

# Questions to ask your trainer...

This checklist contains some things you might like to ask & research if you are considering becoming an **INFANT MESSAGE INSTRUCTOR**. The answers should help guide you in evaluating which infant massage training program is best suited to your individual needs.

## DEPTH OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

Quality Infant Massage Instructors require high-level skills in observing babies and parents. You should look for a course that affords you enough face-to-face opportunities to both observe and teach "live" classes as part of your training. **Ask questions like:**

- How many days does your training program run for?
- **Does the training program include an opportunity for me to observe the trainer teach a "live" infant massage class?**
- Will I have the chance to practice teaching an infant massage class, under the direct supervision and observation of the trainer - *before* I do it on my own?

## QUALITY OF CONTENT

Many people are surprised to discover Infant Massage training programs are not all the same, and vary widely in the quality of content and their effectiveness. You should look for studies that have evaluated and researched the specific program offered by the training provider.

**Ask questions like:**

- **Can you tell me which independent medical research studies have evaluated the effectiveness of your organisation's infant massage program?**
- Which industry organisations endorse or recognise this training program?
- **When you offer training that is "hospital-based" or held at a hospital, does this mean your program is endorsed by, or part of the hospital's service, or does it just mean that you have hired a room at the hospital?**
- How do I know that your trainer is up-to-date with the latest developments and research in the field? How can I be confident these standards are maintained?
- **Who established or founded your training program & organisation? Where did they learn infant massage?**

## TRANSPORTABILITY/ INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

International Recognition is important if you want to be able to use your qualification overseas. International recognition is also important because it indicates how well-recognised and regarded the program is by child health experts around the world. **Ask questions like:**

- Besides Australia, where is your organisation officially established? **Can you provide website/contact details for your offices in other countries?**
- **Can you give examples of actual overseas governments, health services or aid/development groups that officially use this program?** Do you have any evidence (e.g. copies of policies or reports) of this?
- What is the process for having my qualification registered in another country if I want to work overseas?
- **What International authorities is this program recognised by?** (Note: Check the website of any international organisations mentioned. Ensure they are specialist infant massage or respected child health authorities qualified to verify the content of the program. Be cautious of "accreditations" from generic educational companies that just "certify" any and all sorts of privately run training programs in any field (e.g. ranging from dancing to secretarial skills) – as they are not necessarily a good sign of quality in infant massage content.

## FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

As with any other specialist skill, it is important to keep your knowledge up to date and maintain professional standards. It is also important that you are well supported to contribute your skills to the community. **Ask questions like:**

- **Can you send me a sample of your newsletter that is provided to your members?**
- What are some of the continuing education events you have offered students and graduates this last year?
- **How does your organisation support me to access financial supports and funding to run infant massage classes once I am qualified?**
- What other membership benefits do you offer graduates?
- **What projects or programs do you offer in the community?**

**FINALLY - ALWAYS CHECK THE FINE PRINT:** Check things for things like late fees, hidden costs, re-submission fees, and always read any contract carefully.

## HANDY HINT:

Infant massage training programs available in Australia vary widely in quality. Only a few programs available in Australia have actually been independently researched & evaluated. When looking for an evidence-based program, ask to see copies of research that mention the training provider by name.



## HANDY HINT:

Write down the answers given to these questions by each infant massage school you speak with. You can then take time to properly evaluate all available choices.

Training to be an infant massage instructor is a big investment. You can choose which questions to ask based on what is most important to you.

*But...* don't be afraid to ask as many of these (or other questions) as you need to make sure you get the best possible training for your specific circumstances.