



NJ First Steps Infant Toddler Initiative Scholarship Program

The New Jersey First Steps Infant Toddler Initiative is pleased to announce the availability of scholarship funds for infant and toddler practitioners employed in New Jersey licensed child care centers. These funds are made available through the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and are to be used to increase the number of infant and toddler practitioners obtaining the New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential in child care centers in New Jersey. All funding is subject to federal and state auditing and monitoring.

The ARRA funding is time-limited and must be expended by June 30, 2011. Scholarship funds will be distributed until such time or as long as funds are available. Funding is available for infant and toddler practitioners in New Jersey licensed child care centers to cover the tuition, fees and book stipend of the two **approved** college in-class, three credit courses (six credits total) leading toward the New Jersey 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 New Jersey in-class three credit courses.

Eligibility Requirements

Infant and toddler practitioners in licensed New Jersey child care centers may be eligible to receive up to \$4,000 to cover the tuition, fees and book stipend of the two approved college for-credit classes (six credits) leading toward the New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential. Candidates must meet the following criteria:

- √ Candidate works directly with children birth through age three as a head teacher, group teacher, or assistant teacher in a licensed New Jersey child care center.
- √ Candidate works full-time (at least 30 hours per week) currently, for one year prior to application, and for one year following completion of the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential in a licensed child care center serving infants and toddlers.
- √ Candidate must have completed the training/education requirements of the New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential, which include: 120 hours of non-credit training related to the Infant/Toddler Credential Key Indicators **or** the Infant/Toddler CDA **or** 15 college credits related to the Infant/Toddler Credential Key Indicators **or** an Associate's or Bachelor's degree in Child Development or a related field (see page 2 of the "New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential Learning Guide").
- √ Candidate must successfully obtain the NJ Infant/Toddler Credential upon completion of the scholarship-funded coursework.
- √ Candidate must obtain a grade of B- or better in both classes taken on scholarship.

Interested infant/toddler practitioners who meet the eligibility requirements should contact the New Jersey First Steps Agency for the county in which they work (see the back cover of the enclosed "Handbook of Rules and Regulations").