

# New Jersey CITE Survey Results: Infant & Toddler Workforce



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**In Brief.** Educators working in the New Jersey infant and toddler child care workforce earn less than others working in the early childhood field.

This makes it hard for child care centers to recruit and retain educators in infant and toddler classrooms, which makes it more difficult for parents to find infant and toddler care.

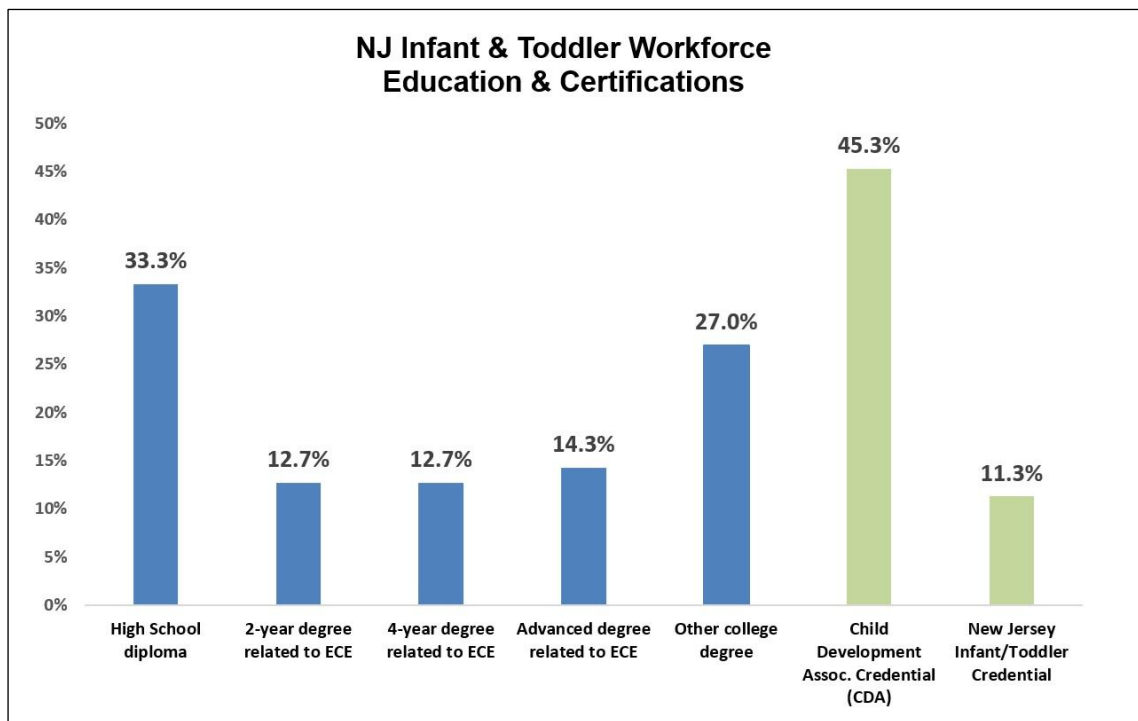
Family child care home educators also care for infants and toddlers but are limited in the number of children they can serve. They, too, earn low wages.

The New Jersey Coalition of Infant/Toddler Educators (CITE) conducted a compensation survey of the infant and toddler workforce in 2024. The results illustrate the difficulties faced by those working with our youngest children.

## The NJ CITE Infant & Toddler Compensation Survey

The NJ CITE survey included 53 responses statewide of individuals working in child care programs with infants and toddlers. The average respondent reported working with infants and toddlers for 14 years although the range varied greatly with more than 40% reporting fewer than 10 years of experience.

About two-thirds (66.7%) of respondents reported some level of college education. More than half of the infant and toddler workforce reported holding either a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or NJ Infant/Toddler Credential. The Credential is important because it means that these individuals working with infants and toddlers have demonstrated the skills and competencies in early childhood that support the healthy development of children.



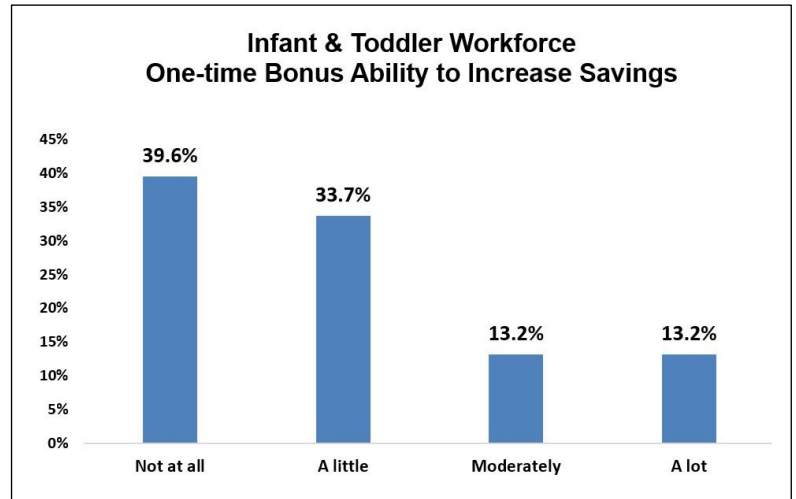
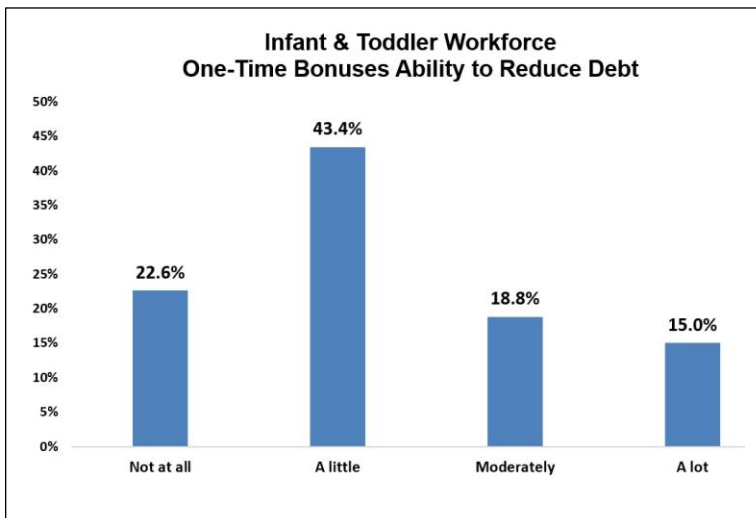
## Infant and Toddler Workforce Financial Struggles

The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment reports that 11.1% of the NJ early childhood workforce live at or below the poverty line. About 43% of the child care workforce relies on public assistance to get by (e.g., Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

The NJ CITE survey found that 73.6% of the infant and toddler child care workforce struggled with stress related to money in the past month.

- 66% struggle to cover monthly living expenses.
- About 70% either struggle to cover monthly expenses or are unable to cover them

The infant and toddler workforce were thankful for the one-time bonuses provided by the Division of Family Development during COVID. However, for too many, one-time bonuses did not help them significantly reduce debt or increase savings.



Too many child care educators are employed in programs that do not offer basic benefits offered by other employers in the community. The CITE survey asked the infant and toddler workforce about their top three wishes for benefits to be offered by employers. The top responses found,

- 88.7% health insurance
- 47.2% paid time off
- 34% retirement plans where employers contribute to employee accounts

Nearly half (47.1%) of respondents said they have considered leaving the field because of their lack of benefits.

Other states have invested in supplemental child care worker pay to address recruitment and retention challenges. CITE respondents ranked a minimum child care pay program enacted in Vermont as #1 and a monthly pay supplement for child care workers enacted in Maine as #2 among options enacted by other states for replication in New Jersey.

### CITE Recommendations

- Increase investments to support recruitment and retention among the infant and toddler workforce.
- Invest in child care employee benefits as another recruitment and retention tool.