

# Rhode Island Infant/Toddler Credential Recommendations

September 2018

## Background

Across the U.S., states have developed infant/toddler credentials as a strategy to formally recognize individuals (most often, individuals working in the child care field) who have acquired basic, intermediate, or advanced skills and knowledge needed to promote strong infant and toddler development. States develop infant/toddler credentials as a strategy to improve the quality of child care and other early childhood programs available for children under age three.

As of 2014, there were 28 states in the U.S. that awarded an infant/toddler professional credential or certificate, including nearby states Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. See the 2014 [State Infant/Toddler Credential Overview](#) for details. As of September 2017 there were 35 states that awarded an infant/toddler credential, certificate or endorsement (a 25% gain).

In 2015, the Rhode Island Early Learning Council identified a set of recommendations to improve policies for infants and toddlers. One of these recommendations was to “explore the development of a state infant/toddler credential that crosses service sectors (child care, home visiting, and Early Intervention) and recognizes an individual’s qualifications for working with children under age three and their families. These recommendations included linking the credential to higher education systems at entry level, AA, and BA levels.

Also in 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded an Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership continuing grant to Children’s Friend to implement the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) model in Rhode Island. The EHS-CCP model brings Early Head Start standards and services to child care programs that serve very low income working parents. The idea is to provide supplementary funding and resources to bring child care programs up to the Early Head Start quality standards, including requiring infant/toddler child care teachers to have, at a minimum, a national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a state-issued infant/toddler credential. Children’s Friend asked the state to develop a Rhode Island infant/toddler credential that included college credit to incorporate into the EHS-CCP initiative.

In October 2016, the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Child Care requested the support of the Office of Child Care: State Capacity Building Center to convene a stakeholder meeting for the purpose of prioritizing Infant/Toddler initiatives. The top priority identified was to develop and implement a RI Infant/Toddler Credential.

A task force was convened to develop recommendations for the state. The task force was facilitated by Ronna Schaffer, the Infant Toddler Specialist for U.S Department of Health and Human Services Region I and met monthly from February 2017 through August 2018 to develop recommendations for consideration by state policymakers. The task force followed the planning tool [Credentials for the Infant/Toddler Child Care Workforce: A technical Assistance Tool for Child Care and Development Fund Administrators](#). The task force also referred to the state’s existing [Workforce Knowledge and Competencies for Early Childhood Teachers](#) Zero to Three’s [Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators](#) , [National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards for Professional Preparation](#) and [The Competency Guidelines® And Endorsement For Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health \(IMH-E®\)](#)

This document presents the recommendations of the task force to DHS.

### Purpose of the Infant/Toddler Credential

- Recognize the value of the infant/toddler workforce as part of the early childhood profession and the special skills and knowledge needed to deliver high quality care and early learning experiences to children under age three.
- Codify the demonstrated knowledge and skills (competencies) that the infant/toddler workforce needs to have in order to provide high quality care in both centers and family child care homes.
- Improve the quality of infant/toddler child care available in Rhode Island by establishing a cornerstone for a career pathway.

### Guiding Principles for the Infant/Toddler Credential

- Acknowledge the current workforce – all levels of experience and qualifications
- Recognize the national CDA credential and include high quality professional development as well as college credit courses
- Integrate the I/T Credential into current systems - Licensing, QRIS, WKC

### Summary of Decisions from Strategic Planning Tool

#### *Credentials for the Infant/Toddler Child Care Workforce*

#### RI Summary of Decisions

Step	Decision	Status	Comments
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Step I: Plan to Plan	Who will be involved in the task force	Completed	Participants identified
Step II: Define the Purpose	What is the purpose for the credential	Completed	Purpose statement identified
Step III: Define the Credential	What will it be called?  Credential, certificate, or endorsement?	Completed	Credential
	Will it be Voluntary or mandatory?	Completed	Voluntary
	Will it be single or multi-level?	Completed	Multi – 2 levels  I/T credential I  I/T credential II
	Who are we designing the credential for? Who can earn the credential?	Completed	Designed for I/T teachers in child care and Early Head Start settings – open to all who work with I/T.  Designed to be attainable by the existing workforce that may have completed very little formal education post high school.
	What will caregivers need to do to earn the credential?	Completed	Requirements identified for Level I and Level 2.
Step IV: Develop the Credential	Curriculum: what exists and where are gaps?	Completed	Reviewed available courses and PD. Crosswalk developed.

	Where will this fit into the current systems? i.e. Licensing, QRIS, Career Pathways	Completed	Not required for licensing at this time. Should be considered in QRIS and Career Pathway
	What entity/entities will deliver the credential training	Completed	College coursework offered by any accredited public or private college in Rhode Island. Professional Development to be offered by the Center for Early Learning Professionals any approved professional development provider. College coursework offered by any accredited public or private college and professional development completed outside of the state will also be considered.
	What entity will be responsible for oversight?	Completed	DHS could potentially contract this oversight to the entity responsible for professional development, to a college or university, or to the entity that manages the registry.
Step V: Award the Credential	What entity will issue, monitor and track the credential?	Completed.	DHS could be responsible for awarding the credential directly or as part of a professional development contract. Credentials should be tracked

			through the Workforce Registry in ECEDS
Step VI: Fiscal Planning and Preparation	What expenses will be needed? What are the existing resources available?	Completed.	<p>Observation tool/s and process</p> <p>Compensation strategy to incentivize</p> <p>Resources for evaluation</p> <p>Resources for marketing</p> <p>Resources for tracking system (data)</p>
	How will the credential be marketed to public and I/T workforce?	TBD	
	What, how and when will the effectiveness of the credential be evaluated?	Completed	Resources will be needed to determine this

**Recommendations for Requirements**

**Level I I/T Credential**

Option A:

One 3 Credit College Course in Infant Toddler Development and Learning (which includes social and emotional development

**PLUS**

Current Infant/Toddler Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)

**PLUS**

A minimum of one (1) year professional experience working with Infants and Toddler in licensed facility (Center or FCC)

Option B:

One 3 Credit College Course in Infant Toddler Development and Learning (which includes social and emotional development

**PLUS**

75 hours of Professional Development (PD) with content, specific to infants and toddlers, that has been approved and/ or offered by Center for Early Learning Professionals (C-ELP) or a nationally/state recognized agency or college credits completed through a nationally accredited institute of higher learning

Training must address each domain area, (these align with current RI WKC) and include content specific to Infant and toddler

- a. Infant/Toddler Curriculum
- b. Infant/Toddler Assessment
- c. Infant/Toddler Physical Health, Safety and Wellness
- d. Professionalism
- e. Family Engagement

**PLUS**

A minimum of one (1) year professional experience working with Infants and Toddler in licensed facility (Center or FCC)

**Level II I/T Credential**

All requirements of Level I I/T Credential

**PLUS**

Six (6) additional college credits in topic areas related to early care and education and are aligned with the definitions or descriptions of the RI WKC Domains

**PLUS**

At least two (2) years professional experience working with Infants and Toddler in licensed facility (Center or Family Child Care)

**PLUS**

An observation using a nationally valid and reliable Infant/toddler observation tool as determined by DHS (e.g. ITERS, Infant CLASS, Toddler CLASS, FCCERS or another tool TBD). A minimum benchmark should be determined by DHS that will be acceptable in order to achieve the credential. If this minimum is not reached, an Individual professional development plan

(IPDP) will be developed and submitted to the awarding entity. An observation can be repeated after 6 months to determine if benchmark and IPDP goals are met.

### Additional recommendations/cautions/considerations

The credential, whether level I or II, should be renewed every 3-5 years. Criteria for renewal will need to be identified. This criteria should include, at a minimum, additional professional development or coursework and an additional observation.

The state should review the national [Infant Mental Health Endorsement](#) coordinated in Rhode Island by the Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health, and consider adopting as a credential for professionals who have experience working with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, parents, and or other caregivers and meet the educational , work, training and reflective supervision/consultation requirement as specified for each category of Endorsement® (e.g. home visitors, Early Intervention professionals, Education Coordinators, child care directors, etc.)"

#### *Alignment considerations*

Achievement of the I/T credential should be aligned to Staff Qualifications & On-Going Professional Development in Bright Stars; consider how working towards the credential can meet requirements within revised Bright Stars. This alignment can also serve an incentive for professionals to achieve the credential as it increases employment opportunities at higher star rated programs. The work group can provide recommended language for this revision.

Consider a licensing requirement that in a center that serves a certain number of infants and toddlers; a specific number of staff have the I/T credential.

A wage strategy that may be developed by the state could connect to achievement of the I/T credential (include Family CC and HV). The group recognizes that wage enhancement and professional qualifications work in conjunction with each other, one can feed the other.

#### *Workforce Study*

A workforce study should be done to determine the need for this credential. The group also suggested that the workforce registry could be a resource for collecting data about the workforce and tracking/administering credential attainment.

*Some task force member have the following questions/concerns:*

#### *ITERS:*

The tool was not designed by the authors as an individual teacher evaluation, and therefore it would be inappropriate to use it as such. It measures very little that relates to direct teacher

performance, and is not an appropriate platform for developing individual professional development goals. It can be used in self-assessment, but not as an evaluative tool.

When using the ITERS, a candidate for the credential could demonstrate strong teaching practice but be hampered due to a lack of program resources (equipment, materials etc). Can an interview process be integrated about what could be in place? An individual professional development plan may not always be appropriate if scores are *beyond candidate's control*.

*Renewal criteria:*

Are exceptions in place for people who received credential after receiving a degree? Is there parity between what we are asking preschool teachers? After 12-18 credits (or other number) is renewal no longer necessary? There is also a resource issue – if every credentialed educator keeps needing renewal how do we insure there is enough money to resource new people coming into the field.

Requiring a renewal observation means person may need to be an active practitioner. Can credential be banked until it needs to be actively renewed? Need to think about people who take time off to raise children, care for family member, or temporarily pursue other jobs due to financial home obligations.

*Pilot*

The task force supports consideration of rolling out the credential as a pilot program.

**Professional Development/Coursework Opportunities**

The following table identifies options that are offered through RI Institutions of Higher Education or CCDF funded Professional Development Programs as of August 2018, which will fulfill the requirements for the Infant/Toddler Credential.

Additional options may be available through professional development that has been approved by the Center for Early Learning Professionals or nationally recognized agencies and courses offered by nationally accredited institutions of higher education.

3 College Credit Infant and Toddler Development and Learning	
Source for courses	TITLE
CCRI	HMNS 2190: Infant-Toddler Care Methods and Materials
RIC	ECED 310: Conceptualizing Infant Toddler Care and Education ECED 419: Early care and Education, Birth- Three
RWU	EDPR 100: Child Development and Practice: Infants and Toddlers EDPR 105: Professionalism: Infants and Toddlers
URI	HDF 306: Infant and Toddler Growth and Development (4 credits)
Infant/Toddler Curriculum	



Source for courses		TITLE
CCRI	HMNS 2030: Emergent Literacy HMNS 2120: Curriculum for Young Children HMNS 2190: Infant-Toddler Care Methods and Materials	
RIC	ECED 312: Infant toddler Cognitive Development and Learning ECED 314: I/T S/E Development and Learning ECED 416: Infant Toddler Language Development and Learning	
RWU	EDPR 110: Applied Social and Emotional Development EDPR 120: Applied Cognitive, Physical and Linguistic Development	
URI	HDF 203: Introduction to Working with Young Children	
Source for PD		TITLE
C-ELP	Two is Not the New Five: understanding I/T Development Responsive Caregiving: Supporting the Needs of I/T Beyond Colors, Shapes and Numbers: Facilitating Language and Learning for Toddlers Discoveries and Explorations: Quality Learning Environments for Infants and Toddlers Becoming a Pedagogical Leader: I/T Curriculum and Development Responsive Caregiving: Putting It Into Practice (admin. series) Using the Infant and Toddler CLASS to Improve Program Quality Planning and Implementing Curriculum in a Multi-Age Setting	
Ready To Learn R2LP	Providence Talks Literacy for I/T Two is not the New Five Mind in the Making Supporting Dual language learners	
Infant/Toddler Assessment		
Source for courses		TITLE
CCRI	HMNS 2060: Characteristics and Needs of Special Populations	
RIC	SPED 415: Early Childhood Development Screening and Assessment	
RWU	EDPR 220: Planning and Assessment in Early Childhood EDPR 210: Highly Individualized Teaching and Learning	
Source for PD		TITLE
C-ELP	An Introduction to I/T Assessment: Observation and Documentation	
R2LP	N/A	
Infant/Toddler Physical Health, Safety and Wellness		
Source for courses		TITLE
CCRI	HMNS 1080: Health, Nutrition and the Young Child	
RIC	HPE 344: Infant Toddler Health and Wellness	
RWU	EDPR 140: Health and Safety	
URI	HDF 208: Health and Wellness of the Young Child	
Source for PD		TITLE

C-ELP	Two is Not the New Five: Understanding Infants and Toddler Development Keeping Children Healthy: Nutrition and Physical Activity Health and Safety Online Modules Using the ITERS-R to Improve Program Quality
R2LP	Responsive Feeding – Best Practices for Infants and Toddlers
Professionalism	
Source for courses	TITLE
CCRI	HMNS 1210;2310;2410: Field Placement and Seminar- ECE
RIC	ECED 479: Best Practices in I/T Settings
RWU	EDPR 105: Professionalism: Infants and Toddlers EDU 200: Foundations of Education EDU 220: Engaging Interactions and Environments EDU 270: Practicum
Source for PD	TITLE
C-ELP	Becoming a Pedagogical Leader: I/T Curriculum and Development Responsive Caregiving: Putting It Into Practice Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Online Modules Using the ITERS-R to Improve Program Quality Using the Infant and Toddler CLASS to Improve Program Quality
R2LP	N/A
Family Engagement	
Source for courses	TITLE
CCRI	HMNS 2150: Parent and Child Relations
RIC	ECED 332: Building Family, School and Community Partnerships
RWU	EDPR 150: Family, community and Cultural Partnerships
URI	HDF 305: Family Engagement in Diverse Early Childhood Settings
Source for courses	TITLE
C-ELP	Family Engagement
R2LP	Family Engagement, Providence Talks (includes a family engagement component) Mind in the Making

## Acknowledgements

### Invited Participants

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