

# GROWTH CHART



National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Volume 14, Number 1

## New Resources Support Doctors Working with Military Families with Young Children

As the pediatrician was examining a 7-month-old baby during her well child visit, he asked the usual question about how she was doing. The baby's father began talking about his difficulty in getting the child to eat and described her as irritable and hard to comfort. Probing further, the pediatrician found out that the baby's mother had recently been deployed, and the father was alone caring for his daughter for the first time. Describing his wife as "the glue that held the family together," he confessed that he was having a great deal of difficulty coping with her gone.

This scenario is not uncommon. In fact, there are close to 359,000 babies and toddlers of active duty military personnel. As we near close to 10 years of military activity in the Middle East, US military families are facing multiple deployments that have a real impact on all family members—including the very youngest.

"As a whole, military families are a resilient and flexible group of people," says Elisabeth M. Stafford, MD, Colonel US Army (retired), pediatrician, and ZERO TO THREE physician training consultant. "Still the challenges of repeated deployment on any family can mean there are going to be some difficulties." Dr. Stafford notes that,

many times, these issues play out in the health clinic where she sees "children with headaches, stomachaches. When I ask what is happening with their family, oftentimes it may turn out that a parent is deployed or getting re-deployed." But Dr. Stafford also emphasizes that if these problems are caught early—by having pediatricians and other physicians "screen" for potential problems by asking the right questions—children (and adults) can quickly be referred to services in a "preventative" manner. Early intervention can address challenges before they impact a child's everyday functioning and healthy development and



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### NEW from ZERO TO THREE



**Reflective Supervision and Leadership in Infant and Early Childhood Programs**  
Mary Claire Heffron and Trudi Murch



**Learning Happens II DVD**  
Claire Lerner and Rebecca Parlakian



**Improving the Lives of Infants and Toddlers in Foster Care**  
Edited by Stefanie Powers

## New Policy Center Pocket Card Packs Power

The landscape is changing at both the national and state levels for many social service programs—including those that serve young children and families. As Congress works to balance the budget and proposes deep cuts to programs that serve them, ZERO TO THREE is hard at work helping policymakers understand the needs of infants, toddlers, and families and the consequences of the proposed cuts.

This is why ZERO TO THREE's Policy Center is mobilizing its Network of 10,000 early childhood professionals to effectively communicate with

policymakers about the needs of families with very young children. Because these policymakers are inundated with messages about various issues, the Policy Center developed new tools to help early childhood professionals "cut through the clutter" and provide research-based information to help in formulating policies that are in the best interest of young children. One of our most popular new tools is our Policy Pocket Card.

ZERO TO THREE's Policy Pocket Card is small but packs a lot of power! The Pocket Card is filled with information to make the case for stronger

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## From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The saying at ZERO TO THREE that “early experiences matter” emphasizes the need to act quickly to help babies and toddlers, and in our current political environment—that could not be truer. As Congress grapples with balancing the budget the level of vitriol is stronger than I have ever seen. I fear that vulnerable babies will “be thrown out with the budget bathwater” as more entrenched and powerful constituencies fight to protect their interests.

Babies in the child welfare system have already been impacted. Every seven minutes a baby or toddler in America is removed from his parents’ care because of alleged abuse or neglect. Infants and toddlers who have been maltreated represent almost one third of all the children entering foster care and are at greatest risk for compromised development. ZERO TO THREE’s Court Teams for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers program has helped change the developmental odds for these children. We have worked with community-based teams of judges, social workers, and other leaders in 10 high-risk communities to make sure these children find permanent, loving homes and receive the services they are eligible for. Unfortunately, all federal



funding for this program was cut in the recent budget compromise hammered out between the House and Senate. As we work hard to diversify support from both local and national private funders, the future of this innovative and proven initiative is in question. With cuts and no new funding, our work could end as early as this September.

Despite these blows, we stand committed to fight hard on behalf of infants and toddlers. In order to continue our important work at ZERO TO THREE, now is the time to consider how your contribution can help us meet our mission

to promote the health and development of babies and toddlers. The research is clear—a child’s health and development are directly influenced by the quality of care and experiences she has with parents and other adults. All babies—especially those at-risk—deserve quality early experiences as well as the supports and services they need to thrive.

I am thankful for all you do to help keep babies and toddlers a priority.

Yours Truly,

Matthew E. Melmed

## New Tool for “Wired In” Parents

ZERO TO THREE is developing a series of podcasts for parents based on the findings from our recent national parent survey. The *Parenting Infants and Toddlers Today* survey found that parents have a better understanding of the importance of positive early childhood experiences than they did 10 years ago; however, the survey also showed that there are still three major gaps in parents’ overall understanding of early child development: the emotional needs of young children, the impact of early experiences, and developmentally appropriate expectations.

With this in mind, ZERO TO THREE is developing at least 12 podcasts on topics to help fill these gaps. Board member Annie Pleshette Murphy, former parenting contributor for *Good Morning America*, is “hosting” the series by interviewing child development experts on topics ranging from “how to build your child’s self esteem” to “choosing quality child care” to “the role of fathers in young children’s lives.” These interviews, condensed into short audio clips, will be downloadable from the ZERO TO THREE website and other outlets so parents can listen to them via their iPods, smart phones, MP3 players or computers.



Podcasts hold significant potential for expanding ZERO TO THREE’s outreach to parents and open the opportunity to penetrate a new generation of parents who rely heavily on computers and portable devices to access information. A 2008 study by Arbitron/Edison Media Research found that an estimated 23 million Americans had listened to a podcast in the last month. Funded by MetLife Foundation, the podcast series will be released this fall and represents an exciting opportunity for ZERO TO THREE to provide content to parents through a new and current medium. □

## Celebrating 25 Years Bringing Professionals Cutting Edge Research



ZERO TO THREE hosted its 25<sup>th</sup> National Training Institute last December, a conference that focuses on connecting science to policy and practice and bringing the latest information regarding the infant-family field to early childhood professionals from around the country.

More than 2,000 early childhood specialists gathered in Phoenix, Arizona, to hear nationally and internationally renowned experts present on topics such as helping young children cope with trauma, dealing with challenging behaviors in toddlers, and the impact of stress on a child’s brain. □

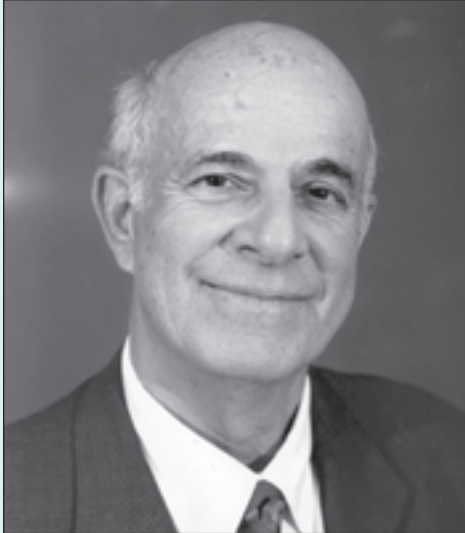
*More than 2,000 early childhood specialists gathered in Phoenix, Arizona, to hear nationally and internationally renowned experts.*

**O**n December 10, 2010, our nation's babies and toddlers lost a major champion.

Bernie Levy, a Founding and current Board Member of ZERO TO THREE, was a successful businessman who was a passionate advocate for our youngest children. He dedicated his philanthropy to support a range of programs and services that helped all babies and toddlers have an equal chance to reach their full potential.

Bernie described his investment in the early years in a past issue of ZERO TO THREE's *Growth Chart*. "I realized the powerful influence the

## IN MEMORIAM



**Bernard Levy**  
1941–2010  
ZERO TO THREE  
Founding and Current Board Member

very first days, months and years of life have on a person's whole life. I understood that emotional and other difficulties can start very early on, and it is best to tackle them as soon as they appear. I wanted to do something to contribute."

And contribute he did for more than 33 years.

Bernie was a dedicated philanthropist, husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He will be deeply missed by ZERO TO THREE!

For more information about the **Bernie Levy Fund** at ZERO TO THREE developed by his family, visit [www.zerotothree.org/bernielevyfund](http://www.zerotothree.org/bernielevyfund). □

## New Distance Learning Partnership with IBM

**I**n our modern, fast-paced world, distance learning programs have emerged as one of the best and most efficient ways to provide critical information to professionals without the cost of travel and time away from their jobs. ZERO TO THREE has long been known for its commitment to professional development and training using new and evolving media to reach the widest range of people possible. As part of this commitment, ZERO TO THREE is partnering with IBM through Work/Family Directions, Inc. to create six training modules to be delivered via distance learning to early care and education teachers and to child care providers of IBM employees for use in their own communities.

"Distance learning programs like these modules provide opportunities for professional development that meet the time

constraints and educational needs of early care professionals that are not always available in a more traditional classroom setting," said Donna Britt, ZERO TO THREE's director on the IBM project. "By creating these modules, ZERO TO THREE is able to provide accessible and affordable educational opportunities for early care and education professionals."

*The modules present the latest research and educational content at a basic entry level in a self-paced multimedia format.*

The modules present the latest research and educational content at a basic entry level in a self-paced multimedia format. Using video and audio segments, interactive exercises, online discussions, and links to additional resources, as well as pre- and post-tests to assess learning, these modules aim to identify best practices and improve the quality of care offered by early care and education professionals. Through distance learning

ZERO TO THREE is working to ensure that every child has the benefit of learning from a skilled and knowledgeable professional. □

## New Policy Center Tools

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federal and state investments in infants and toddlers. It features what we know from research, what we can do to change public policy, and the benefits we all receive when our government invests in children beginning at birth.

The Cards have proven to be quite popular. At our annual conference, more than 9,500 Pocket Cards were distributed to

attendees, who shared them with policymakers in their state and community, as well as with colleagues and friends. Due to the positive response, the Policy Center printed another 10,000 Pocket Cards! □

## ZERO TO THREE Hires New Chief Development Officer

**F**undraising and development are key to the success of any philanthropic organization. ZERO TO THREE is proud to announce the hiring of Michelle Payne as its new Chief Development Officer to help it realize its philanthropic goals. Payne was formerly the Associate Vice President of Development at the National Wildlife Federation where she managed a staff of 40 fundraising professionals responsible for raising \$30 million in revenues for the Federation last year.



As a mother of three, Payne holds a firm belief in the role that adults—parents, guardians, and caregivers—play in shaping the positive growth and development of children from infancy on. "I am excited to join the organization that is leading the nation in early childhood development. My own children are my inspiration, and I look forward to working with everyone at ZERO TO THREE to help other families and babies thrive" says Payne. □



National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

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## Get Involved in Our Work

- Learn More—Become a Registered User on Our Website

[www.zerotothree.org/register](http://www.zerotothree.org/register)

- Join the Policy Network and Be a Voice for Babies!

[www.zerotothree.org/policy](http://www.zerotothree.org/policy)

- Donate by contacting Michelle Payne, Chief Development Officer, at (202) 638-1144 or visiting

[www.zerotothree.org/donate](http://www.zerotothree.org/donate)

**ZERO TO THREE** is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers.

Cheryl Polk, PhD  
President, Board of Directors

Matthew E. Melmed, JD  
Executive Director

Michelle S. Payne  
Chief Development Officer

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)  
(202) 638-1144

## New Military Resources

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also can provide an important source of support to the entire family system.

The importance of screening is the reason ZERO TO THREE's Military Family Projects developed a new set of materials and trainings for military and community-based medical professionals designed to help them identify and respond to both behavioral concerns in young children and stress in families. For young children, these behavioral concerns may include a seeming regression in skills (such as a toilet-trained child returning to bedwetting), increased aggression (hitting, biting, etc.), and/or increased difficulty with parental separations.

This set of training and materials, *Strong Foundations in Pediatric Care: Promoting Resilience in Military Families*, is designed to enhance the ability of health professionals to care for military families. Further, the resources were developed to be easily integrated into a health care professional's daily practice. Materials focus on such topic as deployment, reunification, and loss.

The *Strong Foundations in Pediatric Care* program provides trainings to medical professionals at six Military Medical Centers across the country and at military and community-based sites across North Florida. The trainings focus on the implications of family stressors during wartime on the physical, social, and emotional development of young children. They provide both materials for the physicians and parent materials for the physician to use during visits with the families. The trainings also provide a physician's toolkit which is also available for download at the ZERO TO THREE Military Projects website: [www.zerotothree.org/medical\\_resource](http://www.zerotothree.org/medical_resource).

Although many parents and caregivers believe babies and toddlers are "too little" to understand what's going on around them, health professionals know that even the youngest children are deeply affected by the emotional state of the people close to them. Therefore, the training and materials are critical tools for helping physicians to ask the right questions and refer families to a broad array of resources for support. "This project helps the health professional know what to look for—to know what symptoms indicate the young child is having difficulty," says Dr. Stafford.

Dr. Stafford is a consultant on the project and helps to conduct the training sessions, which are sponsored by the Florida BrAlve Fund. ZERO TO THREE's Coming Together Around Military Families® (CTAMF) initiative works to strengthen the resilience of young children and families who are impacted by these and other deployment-related issues. □

## Military Family Projects Acknowledged in White House Report

ZERO TO THREE's military work was acknowledged in a recent White House Report *Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment*.

## Thousands Join as "Friends" of Journal Facebook Page

Changes in technology seem to occur at lightning speed and bring with them new challenges and new opportunities. While the current trend in magazine subscription and renewal rates is declining numbers of subscribers, *Zero to Three* has bucked that trend in recent months with an increase in our subscriber list. It may be in part due to the fact that social media is allowing us to reach even wider audiences through the Journal's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/zerotothreejournal](http://www.facebook.com/zerotothreejournal)).

The *Zero to Three* Facebook page has grown to more than 3,000 fans in 19 countries with hundreds of new fans joining each month. The Facebook page



provides a place for *Zero to Three* readers to enrich their learning by offering the opportunity to connect with colleagues around the world who share an interest in and passion for improving the lives of infants, toddlers, and their families. Fans of the page can use the space to pose questions, engage in discussion, find resources, and stay up-to-date on the latest news and information from ZERO TO THREE. □