

*Infant - Toddler Course Content and the Teacher Education Pipeline in New York State
Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Programs*

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Infant - Toddler Course Content and the Teacher Education Pipeline in New York State Undergraduate ECE Programs

I. Introduction

With almost 50% of all infants and toddlers being cared for outside of the home (Mamedova, Redford, & Zuckerberg, 2013) and recognition of the critical importance of the first 3 years of life, it is important to have a knowledgeable, skilled, well-prepared early childhood workforce with a specialization to work with infants-toddlers and their families. While New York State Education Department teacher certification for early childhood education certifies individuals to teach children from birth through grade two; recent research posit that early childhood degree programs lack a sufficient emphasis on course content related to infant development and learning, relationship-based practices, and field experiences in infant-toddler classrooms (Beck, 2013; Chu, 2016; Branscombe & Ethridge, 2010; Rockel, 2014; White et al., 2016). Because working with infants and toddlers requires a unique skill set than working with other ages, including working with children over three (McMullen & Apple, 2012), developing courses and a teacher education pathway in early childhood undergraduate programs that focus on content specific to infants and toddlers is imperative.

Previous research has highlighted the need to improve the preparation of infant-toddler professionals in teacher education programs (Beck, 2013; Recchia, Lee & Shin, 2015). There are many factors that impact the quality of undergraduate teacher preparation curriculum for infant-toddler professionals. One factor is the lack of expertise of higher education faculty creates a barrier (Chu, 2016; Recchia et al, 2015; White et al. 2016). Additionally, the course work and knowledge required to become an infant-toddler educator is specialized. A strong focus on

developing relationships and individualized routines as curriculum, which differs from course work for older early childhood education (ECE) classrooms, is necessary. Finally, even though most early childhood programs include practicum experiences, the inclusion of opportunities for students to experience a practicum in infant-toddler classrooms is limited or not available. This is troublesome because as Beck (2013) argues, specialized field experiences support students in making the shift from theory to practice. Early childhood programs must create a space and focus to prepare infant-toddler specialists to meet the growing needs of families. Without a strong start during the first three years, even the best preschool and prekindergarten programs cannot mitigate birth -to-three programs that are not based in best practice

The lack of preparation for infant-toddler professionals raises great concern particularly in light of recent initiatives to focus on the development and well-being of infants, toddlers and families in New York. In 2019 the New York State Department of Health Office of Health Insurance Programs released their final report about the First 1,000's Days on Medicaid. The recommendations include focusing on health measures around development and social-emotional outcomes as well as opportunities for meaningful information exchange between all agencies that work with infants, toddlers and families, including early childhood programs (New York State Department of Health Office of Health Insurance Programs, 2019). In New York City, the Comptroller's Office proposed the plan "NYC Under 3" which would be the single largest local financial investment in the country to increase access to high quality early childhood care for families with low and moderate incomes who have children under 3 years of age. The goal of this initiative is to relieve the burden around affording high quality early childhood care and advocate for a deeper investment in the earliest years (New York City Comptroller, Scott Stringer, 2019). The NYC Department of Education is in the process of implementing the "3K for

All” initiative. The goal of this initiative is to provide free educational programming for all three-year-old children in New York City, with enrollment opportunities expanding annually. As these initiatives continues to expand, the need for competent, qualified staff will increase.

In response to the recommendations from Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Eight: A Unifying Foundation (2015) which suggests that higher education enhance their focus on ECE teacher programming, the previous research findings (Beck, 2013; Chu, 2016; Recchia, Lee & Shin, 2015; Rockel, 2016; White et al. 2016), and the current initiatives in New York, our research examined how New York State undergraduate early childhood programs prepare the infant-toddler workforce. Specifically we investigated the course content and fieldwork experiences offered in New York undergraduate early childhood teacher education programs preparing preservice professionals to work with infants-toddlers and families, identified how best practices for working with infants, toddlers and families was included in course content and fieldwork opportunities in New York undergraduate early childhood programs, and explore the effectiveness of the infant-toddler career pathways for educators.

The results of our research provide evidence for opportunities for growth in New York undergraduate early childhood programs committed to producing an early childhood professional workforce prepared to effectively work with children ages birth through second grade.

The anticipated outcomes of this research serve to:

- 1) Provide stakeholders with information and insights regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth that exist in New York ECE programs, relating to preparing professionals to work with infants-toddlers.

2) Assess the inclusivity of infant-toddler content and fieldwork in undergraduate ECE programs in New York

2) Identify educational and professional development opportunities offered in New York for educators and leaders interested in working with infants, toddlers, and families.

It is imperative that teacher candidates from ECE programs are adequately prepared with clear career pathways and a breadth of professional development opportunities to work with the infants and toddlers of New York, our most vulnerable citizens and the initiatives developing to meet their needs.

Stakeholders interested in this data include policy makers, teacher educators, those who provide professional development for teachers, researchers, employers, agencies reviewing or issuing teacher certification credentials, and others invested in the depth of infant-toddler course content, fieldwork work, and teacher education pipeline for those intent on working with infants-toddlers and families.

II. Research Questions and Methods

The aim of our study was to explore how New York ECE programs prepare undergraduate educators to work with infants, toddlers and families.

The research questions framing our work were:

1. How are the course content and fieldwork experiences in New York undergraduate early childhood teacher education programs preparing preservice professionals to work with infants-toddlers and families?

2. How are the best practices identified for working with infants, toddlers and families included in course content and fieldwork opportunities in New York undergraduate early childhood programs?
3. What is the effectiveness of the career pathway infant-toddler for educators?

To answer these questions, we engaged in an exploratory case study that took place in three phases. Phase 1 included an in-depth document analysis of current documentation of New York undergraduate early childhood programs. Phase 2 included an analysis of faculty response to the Early Childhood Higher Education Program Self-Assessment for Infant-Toddler Content survey. Phase 3 included focus groups with current and former students in NYC ECE programs.

Participants

The population for this study was the faculty from New York undergraduate ECE programs, faculty, and the students from New York City early childhood preservice programs, those currently enrolled and alumni. The sample was a convenience sample.

Phase one

This case study used various data sources, replicating the work of Chu (2016) and Rockel (2014). Both Chu (2016) and Rockel (2014) examined the depth and breadth of course content relating to infant-toddlers within ECE programs in Washington State (Chu, 2016) and New Zealand (Rockel, 2014). The research began with an in-depth examination of current documentation of the New York State ECE programs, articulations and transfer credits; the purpose was to identify strengths, gaps, and pathways to fortify infant-toddler preparation. Course titles and course descriptions, syllabi and any additional relevant ECE materials available on college websites were collected from New York two-year college programs that were approved by the New York State Department of Education to offer early

childhood education programs and four-year colleges which could lead to initial New York State teacher certification upon completion of a Bachelor's degree and other requirements.

Researchers engaged in a document analysis of the information following Creswell's (2008) protocol. Once all data was gathered and the document analysis completed, faculty of all the ECE programs were contacted to confirm or correct the data. Data was organized and coded using Creswell (2003, 2008) six stages of data analysis; categories and themes emerged as the content of the courses and programs were explored in depth. During the coding process, a code book was created and interrater reliability was established. The researchers used member checking with faculty and focus group participants.

A crosswalk (Appendix A) of *Essential Elements for Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals* was created similar to what was developed (Chu, 2016). The crosswalk identifies eight elements that are the foundation to preparing teachers to work with infants and toddlers. The elements were defined in terms of the minimum requirements or skills ECE program graduates should have to effectively work with infants, toddlers, and families. The elements of the crosswalk were compared to competencies established by the following professional organizations in the field: CUPID (Collaborative for the Understanding of the Pedagogy of Infant/Toddler Development), NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), NYAIMH (New York Association for Infant Mental Health, and ZERO TO THREE. Comparing the crosswalk to established professional competencies confirms that the elements identified in the crosswalk are essential for professionals intending to work with infants, toddlers, and families.

Phase Two

During the second phase of data collection, faculty who teach in New York undergraduate ECE programs were contacted to complete Early Childhood Higher Education Program Self-Assessment for Infant-Toddler Content (modified from Chu, 2016) survey (Appendix B). The self-assessment asks faculty to rate two components of a course they taught:

- 1) The frequency or depth that eight infant-toddler teacher essential elements occur within the course content,
- 2) The level of field application within the course
- 3) Additional information they felt was important.

Survey data was analyzed, percentages and response frequencies were calculated.

Phase Three

The third phase of data collection involved three focus groups with current and former students in New York City ECE programs (Appendix C). Students were recruited from programs offering an infant/toddler specialization. Separate focus groups were held for the following groups:

- 1) Students who were currently enrolled in or completed a Child Development Associate program,
- 2) Students who completed their Associate degree then transferred to other educational institutions to continue their education,
- 3) Associate degree program graduates who are working with infants and toddlers. Former students were recruited from alumni databases.

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed for accuracy. Data was organized and coded using Creswell (2003, 2008) six stages of data analysis. Codes were identified and combined into categories enabling themes to emerge, enabling researcher to delve deeper and deeper into the data.

This project used several methods to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. During the coding process, a code book was created and interrater reliability was established. The researchers used member checking with faculty and focus group participants.

III. Findings

The results from all three phases support the prior research around curriculum in infant-toddler undergraduate early childhood programs. Overall New York early childhood education programs offer very little course content to meet the specific needs and skill set of the infant-toddler workforce. While more dedicated infant-toddler course-work can be found in 2-year college programs, inconsistency exists between programs (Appendix C).

Phase 1 Results (four-year programs)

We reviewed 578 courses from 40 four-year undergraduate programs. The courses reviewed were only the courses that were listed as part of the early childhood program and required for the major. In most of the programs, the progression of ECE courses was mapped out and ended with student teaching. Of the 578 courses that were reviewed 18% (102 course) mentioned covering content that applied to children ages birth-to-36 months. Less than 1% (4 courses) were courses that were dedicated specifically to infants and toddlers. While the majority of the ECE courses required some type of field experience, ranging from a visit or observations to a practicum or student teaching, only 5% (26 courses) of those courses included time in classrooms with children ages birth-to-36 months.

Phase 1 Results (two-year programs)

We reviewed 208 courses from two-year undergraduate programs. The courses reviewed were only those listed as part of the early childhood program and required for the major. In most of

the programs, the progression of ECE courses was mapped out and ended with a practicum class. Of the 208 courses that were reviewed 33% (69 courses) mentioned covering content that applied to children ages birth-to-36 months. We found 12% (44 courses) were courses that were dedicated specifically to infants and toddlers. While the majority of the ECE courses required some type of field experience, ranging from a visit or observations to a practicum or student teaching, only 10% (20 courses) of those courses included time in classrooms with children ages birth-to-36 months.

When comparing the *Essential Elements for Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals* crosswalk to the courses that were evaluated from both the two-year and four-year teacher education programs, four elements were rarely represented in undergraduate ECE course content:

- Creating Environments
- Reflective and Ethical practices
- Family-centered practices
- Relationship-based practices

Phase 2 Results

During phase 2 we contacted faculty who teach in NYS early childhood undergraduate programs to complete the Early Childhood Higher Education Program Self-Assessment for Infant-Toddler Content (modified from Chu, 2016) survey. We emailed 490 surveys and received 72 responses for a 15% response rate

Faculty did report that the elements determined by the *Essential Elements for Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals* crosswalk were

represented in their courses, but none of the elements were a focus of the course. While almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the faculty reported supporting fieldwork experiences with infants and toddlers, over half of the fieldwork was reported as observation (Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage that Essential Element was reported as a focus of the course

Essential Element identified from Crosswalk to prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals	Percentage of faculty that included an element as a primary focus of the early childhood course
Holistic child development	41%
Relationship-based practices	37%
Observe, Assess and Communicate	31%
Family-Centered Practices	32%
Creating Environments	39%
Reflective and Ethical Practices	32%
Culturally Sustaining Practice	22%
Fieldwork Experiences	72% (with 53% of the fieldwork noted as observation)

In addition, we asked faculty to share any additional information that they felt was important.

We received 41 responses, encompassing three themes (Table 2).

Table 2. Themes Identified from Faculty

Themes Identified from the Early Childhood Higher Education Program Self-Assessment for Infant-Toddler Content survey, Q13, <i>Additional information from faculty.</i>	Exemplar from Q13, <i>Additional information from faculty.</i>
Infant-toddler course content embedded in other classes	<i>“This is part of the intro course. It is studied as part of the larger subject of child development”.</i>
Additional faculty are needed to teach Infant-Toddler course work	<i>“This could be possible, if we had faculty to teach the course.”</i>
More Infant -Toddler course work is needed	<i>“We do not have a course solely focused on infant/toddler development, or pedagogy. That’s a problem”.</i>

Phase 3 Results

The third phase of data collection involved three focus groups with current and former students in New York City ECE programs. Three groups of students were interviewed: students who completed a Child Development Associate (CDA) and were enrolled in an associate degree program, students who completed their associate degree with a specialization in working with infants and toddlers and transferred to a four-year program, and students who graduated from an associate program with a specialization in working with infants and toddlers and are working in the field with infants and toddlers. Students who had completed their associate degree program and transferred to a four-year program reported challenges with ECE courses transferring, challenges with fieldwork hours transferring, and general systematic challenges. Additionally, transfer students noted that there were limited opportunities to continue with a focus on working with infants and toddlers. Students who graduated from an associate program and are working in the field noted limited professional learning opportunities dedicated to working with infants and toddlers and identified areas where they believed they were unprepared for their work.

IV. Implications and Recommendation

Taking the results into consideration, we found three areas of opportunity in New York early childhood education undergraduate programs and two areas of opportunity in the New York early childhood teacher education career pathways. The recommendations for New York ECE undergraduate programs include: 1) Increase learning experience specific to working with infants and toddlers, 2) Expand upon core concepts in early childhood undergraduate programs to prepare infant-toddler teachers, 3) Build faculty capacity. The recommendations for the New York State career pathways include: 1) Transfer, 2) Credentialing.

New York State Early Childhood Education Undergraduate Program Recommendations:

Area 1: Increase Learning Experience Specific to Working with Infants and Toddlers

Candidates for New York State teacher initial certification programs are required to complete 100 hours of practicum experience prior to entering a semester of student teaching. New York State Education Department should require a percentage of the practicum hours to field opportunities in infant-toddler classrooms supervised by faculty with experience working with infants and toddlers. Research demonstrates that through fieldwork experiences, pre-service teachers put the theory, principles, and techniques they learned in coursework into practice, expand their identity as teachers, observe teachers in actual classrooms, and enhance their repertoire of teaching skills (Beck, 2013; Chu, 2016; Lee, Recchia & Shin, 2016; Recchia, Lee & Shin, 2015; White, Peter, Sims, Rockel & Kumeroa, 2016). Coupling this supervised fieldwork experience in an infant-toddler classroom with a dedicated course focused on best practices for working with infants and toddlers (including the elements identified in the *Essential Elements for Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals* crosswalk) would support students to become competent and comfortable developing skills to

work with infants, toddlers and families, thus creating a stronger infant-toddler workforce. New York should require a dedicated course on working with infants and toddlers in the course sequence for birth to grade 2 teacher certification for the following reasons: 1) teachers who effectively work with infants and toddlers can work with older children (Beck, 2013); and, 2) infant-toddler course content that is diffuse, spread across multiple courses is less effective than when delivered in a dedicated course.

Area 2: Expand Upon Core Concepts in Early Childhood Undergraduate Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Teachers

The Crosswalk of Essential Elements for Undergraduate Early Childhood Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals contains eight elements that our research team of infant-toddler experts identified as important concepts to be included in infant-toddler course content. The crosswalk was compared to competencies for the field established by CUPID (Collaborative for the Understanding of the Pedagogy of Infant/Toddler Development), NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), NYAIMH (New York Association for Infant Mental Health, and ZERO TO THREE. The Crosswalk can be used by faculty in early childhood undergraduate programs to evaluate current courses to ensure they contain the elements to adequately prepare teachers to work with infants, toddlers and their families. The crosswalk can also be used as a tool for professional development for those working in the field, by assessing which elements professionals may need to strengthen their skillset.

Area 3: Build Faculty Capacity

In the Early Childhood Higher Education Program Self-Assessment for Infant-Toddler Content (modified by Chu, 2016) survey we asked faculty to share any additional information that they felt was important. One of the recurring themes from faculty was that while they agreed that more of a focus was needed on infant-toddler course content, they did not have faculty on staff with expertise in infant-toddler content. Consequently, Teacher Education programs should focus on recruiting and hiring faculty and practitioners with experience and expertise working with infants-toddlers and families. Additionally, programs can work with community partners to bring in experts from the community for faculty development around infant-toddler curriculum. By partnering with community experts, teacher education programs are developing relationships and understanding community needs (i.e. local Early Head Start programs, early childhood centers, and infant mental health practitioners, Early Intervention providers). Supporting research focused on infant and toddlers will build faculty expertise. Organizations like the New York City Early Childhood Research Network value and fund research focused on infants-toddlers and families as well as the infant-toddler workforce development which increases faculty capacity.

New York State Teacher Education Career Pathway Recommendations:

Area 1: Transfer

Our research found that much of the preparation of the infant-toddler workforce is taking place in two-year programs across New York State. This coincides with current research which identifies two-year colleges as having a critical role in preparing infant-toddler professionals (Longley & Gilken, 2019). Since this preparation supports the development of an infant-toddler

workforce, four-year teacher education programs should seek out and recruit students with an associate degree. The inclusion of transfer students who have completed an associate degree provides opportunities for infant and toddler professionals to earn teacher certification as well as additional skills. Our recommendation for inclusion of transfer students into the four-year program includes creating seamless articulation agreements between two-year and four-year colleges that embrace the infant-toddler course work and field work hours of incoming transfer students. Enabling credits to transfer between two- and four-year programs will ease the financial burden on transfer students who often exhaust their financial aid before completing the four-year program (Kates, 2010). Four-year teacher education programs could begin to think about the associate degree as an incoming body of work; the early childhood courses (including infant-toddler courses and fieldwork hours) transferring from the associates degree program count towards NY state teacher certification, allowing the four-year college to decide which additional courses a transfer student will need to reach the required credits for graduation.

Area 2: Credentialing

Currently lead teachers in infant-toddler classrooms across New York need a high school diploma or its equivalent, although many programs require a CDA or Associate's degree. Providing opportunities for credentials that connect, which can lead toward a degree, supports the development of a strong infant toddler workforce. One possibility for two-year programs is to work closely with organizations that grant the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) so that coursework completed to achieve a CDA is able to articulate into the associate degree program. Additionally, all teacher education programs could work to provide multiple

certified professional learning opportunities for the infant-toddler workforce, which could be linked to QUALITYstarsNY and Aspire.

Conclusion

This study examined how New York undergraduate early childhood education teacher programs prepare teachers to work with infants, toddlers and their families. The exploratory case study used a survey, focus groups, and document analysis to explore course content and field experience with children ages birth-to-36 months and the effectiveness of the career path for those interested in working with infants and toddlers. Findings indicate that of 786 courses examined, 21.8% mentioned children birth to 36 months and 5.9% included field experiences with children under the age of three. Infant-toddler course content and field experiences are woefully underrepresented in ECE undergraduate teacher preparation programs, despite the State Education Department certifying teachers to work with children from birth to grade 2. Students who graduate from two-year college programs with a specialization in working with infants and toddlers and transfer to four-year colleges report systemic barriers, challenges transferring infant-toddler courses and field experiences, and the inability to continue their focus on working with infants and toddlers. As a result of this work, a crosswalk, *The Crosswalk of Essential Elements for Undergraduate Early Childhood Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals* was created, opportunities for growth were identified, and recommendations were presented for New York State undergraduate early childhood education programs and New York early childhood teacher education career pathways.

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Appendix A

Crosswalk

Crosswalk Essential Elements for Undergraduate Early Childhood Education Programs to Prepare Infant-Toddler Professionals
1. Holistic child development: understand all domains of development of young infants (0-9mo), mobile infants (8-18mo), & toddlers (16-36mo) within the context of relationships & families, & how development & domains of development are interconnected.
2. Relationship-based practices: Understand how to & build & maintain an individual, close bond using respectful, responsive, reciprocal interactions that supports development with each infant-toddler & family
3. Observe, Assess and Communicate: Ability to implement, use tools &/or refer an infant-toddler; to observe, record, screen, assess & communicate development, learning, health, interest, & needs clearly to multiple audiences
4. Family-Centered Practices: Understand how infant-toddlers develop in the context of family & culture; how to develop relationships with families built on trust; multiple methods to openly communicate with families, engage families in programming, form partnerships with families, & create learning experiences that incorporate culture & home experiences
5. Environments: Understand & know how to create & evaluate infant-toddler environments to ensure physical & emotional safety, optimal growth, learning, & development in various settings in which infant-toddler programming can occur: family homes, centers & home visiting contexts
6. Reflective and Ethical Practices: Understand reflective practice & reflective supervision practices in infant-toddler settings; ongoing awareness of ways to be responsive to infants-toddlers & families' needs through understanding of own role & ethical responsibilities; self-awareness into how behavior impacts interactions with others
7. Culturally Sustaining Practice: Ability to use, include, & identify culturally & linguistically sustaining practice with families & children in all infant-toddler settings; integrate & support maintenance of families' heritage culture in programming
8. Fieldwork Experiences: Opportunities to observe, intern, & student teach in classrooms providing high-quality programming to children 0-36 months

Appendix B

Early Childhood Higher Education Program Self-Assessment for Infant-Toddler Content
(modified from Chu, 2016)

Please identify the degree to which each of the following 8 infant-toddler competencies are represented in the course that you teach:

- 1) **Understanding Holistic Child Development:** Understand development during the prenatal period (pregnancy). Understands all domains of development of young infants (0-9 months), mobile infants (8-18 months), & toddlers (16-36 months) within the context of relationships & families.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course

- 1) **Using Relationship-Based Practices:** Understanding how to build and maintain an individual, primary care and education relationship with each infant, toddler and family.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course

- 2) **Observe, Assess and Communicate:** Ability to implement, to use tools, and/or refer an infant-toddler to observe, record, screen, assess, & communicate development, learning, health, interest, & needs to multiple audiences.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course

- 3) **Use Family-Centered Practices:** Understand how infant-toddlers develop in the context of family & culture. Create learning experiences that incorporate culture and home experiences
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course

- 4) **Create Environments:** Know how to evaluate/create infant-toddler environments to ensure physical/emotional safety & optimal growth, learning, and development.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course

- 5) **Have Responsive Interactions:** Facilitate safe secure infant-toddler environments to ensure physical/emotional safety and optimal growth, learning, and development.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course

- 6) **Understand Program Structures:** Understanding of multiple infant-toddler program types in family homes, centers & home visiting contexts.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course

- 7) **Use Reflective and Ethical Practices:** Understanding of reflective practice/reflective supervision practices in infant-toddler settings. Ongoing awareness of ways to be responsive to infant-toddler and family needs through understanding of own role and ethical responsibilities.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course
- 8) **Use Culturally Sustaining Practice:** Able to include and identify culturally and linguistically sustaining practice with families and children in all infant-toddler settings.
A) rarely represented in the course B) represented up to a quarter of the course C) represented up to half of the course D) a primary focus of the course
- 9) Does this course have a fieldwork component: Yes / No
- 10) If yes, what level of fieldwork is required in the course:
A) Observation B) Supervised Practicum C) Student Teaching
- 11) Are students placed in infant toddler classrooms for this experience?
- 12) Please Share any additional comments about infant-toddler course content in your courses and degrees.

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

CDA Group (assumes currently working & enrolled in CDA program)

- Describe your current job (role, age group, type of agency)
- Besides your CDA, what opportunities for professional development have you had as an infant/ toddler professional (in-service, workshops, conferences, etc.)?
- What are your plans after you finish your CDA? (change jobs, continue education, etc.).
- How is your CDA program supporting your professional development?
- What could your CDA program do differently to support you as an infant/ toddler professional?
- As an infant/ toddler professional, what areas of practice do you feel most confident in? (If needed give a few examples, working with families, curriculum development, cultural sustaining practice, etc. Maybe we should have a list to share)
- What areas of practice do you feel least confident in? What areas would you seek additional professional support for?

Current AS I/T Student Questions (assumes currently enrolled in AS program, not working)

- What are your plans after you finish your degree?
- How is your program supporting you to achieve those goals?
- What could your program do differently to support you to achieve those goals?
- As a future infant/ toddler professional, what areas of practice do you feel most confident in? (If needed give a few examples, working with families, curriculum development, cultural sustaining practice, etc. Maybe we should have a list to share)
- What areas of practice do you feel least confident in? What areas would you seek additional professional support for?

Graduates – Working (assumes completed degree, working with infants/ toddlers)

- Describe your current job (role, age group, type of agency).
- How did your teacher training program prepare you to work with infants, toddlers & their families?
- What could your program have done differently to prepare you to work with infants, toddlers & their families?
- What opportunities for professional development have you had since graduating (in-service, workshops, conferences, etc.)?
- As an infant/ toddler professional, what areas of your practice could you benefit from more professional support and development? (If needed give a few examples, working with families, curriculum development, cultural sustaining practice, etc. Maybe we should have a list to share)
- Thinking about working with infants and toddlers, what areas of practice do you feel most confident in?
- What areas do you feel least confident in? (If needed give a few examples, working with families, curriculum development, cultural sustaining practice, etc.)

Graduates – 4-year Schools (assumes currently enrolled, not working with infants/ toddlers)

- What is your major? Why?
- How did your Associates' degree program prepare you for your 4-year college?
- What are your plans after you finish your degree?
- How is your program supporting you to achieve those goals?
- What could your program do differently to support you to achieve those goals?
- How is your 4-year college preparing you to work with infants, toddlers, and their families?*

- What could your 4-year college do differently to prepare you to work with infants, toddlers, and their families?*
- How is the preparation for working with infants, toddlers, and their families you received in your 2-year college different from the preparation you are receiving in your 4-year college?*
- As a future infant/ toddler professional, what areas of practice do you feel most confident in? (If needed give a few examples, working with families, curriculum development, cultural sustaining practice, etc. Maybe we should have a list to share)*
- What areas of practice do you feel least confident in? What areas would you seek additional professional support for?*

*This assumes the participants still want to work with infants, toddlers & families. These questions may not be relevant.

Reflective Prompts

- Can you tell me more?
- What do you think about what the others have/ a person has said? (for someone who has been quiet)
- What do you mean by that?
- Can you elaborate?
- Can you expand upon that?
- I would like to hear more about...
- Asking opinion of "quiet member of group" "What are your thoughts? What is your opinion?"
- Why?
- Can you connect to what X said? (for someone who has been quiet)
- Can you give me an example?

Appendix D

Phase 1: 4-year programs	Phase 1: 2-year programs	Phase 2: Faculty Survey	Phase 3: Focus Groups
<p>40 four-year programs; 578 courses reviewed</p> <p>102 courses (18%) mention 0-36 months</p> <p>4 courses (0.01%) dedicated to infants-toddlers</p> <p>26 courses (1%) included time in classrooms with children 0-36 months</p>	<p>27 two-year programs; 208 courses reviewed</p> <p>69 courses (33%) mention 0-36 months</p> <p>24 courses (12%) dedicated to infants-toddlers</p> <p>20 courses (10%) include time in classrooms with children 0-36 months</p>	<p>490 surveys mailed to NYS early childhood faculty</p> <p>72 responses (15%) response rate</p> <p>Fieldwork questions: 69% completion rate 70% of respondents (35) provide infant-toddler fieldwork placements</p> <p>Faculty report infant-toddler course content embedded/included/infused into ECE courses</p>	<p><u>Transfer students:</u> Limited opportunity to continue their focus on working with infants & toddlers in 4-years programs</p> <p>System challenges to transferring</p> <p><u>Graduates who entered the field:</u> Limited opportunities for professional learning focused on infants & toddlers</p> <p>Need to continually reexamine curriculum to be relevant for workforce development</p>

