

Funded by the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), the New Jersey First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship Program provides professional development scholarships for infant/toddler practitioners working with children birth through age three in licensed child care centers. Funds not to exceed \$4,000 per applicant are made available to cover the tuition, fees and book stipend of the two approved college for-credit classes (six credits) leading toward the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential. Approved topics are **Social and Emotional Development: Infant Mental Health for Practitioners** and **Supervised Field Work in Infant and Toddler Settings**. See www.pinj.org or www.njcite.org for a listing of approved NJ in-class course offerings. **FUNDING AMOUNTS AND TIME FRAMES ARE LIMITED AND ARE NOT GUARANTEED.**

Read this Handbook **carefully** and **thoroughly**. It explains all of the requirements of the program. You must sign the **original handbook** and return it with the application and keep a copy for your records. The other copy is for your reference. Please type or print clearly on the application. Call your NJ First Steps Regional Agency at the number listed on the back with questions.

Initial application to obtain promissory letter must include:

- Fully completed application and signed Handbook.
- Recent pay stub (within last 30 days) from center verifying center name and position.
- Letter from center director on center letterhead verifying that you have worked with infants/toddlers for at least one year prior to application, your position and number of hours worked per week, and recommending you for the scholarship.
- Letter of recommendation from a parent of an infant or toddler you have worked with.
- NJ Registry application for Professional Impact NJ included on NJ First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship Fund application.

Repeat applications to obtain promissory letter must include:

- Fully completed application and signed Handbook.
- Recent pay stub (within last 30 days) from center verifying center name, position, and number of hours worked per week.
- Letter from center director on center letterhead verifying your current position and number of hours worked per week.
- Official transcript for prior class taken on the NJ First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship.

For initial and repeat applications, the following items are due within 60 days of that semester's registration deadline:

- Semester bill from college (can not be handwritten, must include college name).
- Course registration from college.



A State-wide Infant/Toddler Initiative

Funded by the NJ Department of Human Services,
Division of Family Development
through the American Reinvestment Recovery Act

***Mail your application and documentation to the
NJ First Steps Agency for the county in which you work:***

Northern Region:

Bergen • Essex • Hudson • Morris

Passaic • Sussex • Warren

Programs for Parents

500 Bloomfield Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042

(973) 744-4050 ext. 1016

Central:

Union • Hunterdon • Middlesex • Mercer

Somerset • Monmouth • Ocean

CCCC of Union County

P.O. Box 718, Union, NJ 07083

(973) 923-1433 ext. 168

Southern:

Salem • Atlantic • Burlington • Camden

Cape May • Cumberland • Gloucester

Southern Regional Child Care Resource Center-EIRC

900 Hollydell Drive, Sewell, NJ 08080

(856) 582-8282 ext. 145



A State-wide Infant/Toddler Initiative

New Jersey Infant/Toddler Scholarship Fund

Handbook of Rules and Regulations

*Sign and return one copy of this handbook
with your application every semester you apply
for funds. Keep one copy for your records.*



REQUIREMENTS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Check all of the following to indicate you understand and agree to abide by the following requirements:

CERTIFICATION

- I certify I am at least 18 years old and have a high school diploma or GED.
- I understand funding amounts and time frames **are limited and are not guaranteed.**
- I understand that to receive a scholarship, a promissory letter issued by NJ First Steps must be issued prior to my registering for class. I understand that NJ First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship funds will cover the cost of tuition, fees and a book stipend only for the two **approved** college for-credit classes (six credits) leading toward the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential. Approved topics are **Social and Emotional Development: Infant Mental Health for Practitioners** and **Supervised Field Work in Infant and Toddler Settings.**
- A maximum of six approved credits may be funded with this scholarship. A list of approved for-credit, in-class courses may be accessed at www.pinj.org or www.njcite.org.
- I understand that I may not receive funds from Professional Impact NJ for the same course(s) that I am currently applying for NJ First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship funds.

DOCUMENTATION

- I certify I am a **full-time (at least 30 hours per week) regular employee (not temporary or a substitute)** teaching children birth through age 3 in a licensed child care center currently, and have been for the past year. I understand that this will be verified by one recent pay stub from my center (within the past thirty days) and an original letter from my director verifying my position and number of hours I work per week, and recommending me for the scholarship.
- In order to prove I have fulfilled the training/education requirements for the Infant/Toddler Credential, I must submit copies of certificates of the approved 120 hours of non-credit training related to Key Indicators, copy of Infant/Toddler CDA certificate, or official transcripts for 15 college credits related to Key Indicators or an Associate's or Bachelor's degree in Child Development or a related field (see page 2 of the Infant/Toddler Credential Learning Guide).
- I understand that in order to receive a promissory letter, I must submit a fully-completed application, this Handbook signed by me, and a recent paystub **EVERY SEMESTER I AM APPLYING FOR FUNDS.** Once accepted into the scholarship program, I understand I must submit the semester bill and registration within 60 days of that semester's registration deadline in order for my bill to be paid.

- I understand that **FUNDING AMOUNTS AND TIME FRAMES ARE LIMITED AND NOT GUARANTEED.** I understand I CAN NOT be reimbursed for classes that I choose to pay for myself without having a promissory letter before registering for class.
- I understand that I must submit a recommendation letter from a parent of an infant or toddler with whom I have worked in the past recommending me for this scholarship.
- I understand that I must become a member of the NJ Registry by completing pages 3 and 4 of this application in order to qualify for funds.
- I understand that once accepted into the scholarship program, I must submit to NJ First Steps my **official** (in a sealed envelope directly from the college) transcript **upon completion of each course**, documenting a "B-" or better in each course.
- I understand that I am obligated to successfully complete the requirements for the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential and must submit a copy of my certificate upon receipt.
- I understand that applications and documentation are processed **in the order in which they are POSTMARKED OR DATE-STAMPED. I understand that walk-in applications will not be processed while I wait. I understand NJ First Steps does not accept faxes.**

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

- I must work as a **head teacher, group teacher or assistant teacher** in a licensed child care center presently, **for one year prior to application, and for one year after completion of the Infant/Toddler Scholarship Credential**, with children birth to age 3 in order to receive funds.

PENALTIES

- If I leave this field or fail to meet the Employment Conditions specified above, I shall be required to pay back all scholarship funds received for Infant/Toddler Credential college coursework.
- I shall be required to pay back all NJ First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship Funds if I fail to successfully complete all requirements of the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential.
- I shall be required to pay back a portion of the scholarship funds if I fail to receive a "B-" or better in my coursework. Grades will be documented by an **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT for each course taken on scholarship.**

OTHER

- In order to access funds, I must be registered with the *NJ Registry for Childhood Professionals* (application enclosed).
- Applications, pay stubs, transcripts, and *NJ Registry* applications are due **AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH SEMESTER I AM APPLYING FOR FUNDS.** Bills and registration are due within 60 days of that semester's registration. Call your First Steps Region for exact dates.
- The NJ First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship Program is effective March 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011.
- Funds are limited and are subject to collection if I fail to successfully complete all requirements, by the NJ Department of Human Services' Set Off Individual Liability (SOIL) system.
- I give permission to NJ First Steps to request and/or exchange with the bursar or registrar of the college/university named on the application any information needed to complete my scholarship application or for statistical purposes for all semesters/terms in which I have applied for NJ First Steps Infant/Toddler Scholarship funds.
- I VERIFY I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND WILL ABIDE BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NJ FIRST STEPS INFANT/TODDLER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. I have fully completed and signed the application and Handbook. I have submitted all documentation when due, and understand that the scholarship cannot be awarded if I do not successfully complete the application process by the designated deadlines. I understand that incomplete applications will be returned and will not be processed. I understand that funds are limited and are not guaranteed.**

Print Name

Signature of Applicant

Date