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Irving B. Harris

Infant Specialist Certificate Program



Working with infants and families in the context of their culture and community is the hallmark of the infant and family field. If you have a particular passion for work with infants, toddlers, and their families, there has never been a better time to pursue infant studies. And there has never been a better place to do it than Erikson.

New theoretical frameworks and research findings of the past two decades have greatly increased our knowledge of infant, toddler, and family development. Federal legislation and state initiatives are creating a greater demand for service providers with expertise in working with young children and their families in a range of settings.

Erikson's infant specialist certificate program provides you with the training you need for the complex role of infant/family specialist. The program is an 18-credit-hour, post-baccalaureate training program designed to prepare experienced professionals, including those with advanced degrees, to work with children from birth through age three and their families. Past participants have included professionals from such disciplines as child development, education, nursing, social work, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology, and speech and language pathology.

Course descriptions

Selected courses may also be offered online.

I390 Infant/Toddler Growth and Development:

Typical and Atypical

(3 credit hours)

Summer session; also offered online

This course is designed to introduce students to in-depth knowledge of infant development, including developmental patterns of infants at risk. The knowledge includes understanding of the basic developmental processes in the domains of cognition, social/emotional development, communication, and sensory and motor development. Throughout the course, consideration will be given to the interaction of infant development with social, cultural, and interpersonal environments. Special focus will be placed on the influences of developmental challenges on the child's emerging capacities for engagement in relationships and in learning.

I391 Family Studies

(3 credit hours)

Fall semester

This course gives you an empathic understanding of parenting and family life from pregnancy through the first three years of life. Using family systems and attachment theory as organizing frameworks, the course explores the structure and function of families, psychological processes of parenting, and the development of the parent/infant/family relationship within the context of culture and community. Conceptual models of stress and coping guide the exploration of family vulnerability and resiliency. The contributions and challenges of early

childhood disability to family relationships are explored. Further, the course guides you in examining the nature of the relationship between the family and service provider and the tenets of relationship-based, family-centered approaches to infant/family work.

I392 Infant/Toddler Screening and Assessment

(3 credit hours)

Summer session; also offered online

Prerequisite: 30 hours of hands-on, direct experiences with infants and toddlers or consent of Sharon Syc, clinical associate professor and codirector of infant specialist program. Master's degree students must successfully complete C439 before enrolling in this course.

This course takes a relationship-based developmental approach to observation, screening, and assessment of children from birth through age three. Assessment is viewed as an integral part of the intervention process and as a collaboration between parents and providers. Students are trained to focus on underlying developmental processes as well as the appearance of individual milestones in cognitive, social/emotional, communication, and sensory and motor development. Students are guided in partnering with parents to assess the child's strengths and challenges to development, and to identify the family's priorities for services. Selected screening tools, standardized tests, and criterion-referenced instruments are reviewed. Students receive introductory training in one screening and one assessment tool, including administration, interpretation, referral, and recommendations for developmental intervention. The rationale

and practices for screening, referral, and assessment in various infant/toddler settings (e.g., child care, Early Head Start, early intervention) are examined. Students taking the course online for academic credit will be required to attend a two-day, campus-based HELP training seminar in July. Proposals for alternatives to meet this campus-based training seminar course requirement for students living at a distance may be submitted to the course instructor.

I393 Prevention/Early Intervention Methods

(3 credit hours)

For students specializing in prevention/early intervention

Spring semester

This course examines the relationship-based philosophy, principles, strategies, and interventions that underlie effective early intervention and primary prevention services for infants and toddlers at risk of developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

In the first half of this course, special focus is placed on the design and implementation of relationship-based, family-centered, child sensitive services; on the development of collaborative relationships between professionals and families to support the family, the parent-child relationship, and infant toddler development. Students are expected to become involved in the “parallel process” (“Do unto others as you would have others do unto others”) by applying these principles and practices in their class projects involving families and as part of class participation. Although the course blends theory and research with relationship-

building strategies and reflective practice, the emphasis is on students applying what they are learning.

The second half of this course examines the legislation, philosophy, policies, and practices of the prevention and early intervention service systems for infants and toddlers at risk of developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Special focus is placed on identifying markers of risk and delay and on the implementation of infant/family service plans within a range of environments. Intervention strategies will be presented for working with parents around infant toddler issues, and for working with families and their infants and toddlers at risk for delays or with developmental disabilities. Emphasis will be placed on skill building activities and planning interventions.

I361 Designing Quality Child Care for Infants, Toddlers, and their Families

(3 credit hours)

For students specializing in infant/toddler child care

Spring semester

This course is designed to address the key principles and policies underlying the design of quality child care programs for children under three and their families. Building on a model of relationship-based care, this course provides an opportunity for child care staff to create individual program philosophies that will help guide day-to-day practice. Each class will be divided into two parts. Lectures will cover topics on which to build a foundation for creating a program philosophy that will effectively guide and inform relationship-based practice. Teams of

Admission

administrators and caregivers will then be guided through a program design process in which they will examine their current policies and philosophy and explore potential avenues for further growth in the areas covered in each lecture.

I394/I395 Internship and Seminar I, II

(3 credit hours each semester)

Fall and Spring semesters

The internship consists of 10 hours per week of directed field experience, tailored to your learning needs and supported through individual supervision and an internship process seminar. Your faculty adviser helps you select an internship site. An on-site supervisor provides you with guidance and weekly supervision. You can intern within your place of employment if you undertake a special project focused on a new aspect of your work with infants and toddlers. An Erikson faculty adviser provides individual reflective supervision and goes on-site to observe and meet with you and the site supervisor. You also participate in a monthly three-hour infant studies internship process seminar. If you wish to meet the Illinois requirements for a credential as an early intervention specialist in developmental therapy, you must take I397/I398 Prevention/Early Intervention Methods: A and B along with the internship and must intern under a developmental therapist in Part C early intervention services.

You must have a bachelor's degree and an undergraduate grade point average of 2.75 or higher to be considered for admission to the program. Requirements for admission include an application, transcripts of all college and university academic work, three recommendations, a short essay, and a personal interview. Professionals who are currently working with infants and families and those who seek a career move into the infant and family field are encouraged to apply. Applicants will be interviewed and selected on the basis of their academic performance, work history, and suitability for the field. The priority application deadline is March 15. We will continue to accept applications after the deadline if space is available.

Financial aid

Eligible certificate program students may apply for low-interest federal student loans. To be considered for loan assistance, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) available at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

To download an application for admission, visit our web site at www.erikson.edu/applications

For more information about the Irving B. Harris Infant Specialist Certificate Program, contact

Office of Admission

Tel: 312.755.2250

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Specializations

You can specialize in one of two areas: prevention/early intervention or infant/toddler child care. The curriculum for both specializations includes three core courses—Infant/Toddler Growth and Development, Family Studies, and Infant/Toddler Screening and Assessment.

Based on your area of specialization, you will also take the following courses:

- I393 Prevention/Early Intervention Methods (for students specializing in prevention/early intervention)
- I361 Designing Quality Childcare for Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families (for students specializing in infant/toddler child care)

In addition, you will do a two-semester (September through April) internship tied to your area of specialization.

Depending on your prior experience with typically and atypically developing infants, toddlers, young children, and families, you can work toward meeting the requirements for credentialing in Illinois as an early intervention specialist in developmental therapy by taking Prevention/Early Intervention Methods and doing an internship under a developmental therapist in Part C early intervention services.

Special features

- Focused course work and supervision in family support, prevention, early intervention, infant/toddler child care, or a related area of infant specialization.
- Internships in a range of infant/family settings including infant/toddler child care, family support programs, Early Head Start, Healthy Steps, and early intervention.
- A relationship-based approach to infant/family services
- Reflective supervision with a focus on self-knowledge as a vital professional competency
- Small classes and close relationships among faculty and students
- Advanced seminars on special topics (e.g., early brain development and sensory processing)
- Brand new, state-of-the-art facilities in downtown Chicago
- Some online course options
- Experienced and diverse student population

Program length

Course work for the program begins with the summer session (May through July). Students typically complete the program, including course work and internship, in two years.

It is the policy of Erikson Institute not to discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or veteran status in matters of admissions, employment, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates, in accordance with civil rights legislation and institutional commitment. Any alleged violations of this policy should be directed to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty.

Erikson Institute reserves the right to change without notice any statement in this publication concerning, but not limited to, rules, policies, tuition, fees, curricula, and courses.

Other Erikson programs with a focus on infant studies

Infant Mental Health Certificate Program

Experienced infant/family specialists and mental health professionals can pursue a postbaccalaureate, 18-credit hour certificate in infant mental health.

Master of science in child development with infancy specialization

Students can pursue a master's degree and specialize in infancy, focusing on prevention and early intervention.

Year-round professional development programs

Erikson offers numerous short courses, trainings, and workshops for experienced practitioners, including Advanced Practice in Infancy—seminars led by nationally recognized experts that focus on cutting edge issues in infant/family practice, and the Developing Child: Brain and Behavior symposium. Visit our web site for current programs at www.erikson.edu/professionaldevelopment.

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graduate school in child development

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