

Better for babies: A study of state infant and toddler child care policies ^[1]

Author: Schmit, Stephanie & Matthews, Hannah

Source: CLASP

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 Aug 2013

AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf ^[2]

Description:

Better for Babies: A Study of State Infant and Toddler Child Care Policies, presents data from a recent state survey of child care subsidy, licensing, and quality enhancement policies. It provides a national picture of infant-toddler child care-one that shows significant room for improvement.

Collectively, state infant and toddler policies are not meeting the needs of our youngest children and their families. Babies in child care need high-quality care with warm, responsive, and skilled caregivers; healthy and safe environments; and linkages to community supports. Comparing state policies to key benchmark policies finds that too few infants and toddlers have access to such settings -- and while particular state policies offer promise, no state has in place a comprehensive set that fully meets the needs of infants and toddlers.

Surely we can do better for babies to ensure that our youngest and most vulnerable are getting the best possible start in life. CLASP's study shows where state policy stands in relation to a set of key research-based policies on child care subsidy, licensing and quality improvement that support children's healthy development.

Key findings include:

In most states, child-to-provider ratios and group sizes exceed national expert recommendations. Further, a handful of states do not regulate group size at all.

While more than half of states (30) reported having specific infant-toddler training for providers, most state requirements for the number of hours of training are minimal, and the content of training curricula related to infants and toddlers is limited.

Twenty-one states report licensing standards that require a consistent primary caregiver for infants and toddlers. A few additional states encourage continuity of care through other means, including regulations, policies, or waivers.

Most state standard subsidy reimbursement rates for infants in center-based care fail to meet federally recommended levels.

Twenty-two states report offering rate differentials or higher payment rates for infant-toddler care. Higher payment rates for infant-toddler care can offset higher costs and support quality enhancements.

Forty-one states report subsidy policies that pay child care providers for days when a child is absent, a policy particularly important for infants and toddlers who have more frequent illnesses and require more frequent doctor visits than older children.

Fourteen states reported using direct contracts with child care providers in their subsidy system to increase the supply or improve the quality of subsidized infant-toddler care.

State policies are key, as are increased investments at all levels --federal, state and local -- to ensure that our youngest children have access to high-quality care during their formative early years.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: quality ^[4]

infant/toddler ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/13/09/better-babies-study-state-infant-and-toddler-child-care>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/13/09/better-babies-study-state-infant-and-toddler-child-care> ^[2]

<https://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/BetterforBabies2.pdf> ^[3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865> ^[4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> ^[5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/infanttoddler>