



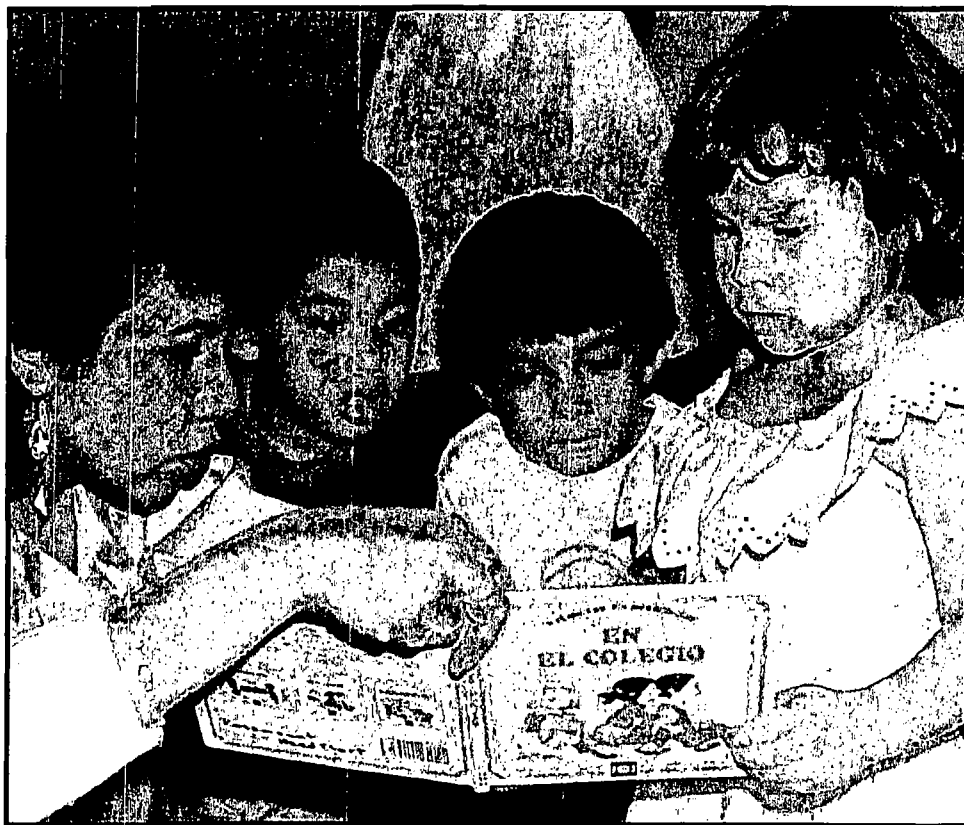
ZERO TO THREE

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Caring for Infants and Toddlers in Groups: Necessary Considerations for Emotional, Social, and Cognitive Development



Subjects and Predicates

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This article is based on a plenary presentation at ZERO TO THREE's Eighth Biennial National Training Institute, December 4, 1993, Washington, D.C. Most of the content of this article comes from print and video materials of the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, described on page 7. Some statements are direct quotes from these materials.

Out-of-home child care for infants and toddlers, if done well, can enrich children's early experience. It can also be a therapeutic component of services to at-risk children, providing a safe and con-

sistent base for protection, prevention, and treatment.

Unfortunately although more and more children in this country are moving into group care at younger ages and for longer periods of time,* we are missing opportunities to provide quality care. Indeed, current practices in many infant/toddler child care settings actually hinder caregivers, children, and parents from forming and sustaining the deep, responsive, and respectful relationships that are the hallmark of quality.

In this article, we will examine two sources of problems in the management and planning of quality child care for infants and toddlers, and then explore six key components of early group experience: group size; quality of the physical environment; primary caregiving assignments; continuity of

care; cultural and familial continuity; and meeting the

* According to the National Child Care Survey conducted in 1990 23 percent of babies under one year of age, 33 percent of one-year-olds, 38 percent of two-year-olds, and 50 percent of three-year-olds are cared for outside their home in regulated and unregulated family day care and in infant/toddler centers.

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**Two ZERO TO THREE
training opportunities in 1994
see page 27 for details**

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