Transcript
Center-Based – Primary Care Video

[Text appears: Primary Care – Center Based. Throughout the video, Amber Morabito provides narration.]

Amber: In this segment, we'll talk about primary care.

[Amber appears on screen. She is seated in a home setting with a large green plant in the background.]

Amber: Hello, I'm Amber Morabito. When a program implements primary care, it means that each child is assigned an infant care teacher who is principally responsible for that child's care. When children spend a longer day in care than their primary care teacher does, a second teacher is assigned to provide the primary relationship. This means that each child has a special care teacher assigned to him or her at all times during the child care day. Primary care works best when teachers team up, support each other, and provide a backup base for security for each other's primary care children. Primary care does not mean exclusive care, however. It means that all parties know who has primary responsibility for each child.

[Text briefly appears: How programs assign children to primary care teachers]

Amber: Now let's discuss how programs assign children to primary care teachers. A variety of factors are taken into consideration when assigning primary infant care teachers to children, including enrollment priorities, regulations and licensing requirements for age grouping, ratios, and group size and vacant slots. However, decisions about primary care assignments should be made to the greatest degree possible in accordance with each child's unique needs and abilities, as well as the needs of the groups.

[Paula Gaither – Lead Teacher. Paula is seated in a room with a bookshelf behind her.]

Paula: One of the ways that we choose primary caregiving is really we wait and see who the child chooses as they start the program. We usually give a couple of weeks. The teachers take turns with the primary routines, the diapering, the feeding, and we see who the child is more comfortable with. And we also actually see who the parent is more comfortable with also...who they feel more engaged with when they drop off...who they feel like more comfortable asking questions about their child's development. And then after a couple of weeks, the teachers usually have a discussion and really see who do they think is a better fit.

[Cindy Mach – Lead Teacher, Infant Classroom. Cindy is seated in an office setting, with a shelf of children's books behind her.]

Cindy: So the way in which I assign primary care teachers are usually I take in two criteria. First, one is if we have a teacher available that does speak the child's home language so that they can feel comfortable inside the classroom, as well that we can support their home language and English at school. Well, and then secondly usually is if they're around the same developmental age levels so that that primary teacher can focus on helping develop certain skills, as well as facilitating the interaction between peers is a

little bit easier for both our primary teacher as well as the children. So if, for example, in my classroom we have children who speak a certain dialect of Chinese that I personally don't know, but I have my co-teacher does, so I assign them to her. And previously I had a Spanish speaking child and I didn't speak Spanish, but I had my other co-teacher spoke Spanish in the classroom, so I signed that child to them. But otherwise, we usually try to group together children who are of similar developmental level so that they can have a lot more peer interaction, as well as the teacher is able to find other resources and activities that support the children together.

[Katy Mata - Early Childhood Educator. Katy is seated in a child care setting. There are pillows, a mobile with paper butterflies, and a bulletin board with printed pictures of children behind her.]

Katy: So the child first builds a connection with one primary teacher. But as their connection has been formed and established and they have that safe security, they then begin to, it's not exclusive care, so we begin to then establish a relationship with another teacher that's also in the classroom, which then becomes the child's secondary primary teacher. So they're there to support the child. If the child, if the teachers ever absent or not there or has to step out of the classroom, the child is not left feeling unsettled or, you know, searching for this teacher because they have already established a relationship with another teacher. So they still have that sense of security.

[Text briefly appears: Benefits of primary care for infants and toddlers.]

Amber: Next, let's talk about the benefits of primary care for infants and toddlers.

[Amber appears]

Amber: Primary caregiving can build strong, trusting relationships that contribute to healthy infant and toddler, social, emotional development and identity. Research shows that such relationships correlate with children's success in school and in life. Primary care helps teachers create warm, trusting partnerships with children's families in order to provide individualized care for each child.

[Mariana Gaidano - Lead Infant-Toddler Teacher. Mariana is seated in a home-like setting.]

Mariana: The benefits of primary care for infants and toddlers are vast. I would say beginning with a really meaningful, strong relationship between the children and the families and the care teacher. In order to really get to know the children and families is by having that primary care relationship. There is a sense of trust that is built from the child and the family onto the teacher. They get to know you on a deeper level. They have a sense that they know what to expect. There is a level of consistency. The child knows what to expect when they come. They know how you're going to respond to their needs. They know that you know their needs. And there is a great level of individualized care that comes from it. So you, the care teacher, knows what their needs and characteristics are and then they're able to attend to that. They're able to have a better quality of care, get to know their family life, their home life. And the children feels seen and heard and welcome and at home in their space.

[Araseli Perez - Master Early Childhood Educator. Araseli is seated in a child care setting. Wood toys and a guitar are in the background.

Araseli: The fit, it has to be that you're also establishing that relationship with the family. So it's not just the child. It's not like I am the primary caregiver only of this child, it's like I am the primary caregiver and support system of the family. Understanding the family dynamics, understanding how to support the family, understanding what the goals that the family has for the child or what outcomes they would like or what they're working on at home. So we can support, because we always want the child to feel that this is like their second home that they're coming to.

[Text briefly appears: Making meaningful connections with each child.]

Mariana: So although we have several children to care for in our group, we are still able to make very meaningful connections. We do this many of the time throughout the day through a lot of non-verbal communication. For example, if a child needs my attention right there, but another one of my children is calling my attention from afar, I may give them a wink and nod, a thumbs up, a wave, something that lets them know that I see them and I hear them and I acknowledge them. However, I'm still able to be present with that child in that moment. I also try to enhance the dynamic between the primary group, the actual children within the group. So I encourage them to help each other, to hold each other's hands, to go to their nap bags, to say good night to each other, maybe a hug. I think that enhancing that dynamic really just creates this much more meaningful connection, not only with me and them, but also as a group together. And small groups...small groups...small groups...small groups.

Katy: In order to establish meaningful connections with family and children is, it starts before they even enter a classroom. They fill out what's called a family social history form, where it talks about just the child's history in general, simple things like when did the child begin to walk...when did the child begin to talk, or was the child a preemie. Things that we might need to know that are important. Also, what is the home language that's spoken at home...and are there multiple languages that the child has been exposed to as well. Because sometimes the grandparents speak a different language. So we look at, we establish them before they even enter the classroom.

Paula: I make meaningful connections with the children during our routines, during diapering, during napping, feeding times. Those are the times where things are a little more calm, where you can really have some one on one engagement with the child and they get to know you and you get to know them. And those are actually my favorite times of the day.

[Text appears on screen:

PITC would like to thank the following programs for their contributions to this video series:

- *Glendale Community College Child Development Center*
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The PITC logo animates into position.]

Narrator: PITC, the Program for Infant Toddler Care, a collaboration of the California Department of Education and WestEd.

[The California Department of Education (CDE) logo and the WestEd logo appear.]

Narrator: Brought to you by the California Department of Education and WestEd.