



## **BABIES Learning Collaborative:**

### **Preparation of Interdisciplinary Professionals to address Developmental Capacities and Needs of Newborns, Young Infants and their Families**

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Fragile newborns and infants who are born with a likelihood of lingering developmental concerns often require specialized assessment and intervention services based on their unique developmental needs. Often these infants are identified as categorically eligible for EI services, based on their medical condition at birth. Providing relationship based evaluations, preventive interventions, and relationship based family support services for fragile newborns and their families is extremely complex and requires a great deal of area area specialization. Few early intervention, health care or mental health providers have the expertise, education or experience to work with this age group and the complexities associated with their medical fragility of the infants and the emotional needs of the family. A recent survey of educational needs of Colorado and Arizona professionals working in EI and public health nursing revealed that many felt only “slightly” prepared to evaluate newborns and young infants and that most providers felt they could benefit from more training on assessment and intervention with this population.

To promote best practice for this ever increasing population, early intervention providers from multiple disciplines benefit from specialized and evidence-based training to increase their capacities to evaluate, intervene and support families and their fragile newborns infants and their families in order to enhance developmental and relational outcomes. All training efforts are designed to be consistent with Competency Guidelines<sup>®</sup> and the Infant Mental Health Endorsement<sup>®</sup> criteria of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health and the League of States.

The BABIES Model provides the framework for learning collaboratives for interdisciplinary professionals who provide early intervention, health care and mental health service providers. The learning collaborative approach provides a broad-based educational program that yields expertise in support of newborns and young infants with health care needs, developmental disabilities, and with those babies who have been deemed categorically eligible for Part C services

and their families. Using the BABIES and PreSTEPS model, the collaborative will focus on evidence based relationship building approaches to assessment and intervention for an infant's **Body Function, Arousal and Sleep, Body Movement, Interaction with Others, Eating, and Self Soothing**. Support for families will focus on best practices of Predictability and continuity, **Sleep and arousal organization; Timing and pacing, Environmental modifications, Positioning and handling and Self soothing supports**.

The *learning collaborative* approach provides technical assistance and reflective consultation for an interdisciplinary cadre of early intervention professionals who meet on a monthly basis for one year to further develop their evaluation, intervention and reflective practice skill. The *learning collaborative* includes in-depth application of the Newborn and Young Infant IFSP, BABIES, PREsteps, and systems-building information through manualized approaches, case studies and guided application to the professional's own case load. Upon completion of the program, these WONDERbabiesproviders will be prepared to provide a spectrum of services including identifying, assessing, coordinating services and providing relationship based developmental supports for newborns, infants and young children with special health care and developmental needs and their families.

Evaluation will be woven throughout the project period and will include the measurement of knowledge and practice as well as infant and family outcome change. Using previously developed instruments, outcomes will include both on-line and paper and pencil evaluation materials.

This unique national educational program includes current knowledge and application to clinical practice emphasizing concepts from special education, health care and infant mental health (social and emotional development). The goal is two-fold: to provide a sound foundation for work with this special newborn and young infant population and their families and create a highly-trained workforce.

The **individual learning collaborative trainees** will need to:

- Commit to regular virtual meetings of the trainees (at least 10 of the 12 proposed monthly sessions) to discuss family and infant issues.
- Attend their own team meetings as scheduled.
- Commit to learning and reflecting about their own learning styles, abilities and time commitment
- Commit to reflecting about their own knowledge base and clinical practice.
- Commit to exploring, reflecting, and sharing infant and family observations, assessments and intervention experiences
- Agree to submit observations, write-ups, and other clinical practice documents (e.g., IFSPs) for review by trainers.

- Agree to video record assessments and interventions with a specified number of infants and their families and bring videos for review at trainings. Trainees will need access to video recording equipment.
- Be willing to use the BABIES model for their future practice.

The ***learning collaborative*** of early intervention, health care and mental health providers meets for two initial training days (First Steps for BABIES) and then on a monthly basis for 3-4 hours at a time. The following approaches are recommended. We prefer that already formed interprofessional teams provide two to three of their providers to join the effort, so that they have depth of resources within their already developed team. The teams need to have access to newborns, very young infants and their families and have a history of providing services to this age group.

- The monthly meetings provide guidance in implementation of the PREsteps model, reflective practice, integration of the FIRST observations and BABIES model approaches to clinical cases.
- Exploration of systems change
- Additional days for trainees only after participating in the LC include
  - Training in the Babies Adaptive Behavior Inventory (BABI)
  - Mentoring for ongoing support and implementation in their practice

After completing the year-long training, trainees will receive a certificate of completion for their participation in the learning collaborative and be eligible to learn and use the BABIES Adaptive Behavior Inventory (BABI).

To register please go to [WONDERbabies.org](http://WONDERbabies.org) and fill out the registration form on the Training tab.