

Infant and Toddler Curriculum Introduction

Angie Godfrey: Hello everyone. We are so happy to be here today sharing this information. Thank you for joining us. Learning experiences in the first three years of life set the foundation for lifelong learning. Staff in Early Head Start and all programs serving infants and toddlers are crucial to the experiences of babies, toddlers, and their families. The relationship of infants and toddlers with their providers, and providers' relationships with families, create an environment of respect and trust that supports each infant and toddler and their healthy development.

The Office of Head Start is committed to supporting the development of an Infant-Toddler workforce—a workforce that understands the unique characteristics of babies and the science of their development. To accomplish this, staff need professional development experiences that include college-level course work with an emphasis on infants and toddlers.

With that in mind, the Office of Head Start, in collaboration with the University of Cincinnati and its partners, funded an Innovation and Improvement Grant, or IIP, to develop infant and toddler course work that can be accessed by institutions of higher learning across the country. This IIP was developed to address the need for accessible, high-quality college degree programs focused on the care and education of infants. The primary goal of the IIP grant was to develop a comprehensive professional development system of support for early care professionals that would be anchored in the development and delivery of an online associate's degree. The curriculum was developed as distance learning courses and instructor's manuals accompany each course.

There are two audiences for the material: One, Early Head Start programs that have strong professional development plans, and can communicate their needs to local institutions of higher education. And two, institutions of higher education that can access these modules online, and offer them as part of existing classes, or as the foundation for expanded infant and toddler course work.

Because we want the modules to remain credit bearing, they will be available as a free download to all institutions of higher education. Modules were developed for 15 courses, and are available in both English and Spanish. Each module contains: a syllabus, weekly objectives, primary texts, appropriate readings for each week, a PowerPoint presentation for each week, assignments, a rubric for each assignment, and a Blackboard template. There is a list of courses available on our web page.

Again, thank you for joining us.