

EMPOWERING EARLY CONNECTIONS FOR STRONG FUTURES: INTEGRATING CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

MARSHALLE MANRIQUEZ

STATEWIDE SAFE BABIES COURT TEAMS COORDINATOR

MEGHAN HAYS DAVIS

PROGRAM AND TRAINING DIRECTOR

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE ARIZONA

Best for Babies is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Humane Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$847,294.00 with 0% finances with non-governmental sources. The contents of this training are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov)



Why Focus on Infants & Toddlers?

Greatest Vulnerability

- Most likely to be reported, removed from parents, and experience longer time in system
- Most vulnerable age – first 1,000 days of life (birth to 3) largely determine life course
- Greatest opportunity for improving the odds – and we know how.



What Does Science Say?

- 0-3yo is the most rapid period of development in our entire lifespan.
- Early trauma derails healthy development.
- Chronic stress changes brain chemistry and architecture.
- Predisposes children to adult depression, anxiety disorder, addictions, chronic disease (ACEs).

What is Best for Babies and where does it come from?

- Best for Babies is a statewide initiative to promote better outcomes for families with young children who are involved with the child protection/child welfare system and the courts.
- It is a systems change approach based on the National ZERO TO THREE's Safe Babies approach which incorporates neuroscience and trauma-informed care into the court process.
- Our Mission: Best for Babies is a collaborative statewide initiative advancing the health and well-being of families by understanding and responding to the unique needs of families with young children navigating the child protection system, honoring each family's race, values, traditions and cultural beliefs.
- Our Vision: We envision an equitable child well-being system that is proactive, collaborative, and nurtures the relationship between young children and their parents.

ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Quick Facts

- Founded in 1977, for more than four decades, ZERO TO THREE has been the leading voice for the mental health and well-being of babies and toddlers.
- While the concepts of Safe Babies started around 2002, the first 4 Safe Babies sites were established by ZERO TO THREE in 2005.



ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Quick Stats

- Outcomes from active sites include
 - 0.7% of repeat maltreatment within 12 months compared to the 9.1% national average
 - 93% of babies and toddlers placed permanently within a year. This is **DOUBLE** the national average.
 - Nearly two-thirds of babies and toddlers are reunified or placed permanently with their family.
 - Babies and toddlers are reaching permanency 2X faster than those who are not within the Safe Babies model.

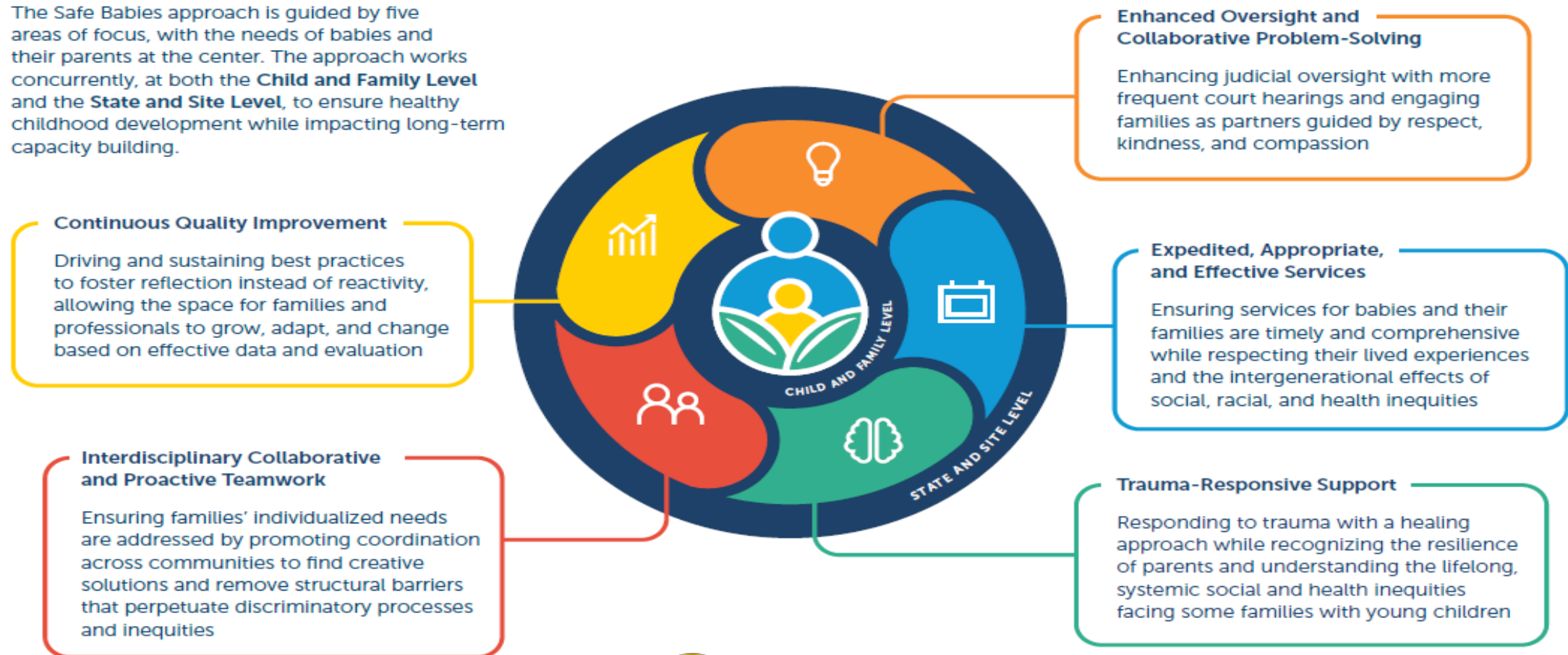


The Safe Babies Approach

Safe Babies, a program of ZERO TO THREE, meets the needs of babies and toddlers under court jurisdiction by implementing a team-based approach, rooted in the science of early childhood development, to ignite collective action across states and communities.

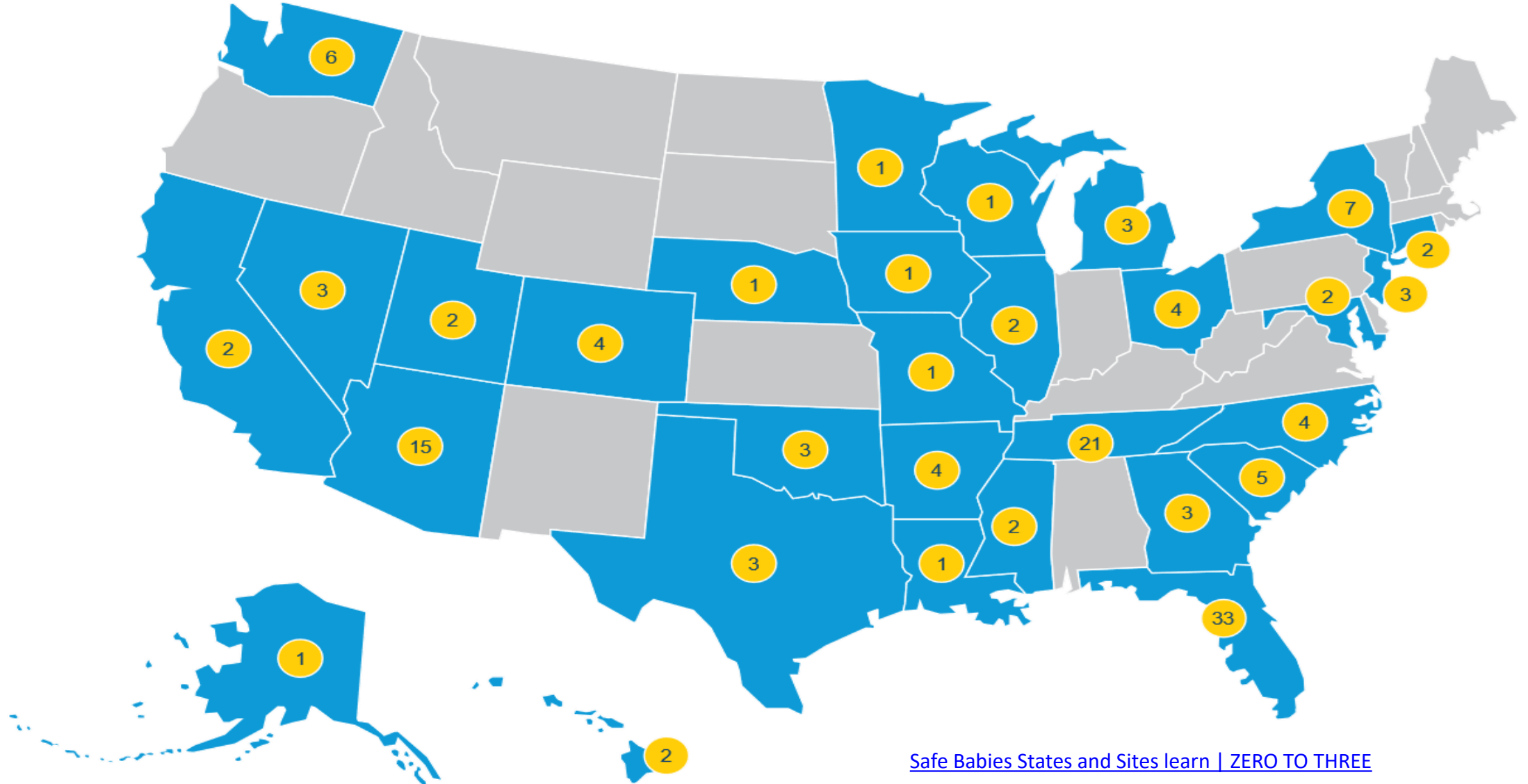
IMPACT: Safe Babies focuses on the urgent developmental needs of young children during all planning and decision-making to strengthen early relationships with parents and caregivers and to create safe, stable, and nurturing environments for babies and toddlers.

The Safe Babies approach is guided by five areas of focus, with the needs of babies and their parents at the center. The approach works concurrently, at both the **Child and Family Level** and the **State and Site Level**, to ensure healthy childhood development while impacting long-term capacity building.



Safe Babies Work Nationwide

Sites: 142, States: 30



History of Best for Babies (Arizona Safe Babies)

- 2004: First implemented in Yavapai Juvenile Court
- 2008: By this point, 6 counties had been provided T&TA on B4B/Safe Babies. PCAAZ begins hosting an annual Court Teams for Infants and Toddlers Summit (CTIT).



History of Best for Babies (Arizona Safe Babies) Cont.



- 2011: Maricopa County’s Cradle to Crayons (C2C) was founded.
- 2014: All 15 counties had T&TA and 8 counties were implementing it within their juvenile courts. California Clearinghouse on Evidence-Based Practice rates as “promising”.



What are C2C Outcomes?

- Successful reunification with birth parents increased from 31% non-C2C to 64% with C2C
- Child safety and placement stability increased
- Re-reports and re-entry to system reduced
- C2C clinical services show a highly promising impact on reunifications, as parents who were offered and accepted at least one clinical service had double the rate of reunification than those who did not.



*Maricopa Cradles to Crayons
2018 ASU Center for Child
Well-Being Evaluation*

Annual Court Teams for Infants and Toddlers (CTIT)

- At this summit, speakers and panelists educate court team members on:
 - The 5 areas of focus.
 - Identify knowledge and service gaps preventing counties from reaching successful implementation.
 - Guide each court team to establish goals and strategies for the next year.
- Through these efforts, the state's court teams are:
 - Expanding judicial oversight of infants and toddlers in foster care.
 - Improving coordination between resource providers.
 - Implementing positive parenting programs.

Exciting Current/Upcoming Expansions

- Prevent Child Abuse Arizona received a 5 year grant from HRSA (October 2022-September 2027) to expand Best for Babies efforts and implementation.
 - 3 Site locations are receiving up to \$80,000 a year for 4 years.
 - Coconino
 - Yavapai
 - Yuma
 - State leadership team to help guide and implement change.
 - T&TA from ZERO TO THREE – Safe Babies Specialists
 - These services are provided to the Statewide Coordinator as well as to the sites and other Best for Babies affiliates.
 - Community Coordinator Academy
 - LMS and Database
 - Partners
 - ASU Center For Child Well-Being as Data & Evaluation team.
 - ASU Children's Equity Project (CEP) for T/TA on Equity work.
 - Nicole Roskens, Clinical Director of Cradle to Crayons, for T&TA.
 - Lauren Lindquist, Maricopa Supervisor of Community Coordinators, for T&TA.

Exciting Current/Upcoming Expansions

- HRSA Supplemental Funding (October 2023-September 2024)
 - Expanded partnership with CEP
 - \$100,000 towards enhancing court spaces to be trauma informed and family friendly.
 - Coconino
 - Gila
 - Maricopa
 - Mohave
 - Pima
 - Pinal
 - Yavapai
 - Yuma

Best for Babies Statewide Leadership Team

Project Director &
Statewide
Coordinator

Department of
Child Safety

Judicial Officers
& Attorneys

The Arizona
Health Care Cost
Containment
System (State
Medicaid)

Open Hearts
Behavioral Health

Mercy Care

Maricopa County
Cradle To
Crayons

Maricopa County
Community
Coordination
Program

Arizona
Administrative
Office of the
Courts

Parent Leaders

Family
Involvement
Center

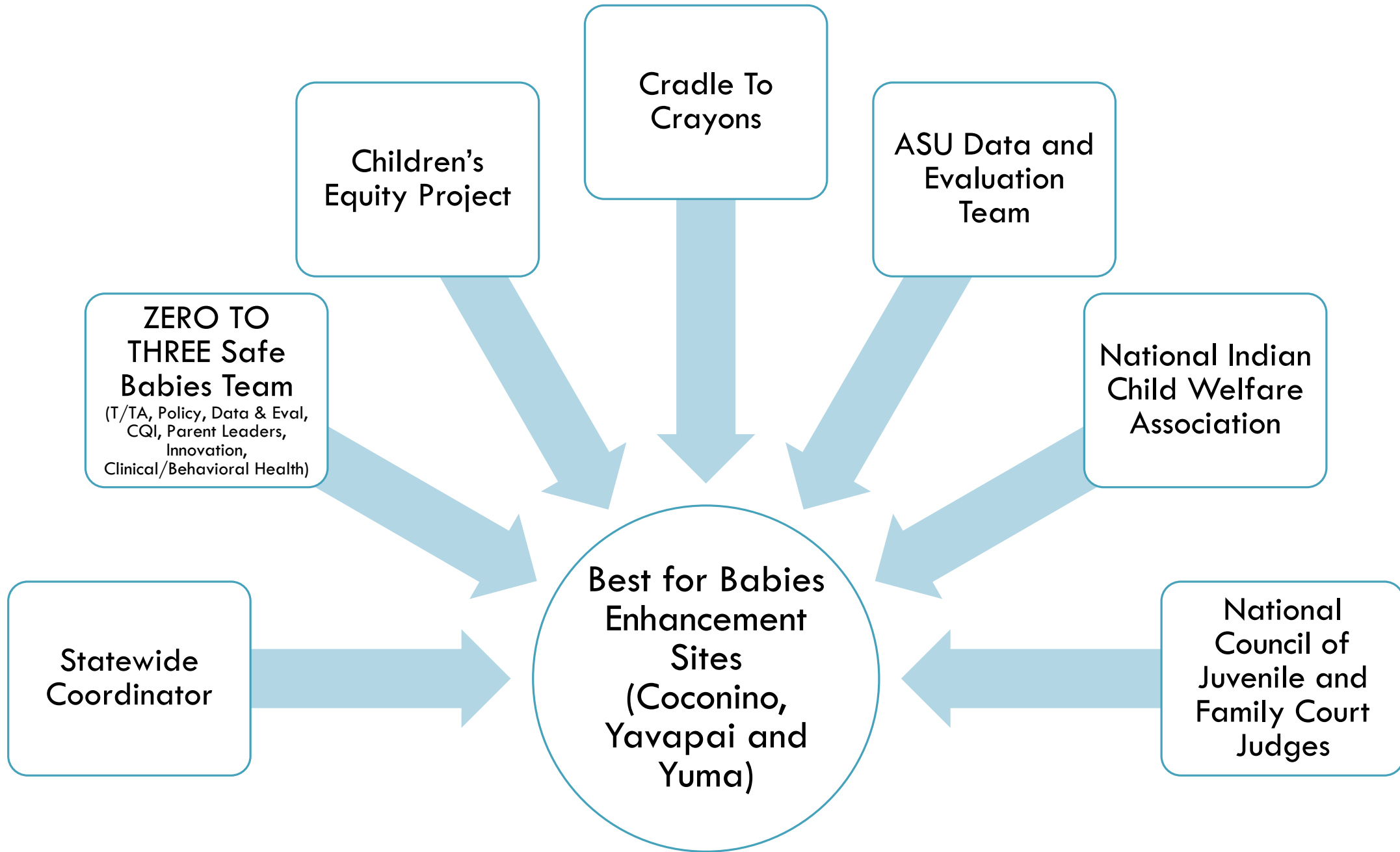
The Arizona
Adverse
Childhood
Experience
Consortium

First Things First

The Arizona
Department of
Health Services,
Office of Women
and Children's
Health

Casey Families

American
Academy of
Pediatrics – AZ
Chapter



Children's
Equity Project

Cradle To
Crayons

ASU Data and
Evaluation
Team

**ZERO TO
THREE Safe
Babies Team**
(T/TA, Policy, Data & Eval,
CQI, Parent Leaders,
Innovation,
Clinical/Behavioral Health)

National Indian
Child Welfare
Association

Statewide
Coordinator

**Best for Babies
Enhancement
Sites
(Coconino,
Yavapai and
Yuma)**

National
Council of
Juvenile and
Family Court
Judges

Group Questions

1. Where do you see overlap between this approach and your wellness courts?
2. What would you need to be successful in creating this overlap?
3. What are some next steps you could take?

Contact Information

Marshalle Manriquez

Statewide Safe Babies Court Teams
Coordinator

Prevent Child Abuse Arizona

marshalle@pcaaz.org

623-229-3501

Meghan Hays Davis

Program and Training Director
Prevent Child Abuse Arizona

meghan@pcaaz.org

602-410-6223

BestforBabies 

Improving Outcomes for Arizona's Infants and Toddlers in Juvenile Court

a project of  **Prevent Child Abuse
Arizona**