traumatized*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Goelman, Hillel, and Huan Guo. 1998. "What We Know and What We Don't Know about Burnout among Early Childhood Care Providers." *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 7: 175-199.
- Heller, Sherryl Scott, and Linda Gilkerson, eds. 2009. *A Practical Guide to Reflective Supervision*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.
- Jones Harden, Brenda, Nicole Denmark, and Dale Saul. 2010. "Understanding the Needs of Staff in Head Start Programs: The Characteristics, Perceptions, and Experiences of Home Visitors." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32: 371-379.
- Jones Harden, Brenda. 1997. "You Cannot Do It Alone: Home Visitation with Psychologically Vulnerable Families and Children." *Zero To Three*, 17(4): 10-16.
- Malakh-Pines, Ayala, Elliot Aronson, and Ditsa Kafry. 1981. *Burnout: From Tedium to Personal Growth*. New York: Free Press.
- Minnesota Board of Nursing. 2010. *Professional Boundaries in Nursing*. Minneapolis, MN: Author. Available on-line at [http://mn.gov/health-licensing-boards/images/Professional\\_Boundaries\\_in\\_Nursing.pdf](http://mn.gov/health-licensing-boards/images/Professional_Boundaries_in_Nursing.pdf)
- Parlakian, Rebecca. 2001. *The Power of Questions: Building Quality Relationships with Families*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.
- Peterson, Marilyn. 1992. *At Personal Risk: Boundary Violations in Professional-Client Relationships*. New York: Norton.

**For sample ethical standards and standards of conduct addressing boundaries, go to:**

American Nursing Association: :

<http://nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses>

American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>

National Association for the Education of Young Children:

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05.pdf>

National Association of Social Workers: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

## *Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

### **Audioconference Evaluation: Also available on-line!**

Go to <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e6igcj8hh8bxb0or/start> or submit the hard copy below. Your comments are very important to us. After participating in the audioconference, please complete the following evaluation form. Make additional copies as needed.

My role is: (please check all that apply)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Teacher          | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian          | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Staff                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Child Care Provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Director/Program Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Training and Technical Assistance Provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home Visitor               | <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinator              | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultant                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Support Worker      | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                               |

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ages Served:  Prenatal-Three  Three-Five  After School or School Age  Teens  Adults

<i>Please rate the training session by responding to the following:</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The audioconference met the stated goal(s).	5	4	3	2	1	0
The presenters were knowledgeable about the topics covered in this audioconference.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The presenters provided balance between participant questions and presentation content.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The presenters used a variety of activities to share the information.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The information presented was useful—could be used in my work or life experiences.	5	4	3	2	1	0
I want to learn more about this topic.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The information was clear and organized.	5	4	3	2	1	0
This training was a valuable professional development opportunity for me.	5	4	3	2	1	0
The accompanying resources/materials were useful and relevant.	5	4	3	2	1	0



*Professional Boundaries in Work with Expectant Families and Infants and Toddlers and Their Families*

**Audioconference Evaluation (cont'd.)**

What I liked most was....

What I liked least was...

One idea I will take back and include in my work is...

Topics I would like to learn more about are...

Please fax or mail your completed evaluation forms after the audioconference to:

Attn: Amanda Perez  
Fax: (202) 638-0851  
EHS NRC @ ZERO TO THREE  
1225 M Street, NW, Suite 350  
Washington, DC 20037

**Thank you!**