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State Superintendent of Schools

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Maryland State Board of Education

FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*

DATE: March 22, 2011

SUBJECT Healthy Beginnings Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to provide an overview of the new guidelines for infant and toddler care through *Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age*.

BACKGROUND:

The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood Development in partnership with Johns Hopkins University/Center for Technology in Education, has developed *Healthy Beginnings*, a set of newly updated developmental guidelines for families and those who live or work with children from birth through three years of age. The guidelines describe what infants and young children are learning at specified age ranges, and how adults can support their development. The *Healthy Beginnings* website at www.marylandhealthybeginnings.org provides practical and fun activity ideas for parents and teachers along with downloadable tips and tools.

Healthy Beginnings was created to ensure that those who care for infants and young children have the knowledge and resources to support and encourage children during the ongoing process of growth and learning. By supporting and encouraging young children in their development, families, child care providers, special educators, family service workers and others who use *Healthy Beginnings* will confidently embrace their roles as a child's earliest teachers.

The guidelines will be disseminated by infant-toddler specialists from the regional child care resource and referral centers as well as by staff from the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program. A training of training program, sponsored by the Maryland Family Network has more than 80 registered trainers to disseminate the guidelines to all early care programs serving infants and toddlers.

The *Healthy Beginnings* guidelines are compatible with the Maryland State Curriculum and the Maryland Model for School Readiness, making them an important part of a Birth to Grade 12 learning continuum. Federal funding from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Child Care and Development Fund support the production and dissemination of *Healthy Beginnings*.

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ACTION:

For information only. The guidelines can be reviewed at www.marylandhealthybeginnings.org

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