



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services



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**Connecticut Birth to Three System Update**  
**Public Act No. 13-178 - An Act Concerning the Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health of Youths**

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2013*) The birth-to-three program, established under section 17a-248b of the general statutes and administered by the Department of Developmental Services, shall provide mental health services to any child eligible for early intervention services pursuant to Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1431 et seq., as amended from time to time. Any child not eligible for services under said act shall be referred by the program to a licensed mental health care provider for evaluation and treatment, as needed.

July 24, 2014

Lynn Skene Johnson, Acting Director of the Birth to Three System, reports:

1. In June 2014, Birth to Three trained an additional 45 providers in the use of The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment for Infants and Toddlers (DECA-I/T), a tool for assessing protective factors and screening for potential risks in the social and emotional development of very young children. There are now over 90 Birth to Three staff who have been trained to use this tool for the earliest possible detection of mental health or social emotional disorders in children under three, who have been referred.
2. Birth to Three continues to identify and support staff who are interested in becoming endorsed in Infant Mental Health, by co-funding two new reflective supervision groups that began this month. These groups are an important first step in the process of staff becoming endorsed. Endorsement assures that persons providing culturally sensitive, relationship-focused services, which promote infant mental health, meet standards that are approved by a highly recognized professional organization in the field of infant mental health. Birth to Three anticipates adding two more reflective supervision groups this fall.
3. Birth to Three continues to participate in the statewide initiative focused on the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children, a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices.
4. In September 2014, Birth to Three will offer a two-day "train the trainer" workshop for all Birth to Three mental health clinicians titled: Working with Families in Challenging Circumstances. Substance abuse, mental illness, domestic abuse, parents with intellectual disabilities, severe socio-economic stressors and medically-fragile and terminally-ill children are some of the toughest situations Birth to Three providers face with families. This workshop will explore the challenges Birth to Three staff may encounter in these situations and help participants discover effective and creative problem solving that leads to positive outcomes for families and staff alike. Participants will be given evidence-based clinical guidelines and strategies as well as basic nuts-and-bolts tactics to help providers forge relationships with

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families during difficult times. The mental health clinicians trained at this workshop will then be able to present this information to the staff of their own programs.

5. After the September workshop a group of Birth to Three mental health clinicians will be recruited to participate in a learning community supported by funding from a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). This group will address the social emotional concerns and mental health needs of children living in challenging circumstances and will continue to explore effective strategies and family focused interventions for promoting social emotional development in infants and toddlers with disabilities.
6. Birth to Three continues to track referrals made by staff of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Data reports are sent to DCF per the MOA between DCF and DDS's Birth to Three System.