

National Infant and Toddler Care Program Comes to NY

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By [Mary Stalker](#)

The Early Care & Learning Council has brought the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) to New York State, creating a network of professionals dedicated to improving the quality of care for New York's youngest citizens.

The Early Care & Learning Council, a state-wide nonprofit organization, has been working to make quality, affordable child care available to New York's families since 1975. The Early Care & Learning Council, in partnership with its membership, New York's 39 child care resource and referral agencies, seeks to continuously improve a system of quality early childhood care and education that addresses the childcare needs of all segments of the community.

The Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) was developed collaboratively by the California Department of Education and WestEd, a California based nonprofit.

It is a comprehensive training system that certifies trainers to teach others about responsive relationship based caregiving for infants and toddlers. PITC worked with the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families to develop the Early Head Start program, and has presented training institutes and technical assistance for more than 500 programs serving families with children from birth to three years old.

The PITC training institute is a two week training program for trainers to deepen their knowledge of infant/toddler care and learn new strategies to meet the needs of adult learners. Participants spend their time attending workshops facilitated by the early care and learning field's most renowned and respected leaders. They also spend time with one another, building partnerships and exploring ways to improve the quality of care in New York State. The first of the two week-long programs took place in August of 2010, the second week is coming up at the end of this month.

Evelyn Efinger, MEd, infant toddler coordinator at the Early Care & Learning Council, is thrilled to have PITC in New York, "We have been working for years to bring PITC here and in 2010 we were finally able to make that happen with funding through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act via the NYS Office of Children and Family Services."

Dr. Peter Mangione, Co-Director of WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies, facilitated much of the PITC Institute in August. He says the institute "brought together a remarkable group of dedicated professionals who share our vision of high-quality infant/toddler care." Mangione continues, "I experienced so many lively, thoughtful discussions during workshops, at mealtimes, and between sessions. These conversations confirmed the priority we place on creating respectful, emotionally secure relationships with babies and toddlers. As we continue our collaboration, I look forward to hearing about how the institute participants are using the PITC resources and strategies in their efforts to build high-quality services for all infants, toddlers, and their families"

The participants come from across the state. When they complete the certification process they will be part of network of professionals supported by the Early Care & Learning Council working to improve the quality of care for New York's infants and toddlers. Efinger says, "This is such a great opportunity that will have a perpetual effect across the state. Our 120 PITC certified trainers will be able to help child care programs and families throughout New York increase the quality of care and enhance the relationships with babies and toddlers. I am so excited to be a part of this. We've known for so long how important early social emotional health is to long term development and this investment is aimed at the

foundations of early learning. I believe we are on the verge of a paradigm shift that will make a tremendous difference in New York's future."

The Early Care & Learning Council has four professionals currently working through the certification. Over the next eight weeks they will be sharing information about infant/toddler care with our readers.

Articles will cover discipline, guidance, emotional needs, development, making the most of everyday routines, and what to look for when searching for quality care for your own infant or toddler.

Mary Stalker is management training specialist at the Early Care & Learning Council. Currently working on her PITC certification, she conducts workshops for early care management professionals throughout the state and has over 15 years experience in the early care and learning field.