



New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential Frequently Asked Questions

What is the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential?

The *NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* is a qualification earned by teachers, family child care providers, and paraprofessionals who have demonstrated their knowledge of infant/toddler mental health: social/emotional well-being, child development with a focus on infants and toddlers, and their skills in working with infants, toddlers and their families.

Who should earn the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential?

The credential is intended for use by professionals and paraprofessionals working in the field of infant/toddler care in all settings, including center-based care, family child care programs, and community-based programs that support infants, toddlers and their families. It is especially beneficial for those who have not completed a college degree or whose degree is in another field.

Why should I get the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential?

Earning the *NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* is a professional development statement that you have the knowledge, special skills, and experience necessary to provide the highest level of quality infant/toddler care and education. The Credential recognizes your accomplishment and will support your professional career growth. The Credential may also allow you to participate in future state quality enhancement programs or to qualify for increased or expanded state early care and education regulations in licensed center-based child care and registered family child care programs.

How is the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential different from other credentials?

The *NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* requires two college level courses which include a practicum where candidates can demonstrate their mastery of the learning content and an in-depth emphasis on social/emotional development and infant/toddler mental health. This special focus sets the *NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* apart as an important statement of a commitment to quality for infant and toddler caregivers and teachers.

What are the eligibility requirements to earn the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential?

At the time that the practitioner submits an initial application for the Credential process, s/he should have obtained at least six (6) months work experience (paid, volunteer or through student practicum) with children under three years of age in a licensed child care center, family child care home, or early intervention service program. Individuals not meeting eligibility requirements will be considered on an individual basis.

How can I earn the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential?

Candidates can earn the *NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* by documenting appropriate work experience, education and training hours, completing a portfolio, submitting letters of recommendation, a personal essay, a statement of commitment, a completed *Learning Guide for the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* (see the *Learning Guide* for an alternative to this requirement), and an advisor's feedback on an observation and filed experience.

What training hours and/or education are required?

The appropriate training hours can be 1) complete 120 approved non-credit training hours (completed within 5 years) related to the eight Key Indicators listed in the *Learning Guide*, **OR** 2) earn an Infant/Toddler CDA or other CDA which includes 30 hours of infant/toddler specific training, **OR** 3) complete 9 college credits from an accredited institution that are related to the eight Key Indicators, **OR** 4) complete an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education, child development, human development, or related field. Each candidate is also **required** to take the following two college courses: Social and Emotional Development: Infant Mental Health for Practitioners **and** Supervised Field Work in Infant and Toddler Settings

Where can I get the Learning Guide for the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential?

You can go to the Coalition of Infant/Toddler Educators (CITE) website at www.njcite.org to purchase the *Learning Guide*. The *Learning Guide* costs \$20.00. You can download for free the *Technical Assistance Manual for the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* which further assists you with the *Learning Guide* at www.njcite.org.

Where can I take the two required college courses?

CITE maintains a list on their website www.njcite.org of the colleges offering the courses.

Where can I complete the non-credit training hours?

The 120 non-credit training hours (with an approved instructor) will be offered through the CITE annual conference, local child care resource and referral agencies and independent consultants.

Where can I find a list of approved instructors and course locations?

A candidate should consult the NJ Workforce Registry website at www.njccis.com for approved instructors and a listing of available courses and their locations. From the Home page, go to *Find Instructors*. To find available courses and locations, go to *Find Training*.

I am already caring for infants and toddlers can this be my Supervised Field Work with my employer or director writing the observation and feedback?

No, all candidates are required to complete the college level coursework *Supervised Field Work in Infant and Toddler Settings* during which the Instructor will do the observation and give the feedback.

If I took child development courses in college do I need to take the Infant Mental Health course?

CITE has established an Infant/Toddler Credential Council to review a candidate's college transcript to determine eligibility based on the documentation of infant and toddler content in courses. A candidate may be asked to submit the course syllabus or description, or an additional essay demonstrating knowledge of infant and toddler social/emotional well-being.

What if I have a different CDA or a CCP credential?

If a candidate has a current standing CDA other than an Infant/Toddler CDA, such as a Family Child Care or Preschool, or is a Certified Childcare Professional, CITE has established an Infant/Toddler Credential Council to review these candidate's eligibility based the documentation of infant and toddler content in these credentials. A candidate with any of these credentials may be asked to complete additional training hours related to the infants and toddlers or submit an additional essay demonstrating knowledge of infant and toddler care and education.

What if I have an Associate or Bachelor degree in a different field of study?

The Infant/Toddler Credential Council will review a candidate's eligibility based on the documentation of infant and toddler content in the degree. A candidate with any of these qualifications may be asked to complete additional training hours related to the infants and toddlers or submit an additional essay demonstrating knowledge of infant and toddler care and education.

What should be in the portfolio?

The portfolio should demonstrate how knowledge of infant and toddler care and education is applied to program implementation. Some options for documenting competency are video, photo journal, written child study, research paper, etc.

Where can I find the application and what does it cost to earn the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential?

The *NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* Application and all corresponding forms can be downloaded from the CITE website at www.njcite.org. The Administration fee for the Credential is \$350 plus the \$20 purchase of the *Learning Guide for the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential*. The candidate will also be required to register at no cost with the NJ Workforce Registry at www.njccis.com.

What if I don't have access to a computer?

Although CITE prefers all applications and corresponding documents be submitted via email, flash drive, or on a CD Rom, they will accept hard copies via regular mail.

How can I verify my work experience with children?

Verification of at least six (6) months working with infants and toddlers under three years of age can be a letter from an employer, center director, faculty advisor, or for a family child care provider, letter(s) from parent(s) in the program.

How long do you have to complete the process?

The training hours must be completed within 5 years and the college coursework within 2 years of submitting the Credential Application.

How long will the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential be in good standing?

The *NJ Infant/Toddler Credential* will be valid for four years.

What is the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential renewal criteria?

In order to renew the Credential, a renewal application must be completed and submitted to CITE along with documentation of 12 hours of infant/toddler specific professional development completed since earning the Credential, a reflective essay, statement of commitment reflecting goals and commitment to profession, proof of current CITE and NJ Workforce Registry membership. The renewal will be valid for four years.