



## **Request for Applications: SCPITC Quality Infant/Toddler Demonstration Programs**

### **Overview**

The SC Program for Infant/Toddler Care (SCPITC) is inviting eligible early care and education programs to express intent to apply to become a SCPITC demonstration site.

The purpose of the demonstration programs is to provide opportunities for outside visitors and stakeholders to observe the implementation of the SCPITC policies and practices, which support the highest quality of infant/toddler care, in a child care and development program serving children birth to three years of age. Programs selected as demonstration programs will serve as a model of high quality infant/toddler care. Visitors will be encouraged to observe demonstration programs “in action” to see what quality care looks like in practice. The director of the selected programs will be asked to share with visitors, their experiences in operating a high quality infant/toddler program, highlighting the challenges of achieving quality and noting the impact that adopting a relationship-based model of care has on children, families and care teachers. Selected demonstration programs will be recognized at state and regional early childhood conferences for their exemplary practices. These venues will also provide an opportunity for demonstration program directors and staff to partner with their assigned SCPITC Infant/Toddler Specialist to share their knowledge and experience with others.

The SCPITC is a responsive, relationship-based approach to care that promotes learning and development in children from birth to three years of age in group care settings. The SCPITC approach to infant/toddler care draws on the infant’s natural interest in discovery, urge to learn, and close, responsive relationships with caregivers. It asserts that good infant care is neither baby-sitting nor preschool, but rather a special kind of care that resembles no other. Rather than detailing the specifics of lessons for caregivers to conduct with infants, the SCPITC approach shows caregivers ways of helping infants learn the lessons that every infant comes into the world eager to learn. Infant care should be based on relationship planning – not lesson planning- and should emphasize child-directed learning over adult-directed learning.

### **Selection Process**

The process for selecting demonstration programs will unfold in two stages across two years. In the first year, programs that are interested in applying to become a demonstration program and meet the eligibility criteria will express their intent to apply by submitting a letter of intent along with other required forms and documentation outlined in the PART 1 Application. Those who meet the posted criteria for PART 1 will be visited and interviewed by representatives from the SCPITC Demonstration Program Review Committee. Successful applicants will complete two phases of scoring for PART 1 of the SCPITC Demonstration Program. The highest scoring

applications will be selected to participate in a second scoring phase: the onsite visit/interview. Applicant's scores from the onsite visits/interviews will be combined with their application score to determine selection for participation in PART 1 of the SCPITC Demonstration Program. Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which they demonstrate a commitment to quality improvement, ability to adopt new practices and effectively implement changes, leadership capacity, and openness to partnering with many stakeholders to model quality.

Top candidate programs will be selected to participate, or continue participation, in the SCPITC Network service plan for PART 1 of the SCPITC Demonstration Program lasting approximately 1 year during which time they will work with support from their assigned SCPITC Infant/Toddler Specialist toward meeting the standards that will qualify them to apply to become an infant/toddler quality demonstration program in January 2014 for the second and final stage of demonstration program selection.

PART 2 of the application process will begin in January 2014 and only those programs that were selected in PART 1 of the selection process will be eligible to apply. Those programs that meet the qualifying criteria outlined in PART 2 of the application will be visited by the SCPITC Demonstration Program Review Committee during which time applicants will be asked to demonstrate the extent to which they have implemented the recommendations presented by the SCPITC during the first year of the process. The committee then will select and notify the final award candidates.

## **PART 1**

To be considered for PART 1 of the process, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- A. be a licensed facility, with a history of compliance with the Department of Social Services, Child Care Licensing and the ABC Program
- B. have an electronic record keeping system and an active email address
- C. be at least a Level B program in the South Carolina ABC Child Care Program and working toward continuing improvements that could lead to a Level A status
- D. be located in or very near a highly populated area of the state, providing access to many stakeholders (families, other child care providers, college students, policy makers, etc.)
- E. have a minimum of 25 children spanning the birth to 36 month age-range enrolled
- F. have a minimum of five full-time, permanent infant/toddler care-teachers who regularly serve children under 36 months
- G. employ a center Director who has served at least two years as the Director of the applying center
- H. have a demonstrated commitment to seeking out opportunities for ongoing program improvement to provide high quality care and show evidence of appropriate follow-through and implementation of provided opportunities.

Selected PART 1 applicants will agree to the following requirements:

- ✓ Participation in the SCPITC Network’s intensive service plan comprised of on-site training and coaching (scheduling will be coordinated with the program director and the SCPITC Infant/Toddler Specialist)
- ✓ Implementation of the SCPITC’s Six Essential Policies and approach to high quality infant care
- ✓ Participation in three demonstration program meetings (travel expenses and substitute subsidies provided) – dates to be determined (directors only)
- ✓ Participation from one or two infant/toddler teachers from your center, in five, 2-day teacher-mentor trainings (travel expenses and substitute subsidies provided). The teacher-mentor training series will teach infant/toddler care teachers how to coach and support their peers. Training dates are listed below. The program director is expected to attend the first meeting:
  - January 16, 2013 (Greenville), February 8-9 (Atlanta), March 8-9 (Atlanta), April 5-6 (Atlanta), May 3-4 (Atlanta)

Programs that are selected for PART 1 of the application process, will receive intensive, ongoing training and coaching from a SCPITC Infant/Toddler Specialist. All services are provided on-site and offered at no cost. Selected programs are also eligible for a materials grant to purchase classroom materials for the infant/toddler classrooms. All travel costs for required meetings and trainings are covered by the SCPITC and subsidies to support the cost of hiring substitutes for designated events will be offered. In return, selected programs must commit to creating a professional climate that encourages care teachers to examine their own practices and embrace opportunities to learn and grow. This requires a significant commitment from the director and other administrative leaders in the program. The application for PART 1 is attached in the Appendix.

## **PART 2**

Eligibility for PART 2 of the application process will be contingent on a program’s success during PART 1 of the process. Programs selected for PART 1 of the application process will be expected to have achieved the following goals by the end of the first year in order to proceed to PART 2 of the application process:

1. Implementation of SCPITC’s *Six Essential Policies*
2. Director provides ongoing feedback and support to staff and has a long-term plan to maintain and enhance program quality
3. Teachers engage in consistent planning and reflection
4. Teachers are engaged in intentional decision making
5. Teachers can explain the rationale for the decisions they make in their practice
6. Teachers consistently observe and document individual child growth and development
7. Teachers use collected documentation to plan for the learning and development of individual children

Programs that have successfully completed PART 1 will be invited to participate in PART 2 of the application process in which the three highest performing programs will be identified and

invited to serve as the state's Infant/Toddler Quality Demonstration Programs. Ongoing support and resources from the SCPITC will be offered to these selected programs.

The deadline for submitting PART 1 of the application for consideration is **DECEMBER 3, 2012**.

Questions will be accepted via email at [SCPITC@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:SCPITC@mailbox.sc.edu).