

BEST BEGINNINGS QUALITY INITIATIVES

CHILD CARE 7 – 3c

Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Stipend Award and Certified Infant Toddler Course Completion Award

Supersedes: Child Care 7-3c (4/9/16)

References: 37.95.102, 37.95.1001-1021 ARM
45 CFR Part 98.51 (b) (2) (ii)

General Information

The Best Beginnings Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Stipend Award and Certified Infant Toddler Course Completion Award are offered to help reduce the turnover of infant toddler certified caregivers in early childhood programs. The goal of this stipend is to maximize the continuity of care for as many infants and toddlers as possible in child care settings. Research shows that a child's ability to develop a healthy attachment to parents and other caregivers is critical for overall development. The early interactions between an infant and a primary caregiver are instrumental in shaping the child's brain, laying the foundation for future learning and emotional growth. When that relationship changes frequently or is suddenly discontinued, the development of the child's brain is also interrupted. It is vital that infants and toddlers receive responsive and nurturing care from a knowledgeable caregiver over an extended period. This is also important for parents and caregivers because building trusting relationships takes time and is the key to high quality infant toddler care.

Who May Apply

Montana Certified Infant Toddler caregivers (as defined in Section 7-3a Infant/Toddler Certification) may apply for a Certified Infant Toddler stipend by meeting the following criteria:

1. Work a minimum of 5 hours per day (M-F) for the Continuity of Care Stipend or a minimum 15 hours per week for the Course completion award;
2. Provide direct care to infants and/or toddlers;
3. Care must be provided in a licensed facility; and
4. Be current at any level on the Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry.

Application Process

Once an individual has successfully completed the appropriate training required to become a certified infant toddler caregiver (see section 7-3a for more information) they will be awarded a certificate.

Individuals may apply for the Infant Toddler Course completion award once the course has been completed, but no later than 1 year past date of course completion. Individuals may apply for the Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver Stipend award six months after the date of course completion.

Application Evaluation and Selection Process

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Applications and W-9s must be complete and signed.
- Applicants must be current on the Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry at any level. Proof of current Practitioner Registry status must be attached to the application form.
- Individuals must be working in the same licensed facility within the previous six months prior to application for the Continuity of Care Stipend award.

The Department reserves the right to deny any or all applications based on availability of funding.

If the applicant has not completed the requirements to become a Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver, the application will be denied. If the applicant is not working for a licensed or registered child care facility, the application will be denied. If the facility at which an applicant is employed is not licensed, the application will be denied.