

ITC@NIEER

Policy Research to Improve Infant and Toddler Education and Care

Overview

Mission. ITC@NIEER is a policy research center to advance high-quality early education and care for infants and toddlers that supports optimal early development that emphasizes equity for America's most disadvantaged children and families.

Partnering with research, policy, and practice stakeholders, ITC@NIEER will conduct and disseminate timely and relevant analysis and research to inform responses to critical policy questions in New Jersey and nationally.

Focus and Scope. Our focus, initially on New Jersey, will expand as we build capacity.

Why ITC@NIEER? Several factors have converged that lead us to focus on research-informed infant and toddler early education and care policy in New Jersey:

- Growing knowledge of learning and development in first three years
- Inadequate infant and toddler education and care policies
- New Jersey's efforts to improve infant and toddler education and care
- Adding the voice of a research-focused institution would strengthen these efforts.

Activities. ITC@NIEER's work involves three interrelated efforts:

1. Conducting policy analysis and research
2. Developing partnerships and collaborations
3. Communicating and translating research to inform policymaking

ITC@NIEER Year One Work Plan. Our work will include policy briefs and fact sheets, surveys and focus groups to learn from parents and providers, cost analyses, comparisons of New Jersey to other states and the nation, and discussions with policy makers. Our Year One Work Plan addresses seven key questions:

1. Summarize research and its implications for infant and toddler education and care policy.
2. Identify New Jersey's data needs.
3. Analyze COVID-19's impact on education and care in New Jersey.
4. Describe how parents of infants and toddlers make care decisions.
5. Examine characteristics and concerns of center directors, teachers, and staff.
6. Examine characteristics of family child care.