



Giving each child
a chance to succeed

ECAL is a project partner of Caring Communities: Birth to 3

A Franklin County initiative working to transform early care and learning philosophy and practice for children ages six weeks to three.

"The relationship that grows between the child and the primary care teacher supports the child's development of emotional security and self regulation. This personal approach to care is supportive of all children, including infants and toddlers with disabilities and special needs."

Standards of Care and Teaching for Ohio's Infants and Toddlers, a state program model, adopted (10/08), but not yet implemented.

Caring Communities: Birth to 3

Every day, 90,000 children in Ohio under age 3 are cared for outside their homes. A Franklin County initiative, **Caring Communities: Birth to 3 (CC: B-3)** is working to transform early care and learning philosophy and practice for children ages six weeks to age 3.

The essence of **CC: B-3** is offering children consistent, skilled care teachers in family style intimate communities. Children are cared for in small, mixed age groups, by one primary caregiver, until they are three years old.

Such continuity is a departure from today's standard practice of moving children from room to room with different teachers and children up to five times over three years. This continuity of care is especially important for at-risk children and families, whose lives are less stable due to poverty, illness, job loss, and frequent moves.

In 2008, *Action for Children and Early Care and Learning* partnered with five early learning centers to establish **CC: B-3**. Each of the centers are urban and offer comprehensive programs for children birth to age six and serve many lower income children, including those receiving state subsidies. The five partner centers have committed to structuring their infant/toddler programs to provide continuity of care in a family style setting.

Key Project Objectives

- Advance the effort to bring high-quality care to Ohio's youngest children.
- Expand local access to higher-quality programs for lower-income children ages six weeks to age 3.
- Create a curriculum to educate teachers on how to implement individualized (primary) care for a mixed age group of children six weeks to age 3.
- Establish best practices for classroom procedures, in mixed age groups of children six weeks to age 3, which will be adaptable to diverse centers.
- Establish environment design models with suggested materials and equipment to guide centers committed to serving children with primary care in mixed age groups.
- Create public information materials informing families and other stakeholders of the value of continuity of care and mixed age groups.



“The practice of switching infants and toddlers from group to group [should] be questioned with regard to its impact on children’s identity formation. If a child needs strong bonds with caregivers during infancy in order to feel secure . . . why switch caregivers at all during the infancy period? Children need to feel connected enough to their caregivers to fall back dependently on those traits of the caregiver the child knows he can count on. Why not have children stay with the same caregivers for the first 36 months of life?”

Ronald Lally, “The Impact of Child Care Policies and Practices on Infant/Toddlers Identity Formation.” Lally is Co-Director of WestEd’s Center for Child and Family Studies, the most widely used training system for infant and toddler care teachers in the U.S.

Project Partners

Community Agencies:

Early Care & Learning
Action for Children

Early Childhood Program Partners:

Columbus Montessori
OSU Schoenbaum Family Center Weinland Park
Our Play Station & Learning Center

Kids Care Academy
Starting Point Learning Center

Cost and Funding

Caring Communities: Birth to 3 is a three year project estimated to cost \$344,000, including costs to:

- Develop best practices curriculum
- Conduct continuous assessment and evaluation
- Increase teacher qualifications
- Lower teacher/child ratios
- Upgrade classroom environments using the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale*, a national standard
- Enable centers to attain and maintain Star 2 level of *Step Up To Quality* (Ohio’s quality rating system for child care centers)

CC: B-3 has received a leadership gift of \$100,000 – ***Thank You American Electric Power Foundation!***

The balance of the resources needed to fund the project is sought from corporations, foundations, and individual donors. In addition, community service groups, construction professionals, and other volunteers are being asked to contribute in-kind gifts of time and materials to limit costs of classroom upgrades, such as sinks and toilets, and new furnishings.

Need + Innovation + Funding = Success for Children Birth to 3

Lead Donor:

