

Primary Care Child Development Initiative

Recommendations for Implementing the Biden-Harris Early Childhood and Health Agenda



BIDEN-HARRIS FIRST 100 DAYS PRIORITY: PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY CARE

President Biden has called for a major expansion of access to early childhood experts within community health centers and other primary care settings, as detailed on the Biden campaign's [education policy page](#), and copied below (emphasis added):

“Provide early childhood development support to families where they are most likely to access it – the pediatrician’s office. For many families with young children, the pediatrician’s office is the one place where they interact with service providers before their child enters school. President Biden will provide funds to ensure that there is an early childhood development expert in every community health center. He will also provide grants to help cities place early childhood development experts in other pediatrician offices with a high percentage of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program patients. These experts, as part of the primary care team, will help identify whether children are reaching development milestones, help connect families to additional services like home visiting when needed, and answer parents’ questions regarding child development so every child in the U.S. is placed on the path to succeed once they start kindergarten.”

ABOUT HEALTHYSTEPS

HealthySteps, a program of ZERO TO THREE, is an evidence-based, interdisciplinary pediatric primary care program that promotes positive parenting and healthy development for babies and toddlers, particularly in areas where there have been persistent inequities for families with low-incomes and families of color. Early childhood development specialists, called HealthySteps Specialists, are integrated into the pediatric team to provide short-term behavior and development consultation and referrals, as well as intensive services when needed, and to support practice-wide screening efforts for children and caregivers, covering topics from autism to caregiver depression.

Founded in 1995, today HealthySteps is the largest program of its kind to integrate early childhood development specialists into pediatric primary care with a focus on children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP. In 2020, the program reached over 300,000 children and their families, in 173 sites, including over 50 Federally Qualified Health Centers across 24 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

RECOMMENDATION

To deliver on this campaign promise, we recommend and support the **creation of a new Primary Care Child Development Initiative (PCCDI)** as a signature proposal to be rolled out by the Biden-Harris Administration within the first 100 days and included in President Biden’s first Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2022.

We firmly believe that our nation will reap the rewards of a new Biden-Harris Administration Primary Care Childhood Development Initiative. The HealthySteps National Office at ZERO TO THREE and the early childhood pediatric community are uniquely positioned to support President Biden's PCCDI and stand ready to serve as a resource as we continue our work to improve the health and wellbeing of families across the country.

ZERO TO THREE FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

In addition to the PCCDI, ZERO TO THREE's policy priorities are well-aligned with President Biden's pledge to support young children and families including family and medical leave, comprehensive child care, and expanding Early Head Start as well as policies to address infant and early childhood mental health and transform child welfare to promote infant-toddler wellbeing. These policies are detailed in ZERO TO THREE's Transition Plan linked below.

POINT OF CONTACT

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Embracing Growth – HealthySteps 2019 Annual Report](#)
- [What is HealthySteps](#)
- [HealthySteps Outcome Summary](#)
- [HealthySteps Return on Investment](#)
- [Building Back Better for Babies and Toddlers: ZERO TO THREE's Transition Plan](#)