National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative and ZERO TO THREE Policy Center

Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Implementation Toolkit

Introduction

The following resources, tools, and process suggestions are intended to assist States and Territories in engaging in a strategic planning process to support the implementation of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (ELG for IT). The process is modeled on the early care and education system model (eco-model) and planning process used by the National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative, a project of the Child Care Bureau. It is designed to maximize involvement of stakeholders while minimizing face-to-face meeting requirements. The process will result in a concrete plan for implementing ELG for IT in your state. The toolkit includes the following materials:

Resources:

- *Putting Standards into Practice: States' Use of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers*—ZERO TO THREE Policy Center
- *Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Fact Sheet*—National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative
- *Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: Recommendations for States*—ZERO TO THREE Policy Center

Tools:

1. Implementing Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: A Strategic Planning Approach (power point)
2. Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Strategic Planning Tasks Matrix
3. The Relationship between Early Learning Guidelines and Key Elements of State Early Childhood Systems
4. Sample Invitation Letter
5. Sample Strategic Planning Committee Interview Questions
6. Sample State Early Learning Guidelines Survey Results (power point)

7. Sample 1st Meeting Agenda
8. Icebreaker Activity for 1st Meeting
9. Key Elements Activity for 1st Meeting
10. National Overview of States' Use of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (power point)
11. Ecological Model (power point)
12. A Strategic Planning Approach: The Logic Model (power point)
13. Sample Logic Model: Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, Program Standards
14. Blank Logic Model
15. Sample 2nd Meeting Agenda
16. Sample Action Plan: Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, Program Standards
17. Blank Action Plan
18. Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Implementation Project Evaluation

Resources:

• Putting Standards into Practice: States' Use of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers—ZERO TO THREE Policy Center
This paper draws upon 2010 interviews with representatives of eight states on implementation and alignment of their Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) for infants and toddlers. It summarizes the status of guidelines in states and offers suggestions and examples related to disseminating and training on the ELG and embedding them into professional development and quality improvement systems. The paper provides definitions and examples of aligning the ELG for infants and toddlers both vertically, with guidelines for older children, and horizontally, with other parts of the infant-toddler system.

• Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Fact Sheet—National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative
This fact sheet provides a national overview of Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines adopted by States and Territories. As of July 2010, 31 States and 3 Territories implement ELG that describe outcomes for infants and toddlers. The fact sheet documents the various ways States and Territories represent infants and toddlers in their guidelines.

• Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: Recommendations for States—ZERO TO THREE Policy Center
This 2008 report by ZERO TO THREE, drawing on the expertise of national and state leaders, offers recommendations and examples to states as they embark on an inclusive process to develop or refine research-based Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers. The report focuses on the unique and foundational nature of the infant and toddler period and addresses issues related to both process and content. It is offered as a road map for states as they develop policies and programs that lay a strong foundation for child development and future learning through responsive, appropriate, and high-quality early experiences.

Tools:

1. **Implementing Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: A Strategic Planning Approach** (power point)

This power point provides an overview of the process for developing a state strategic plan to implement Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers. It can be used to explain the process to members of the Planning Design Group and other interested stakeholders.

2. **Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Strategic Planning Tasks**

This Task Matrix is a table that provides a checklist of tasks that support the process of developing a plan to implement ELG for IT. It includes columns that list the task, who will complete it, when, and any comments.

3. **The Relationship between Early Learning Guidelines and Key Elements of State Early Childhood Systems**

The Key Elements tool provides a framework for thinking strategically about implementing ELG for IT. It assists the State/Territory in developing a scan of the current, planned, and potential supports for implementing the guidelines. It is structured around key elements of the early care and education system and offers opportunities to discuss:

- Potential impact or link with ELG for IT
- Questions for consideration
- Current status and past accomplishments
- Planned or potential enhancements

An initial draft of the Key Elements document is prepared prior to the first meeting. Changes can be made to it throughout the planning process and as strategies are implemented.

4. **Sample Invitation Letter**

The sample invitation letter provides an example of correspondence that explains the ELG implementation planning process to prospective members of the Strategic Planning Committee.

5. **Sample Strategic Planning Committee Interview Questions**

The document provides sample questions for interviews with Strategic Planning Committee members prior to the initial face-to-face meeting. It can be used as an electronic survey or can be completed via e-mail or phone calls. Questions can be adapted for a particular State/Territory.

6. **Sample State Early Learning Guidelines Survey Results** (power point)

This power point offers one way to compile and analyze the results of interviews with Strategic Planning Committee members prior to the first face-to-face meeting. It follows the same format as the sample interview questions.

7. Sample 1st Meeting Agenda
The sample agenda for the initial Strategic Planning Committee meeting is designed for a 4-hour to 5-hour meeting. The first meeting includes an overview of national and State/Territory information about the topic, completion of the vision and mission, member interview results, review and prioritization of the Key Elements, and development of long-term outcomes for prioritized key elements.

8. Icebreaker Activity for 1st Meeting
The sample icebreaker, "More or Less," can be used at the beginning of the first Strategic Planning Committee beginning.

9. Key Elements Activity for 1st Meeting
These instructions help facilitators lead a major part of the first meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee. The activity includes an overview of the eco-model, introduction to the Key Elements tool, additions to the third and fourth columns from small groups, reporting out from small groups, and prioritizing of the top key elements for action.

10. National Overview of States' Use of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (power point)
This power point provides an overview of states' efforts in implementing ELG for IT, including understanding states' use of ELG, thinking systematically about embedding the guidelines, evaluating the impact, and aligning ELG within the early childhood system. It summarizes information in the paper on *States' Use of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (*first resource listed above).

11. Ecological Model (power point)
This brief power point summarizes the ecological model of the early care and education system, which was developed by the National Infant & Toddler Child Care Initiative. It provides helpful information for understanding the context of the Key Elements document.

12. A Strategic Planning Approach: The Logic Model (power point)
This power point provides an overview and guide for developing a logic model to help States/Territories define and track outcomes, outputs, strategies/activities, and inputs/resources. It can be used to help define the type of information that will need to be collected to track the progress and evaluate the impact of the ELG implementation process over time.

13. Sample Logic Model: Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, Program Standards
This sample logic model provides an example of how a State/Territory can develop a logic model to help guide planning to achieve a long-term outcome. It focuses on one key element (program standards) related to the implementation of ELG for IT.

14. Blank Logic Model
The blank logic model provides a format for States/Territories to use to develop their own logic model around implementation of ELG for IT.

15. Sample 2nd Meeting Agenda
The second Strategic Planning Committee meeting agenda is designed for a 4-hour meeting. It focuses on development of outcomes, outputs, and inputs/resources as part of the logic model, as well as development of an action plan.

16. Sample Action Plan: Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, Program Standards
The sample action plan provides a format that is separated into 3 sections: planned activities, back burner (activities that are delayed), and completed steps. It also contains an area to identify TA needs. The example provided shows entries focused on the program standards key element of the implementation of ELG for IT.

17. Blank Action Plan
The blank action plan provides a format for States/Territories to complete near the end of the planning process. It is intended to be reviewed and edited periodically.

18. Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines Implementation Project Evaluation
The project evaluation is designed to be completed by members of the Strategic Planning Committee at the end of the planning process. It provides useful feedback on the meetings, facilitation, and other aspects of the project.

To request additional information or technical assistance on the implementation of Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, please contact:

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