



Connecting Families to Appropriate Services

GRANTEES FEATURED

New Jersey

Vermont

In December 2013, **Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Vermont** became the newest states to receive Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (ELC) grants. Although they, like the 14 states that received awards before them, do not plan to use a significant portion of their grants to fund initiatives targeting infants and toddlers specifically, their efforts to strengthen the systems that support all young children and families have potential to improve outcomes for babies if their needs are intentionally addressed. This excerpt from *Meeting the Challenge: How the Newest Early Learning Challenge Grantees Can Meet the Needs of Infants and Toddlers* [www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/state-community-policy/elc-grantees-2014.pdf] discusses grantees' plans to connect families to appropriate services.

The services and supports that families with young children need are often administered by multiple agencies and operate in an uncoordinated fashion. Implementing processes to make it easier to connect families to the programs that are most appropriate for them is essential. Both **New Jersey** and **Vermont** outlined proposals to do so in their ELC applications.

- **New Jersey** will expand its network of central intake hubs, which currently operate in fifteen counties, across the state. Hubs serve as a single point of entry for families to link to services including health insurance, primary care/pediatric medical homes, WIC, Part C Early Intervention, child behavioral health and mental health, and early education programs.

- **Vermont** plans to implement the Connecticut Help Me Grow framework to serve as a central mechanism to coordinate and track developmental screening results and referrals. The state will translate some educational materials into languages other than English to increase the number of refugee children who are screened. **Vermont** also plans to develop and implement a case management and data collection system for its current Children's Integrated Services (CIS) program. CIS collocates Part C Early Intervention, early childhood and family mental health, nursing and family support, and specialized child care services in the Department for Children and Families. CIS teams across the state already use common referral and intake forms and a case management form to develop a comprehensive and individualized child and/or family plan.

This series explores six strategies the newest ELC grantees are pursuing: developing and integrating Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers; professional development of the infant-toddler workforce; expansion of home visiting; building capacity in high-need communities; engaging and supporting families; and connecting families to appropriate services. Download all of the strategy briefs and full paper, as well as other ELC resources, at www.zerotothree.org/elc.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ZERO TO THREE has developed a number of resources related to the ELC, including a toolkit outlining how states can use the ELC to benefit infants and toddlers and articles detailing how the 2013 and previous ELC grantees targeted very young children. View them all at www.zerotothree.org/elc