

# WVHSA NEWSLETTER

## Strengthening Services for Infants and Toddlers

By Traci Dalton Volume 13, Issue 2

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Serving additional infants and toddlers in high quality programs is a goal shared across the early childhood community in West Virginia. Early childhood leadership spanning all systems values the importance of high quality services for our youngest children. The newly named Early Childhood Advisory Council has identified maintaining and expanding available high quality programs and services for infants and toddlers as a goal. To assist in achieving this goal, federal legislation and state level initiatives have occurred that bring a renewed emphasis on infants and toddlers. In this article, I will highlight some of these exciting opportunities focusing on infants and toddlers.

The last twelve months have brought great new federally funded opportunities for services and systems focusing on Infants and Toddlers and their families. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act or ARRA created the opportunity to expand Early Head Start services. This expansion in West Virginia has allowed an estimated additional 400 infants, toddlers and their families receive comprehensive Early Head Start services. Numerous communities are benefiting from Early Head Start services for the first time; in others additional children and families are receiving services. This expansion has also allowed very vulnerable targeted populations, incarcerated mothers and teenage parents, to receive services through innovative collaborative partnerships and service delivery.

Recently, federal legislation related to healthcare also created funding to expand home visitation programming for infants and toddlers within states. West Virginia has created a collaborative stakeholders group that includes the Head Start State Collaboration Office, as well as, the West Virginia Head Start Association to contribute to the design and submission of West Virginia's home visitation grant. This funding should support the creation of new collaborative efforts across home based service providers and programs to identify and provide non-duplicative services to our most vulnerable infants and toddlers and their families.

Opportunities to serve additional children and families are exciting and necessary; however, systems must support local efforts to maximize effectiveness. Numerous efforts to strengthen infant toddler system support have or are occurring. West Virginia now has Infant Toddler Early Learning Standards that have been finalized and distributed over the last twelve months. Collaborative work is beginning to create an Infant –Toddler credential for providers working across systems such as childcare, Early Head Start, family childcare and WV Birth to Three. West Virginia is also working to develop the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and will include Head Start/Early Head Start performance standards into this system.

We have also been successful in securing two federal technical assistance grants related to infant and toddler services. In May, West Virginia was selected as one of five states by Zero to Three to receive technical assistance on including and expanding Early Head Start into the state's early childhood system. This opportunity will allow the Early Childhood Advisory Council to complete a self-assessment on state level systems and supports for infants and toddlers. The assessment results will be used to select state level priorities as they relate to infants and toddlers.

Most recently, West Virginia has been selected as one of only two states by the Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention or TACSEI on implementing a systemic approach for supporting positive social emotional development and language and literacy of infants and toddlers. This work will occur over the next two years and initially involve "demonstration sites" that are both geographically and programmatically diverse. The West Virginia Department of Education, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, West Virginia Birth to Three, West Virginia Partners for Community Outreach, and the Head Start State Collaboration Office collaboratively support this effort. This project will support training, mentoring, and technical assistance for programs implementing the pyramid model, as well as, the creation of master cadre trainers available to sustain and expand these efforts beyond the initial two years across our state.

I hope this brief article has highlighted some of the very important collaborative work occurring to support infants, toddlers and their families in our state. If you are interested in learning more about any of these collaborative efforts please contact me at [Traci.L.Dalton@wv.gov](mailto:Traci.L.Dalton@wv.gov) or phone me at 304-558-4638.

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**Become a  
 Member of the  
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 Association**

For more information contact Becky Gooch-Erbacher, Executive Director at (304) 233-4450.

## CASE WV Early Head Start Promoting Good Oral Health

By Melissa Shinault

In WV the percentage of low birth rate babies increased from 8.4% in 2007 up in 2010 to 9.6% and these statistics reflect the pregnant mothers going without dental care. For many women when it comes to paying utility bills over dental bills the utility bills win. In an effort to promote good oral health and all prenatal needs, CASE WV Early Head Start was able to collaborate with two local dentists that have volunteered to offer their time, expertise, and services to help meet the needs of two enrolled pregnant women in the Early Head Start Home-based Program.

Dr. Tom Honaker, of Bluefield Dental Care, and Sean Lawson, of Lawson Family Dentistry have volunteered their expertise, time, and services to assist with one pregnant mother each in promoting good oral health. These services will not only include screening the mothers but providing any comprehensive dental services that be may needed. Trella Coppola, EHS Home-based Supervisor sent out letters to various local dental offices explaining the importance of dental care during pregnancy. Within the letter sent to the dentist Ms Coppola explained that due to Medicaid only paying for emergency extractions and not paying for screenings or any other dental procedures that expectant mothers go without any dental care thus causing potential harm to their unborn child. Ms Coppola asked for the local dentist to volunteer any time or services they could to assist in helping any expectant mother that may be at risk for poor dental hygiene. Although the services provided are only for two pregnant mothers hopefully in the future more dentists will come forth and provide services. CASE WV believes this, along with other services provided through the EHS program the number of low birth rates will decrease.



**ChildPlus.net – The Nation's Premier Head Start Software from the Head Start Experts**

By Kelly Smith, Account Executive

ChildPlus.net is the complete, all-in-one Head Start and Early Head Start program management software. Exclusively designed to improve agency performance, comprehensive features and in-depth reporting provide helpful program insight in an easy to learn and easy to use web based system. Nationwide ChildPlus.net is the most widely used software, and in West Virginia, ChildPlus.net tracks over one-third of all children. With over 25 years of dedicated experience, ChildPlus has helped countless agencies meet OHS's evolving requirements making it the preferred Head Start management software.

With ChildPlus.net you'll stay compliant throughout the year so there's no stress or panic preparing for OHS Monitorings or your PIR. Quickly gauge key performance indicators like health, enrollment and ADA to stay informed of the most critical agency statistics, automate internal monitorings and promptly resolve issues using corrective action plans. ChildPlus.net also comes with over 100 built-in reports and the ability to create custom reports that are all easy to run, read and understand. From calculating the PIR and meeting Performance Standards to entering applications and tracking attendance to managing and reporting data, ChildPlus.net does it all!

The software's secure shared database reduces errors and paperwork, giving staff more time to proactively manage tasks and save time entering data. With a few keystrokes you can input enrollment applications without stopping and starting, enter records for multiples families or groups without going into every participant's record and preset the software to automatically insert regularly entered data to avoid repetitive entry.

But ChildPlus.net doesn't stop there! Look for future articles in the coming months to learn more about ChildPlus.net and the software's latest features. We're also attending the June meeting where we'll conduct a day long training you won't want to miss! And of course, you can always reach us at 800.888.6674 or sales@childplus.com should you have additional questions or want to schedule a FREE 1 hour personal demonstration for your agency. We look forward to working with you in 2011!

## West Virginia New State Based Training and Technical Assistance Network

By Kathleen Pathan

The new State Based TTA network kicked off on September 8, 2010. It has been an exciting couple of months of program start up. Region III TTA staff are now in place, conducting site visits with grantees, attending national, state and local meetings and working to improve Head Start program quality, performance, management and delivery systems and resources in partnership with the Regional Office, the State Collaboration Office, the Head Start Association and Head Start programs.

The new State T/TA Centers include two categories of specialists: **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Specialists and Grantee Specialists**. These two categories of T/TA providers work together seamlessly to support Head Start programs.

### West Virginia Early Childhood Education Specialists:

- **Kristi Hixenbaugh, ECE Specialist/Center Manager**
- **Susan Whitmore, Infant Toddler Specialist**

Kristi and Susan, as **ECE Specialists** support local Early Head Start and Head Start programs in their work to develop quality environments for infants, toddlers, and their families and improve school readiness outcomes for Head Start children. Kristi and Susan have been working closely with grantees to collect grantee profile data to better identify resources and areas for T/TA support, attended the national Birth To Three Institute, WVHSA meetings, Quality Initiative meetings and provided individual support and TTA to multiple grantees.

### Region III Grantee Specialists:

**Colette Sandzimier, Grantee Specialist (WV primary contact)**  
**Gail Govoni, Grantee Specialist**  
**Laura Hunt Trull, Grantee Specialist**  
**Jeff Koppel, Grantee Specialist**  
**Keno Simmons, Grantee Specialist**

These are the Region III **Grantee Specialists who are deployed throughout the Region** to partner with grantees in addressing needs identified through monitoring, PIR results, risk management meetings, or other data reviewed by OHS. The GS team will begin working with new Head Start directors soon. Colette Sandzimier has been working with Head Start programs in West Virginia and is the WV GS contact for state level collaboration meetings.

In addition, the new system includes one T/TA Coordinator, **Kathleen Pathan**, who collaborates with the Regional Office to coordinate the network of the various ECE Centers and Grantee Specialists within Region III and also provide additional Grantee Specialist support.

The Office of Head Start hosted the national T/TA kick off meeting in Washington DC in November, introducing the National Resources Centers, the Centers of Excellence and Mentor Coaches as well as providing technical direction and guidance for T/TA. The ACF Regional office hosted the first T/TA Quarterly meeting in Philadelphia in December, bringing together all the T/TA staff and management, Program Specialists, Fiscal Specialists, State Collaboration Directors, and State Head Start Association Directors. It was an ideal opportunity to get it "right from the start" by planning together as a regional team as well as individual state teams. We look forward to continued partnership in support of our Head Start children and families in 2011.

**Your West Virginia Head Start Association  
2010-11 Board of Directors**

**President:** Susan Stafford

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Parents: Cindy Berry, Jackie Cain, Diane Grooms, Donnie Lambert, Misty Lomas, Nicole Yoho

Friends: Edith Redd, Tim Salmons, Terri Wontrobski

***UP & COMING***

**2011 WVHS Association Meeting Dates**

1/12 & 13 /11 Morgantown, WV

3/16 & 3/17/11 Morgantown, WV

6/08 & 6/09/11 TBA

**2011 WVHSA Board of Directors Meeting Dates**

2/10/11 Conference call

4/04/11 Conference call

5/12/11 Conference call

8/11/11 Conference call

9/08/11 Charleston, WV

10/13/11 TBA

***MISSION  
STATEMENT***

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***The West Virginia Head Start  
Association's Mission Statement for  
2002-2009***

Speaking with one voice for West Virginia's young children and families by:

- involving parents as decision makers,
- advocating for high quality services,
- strengthening partnerships on the local and state level,
- providing statewide training for early childhood programs, and
- circulating key information to local Head Start programs.