

## Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

# REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear early childhood professionals,

Our fall calendar is filled with good things for the early childhood community!

First, we invite you to visit our table at Newark's Community Day event, where DIEEC will be sharing information about how we support Delaware early childhood educators and programs in providing high-quality care to our children.

Next, note that registration for two key DIEEC initiatives is now open. We hope you'll sign up to receive a visit from a guest reader during Children's Book Week and, if you're a family child care educator, that you'll register for our annual First State Family Child Care Conference. Both of these events take place in November, but you need to register in advance. Don't miss out!

For programs currently engaged in Quality Improvement Planning, be sure to check the important updates included in this issue of REACH.

Finally, we have new resources to share with you this month. Read Coach's Corner for tips on making the most of multi-age environments; find simple tips for integrating diversity in our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion highlight; and learn more about deaeyc's new resource center that is open to all programs and families!

We look forward to seeing you at a program or event this fall!

With warm regards,  
Kristy Sheffler  
DIEEC Interim Co-Director

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# DIEEC Action Items

## Come See DIEEC at Community Day in Newark!

Early childhood education is a pillar of the community, and DIEEC will be out to spread the word at Newark's annual Community Day event on Sunday, September 15 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Stop by and say hi at the DIEEC table on the University of Delaware Green! Community Day is lots of fun for families and children, with resources, performances, and much more. More information is available on the [city of Newark's public calendar](#); [follow Newark Parks and Recreation on Facebook](#) for the latest news.



## Registration Now Open: 1st State Family Child Care Conference

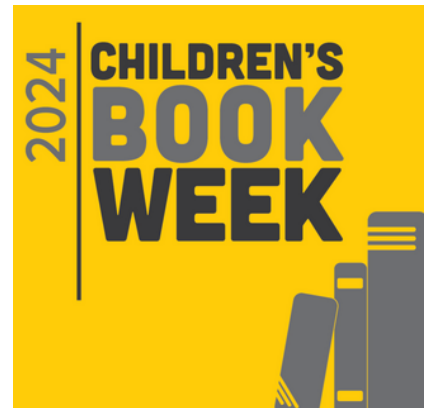
The third annual 1st State Family Child Care Conference will take place on Saturday, November 16 at the Cheer Center in Georgetown. This year's theme is "Your Best Self, For Their Best Future," and we can't wait to connect and share with Delaware's family child care community! To learn more or register, please [visit our conference web page](#). **Registration closes on October 15th.**



*Image: Members of the home-based team planning committee visit the Cheer Center in Georgetown as they prepare for the upcoming conference on November 16.*

## Children's Book Week 2024: Register Now!

Be a part of DIEEC's annual celebration of Children's Book Week, November 4-10! Participating programs receive a visit from a guest reader and books to keep for your program library. Registration is open through October 4. Visit our [Children's Book Week web page](#) to register or learn more.



## Zero to Three Critical Competencies and Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model series focuses on supporting preschool educators to promote young children's healthy social and emotional development, leading to better social skills and fewer challenging behaviors.

Our Zero to Three Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators series focuses on supporting infant and toddler educators to promote social-emotional, cognitive, and language and literacy development.

To learn more, view our NEW on-demand info session, or to apply, please [visit our webpage](#).

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## DIEEC News

### DIEEC Interim Director Announcement

We are pleased to announce that Kristy Sheffler and Heidi Beck will serve as interim co-directors of DIEEC during Rena Hallam's term as interim dean of the University of Delaware's College of Education and Human Development. Kristy and Heidi have long histories of leadership experience at DIEEC and New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS), respectively. The experience they bring to their new roles will ensure that all aspects of DIEEC and NDEHS will continue to run smoothly in the coming year.

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### Key Practice Highlight - Quality Improvement System

Each month, we share resources that Delaware programs can use as they work towards higher levels of quality in a specific key practice. The key practices support quality indicators in Delaware's revised quality improvement system.

This month's highlighted key practices support the Positive Climate and High-Quality Interactions (PCHQ) indicator.

As part of the continuous quality improvement process, program leaders will use tool(s) and/or survey(s) to document improvements in program practices and assess whether their goals have been achieved.

Here are three options that could be used to assess and evaluate your classroom environments to provide insights into the overall climate and interactions:

- [Relationship-Based Competencies to Support Family Engagement](#)
- [Anti-Bias Classroom Observation Checklist Environmental Evaluation](#)

Your quality improvement specialist can assist you in selecting the most suitable tools or surveys for your quality improvement plan.

If you have a resource to share or something that you're doing in your program that we can highlight, we'd love to hear about it! Submit your ideas to [ecinstitute@udel.edu](mailto:ecinstitute@udel.edu) to be included in a future edition of REACH.

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## Coach's Corner: Multi-Age Learning Environments

Family child care homes and Montessori programs have long embraced multi-age learning environments that include children ranging from infants to school-age. More recently, many center-based early childhood programs have adopted this model as well. Curious to know why? [In this month's Coach's Corner](#), Meghan Pallante takes a close look at the benefits of these environments and includes some tips for making the most of them in your own program.



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## The Early Learning Center (ELC) at the University of Delaware (UD) Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

DIEEC is proudly partnering with the ELC on the CCAMPIS grant (Child Care Access Means Parents In School) that provides child care funding support for UD students. [Read more about the "living-learning laboratory" at the ELC.](#)

*Image: Infants play with blocks, balls and other colorful toys in UD's Early Learning Center.*



## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Highlight

How can we teach children to understand and genuinely value people who look, sound and act differently? One way to do this in early childhood education settings is to create an environment where diversity is valued, modeled and taught. [Check out this article by Pennsylvania's Promise for Children for some simple, yet effective ways to incorporate diversity in your program.](#)

# Quality Improvement Planning

## The Programs and Policy guide for Delaware's Quality Improvement System (QIS) for Fiscal Year 2025 is here!

The Delaware Department of Education's Office of Early Learning has released the [FY25 Program and Policy Guide for Delaware's Quality Improvement System \(QIS\) for Early Care and Education Programs](#). Use this guide as your guide to engaging with the quality improvement system! This guide defines the specific components of quality, outlines how programs can engage in continuous quality improvement, and shares the variety of professional and financial supports that are available to programs, including details on quality improvement awards.

Ready to start working on your plan for this year? Contact your DIEEC quality improvement specialist about scheduling. If you don't have a specialist yet, [submit a request through the Delaware ECE portal](#).

### Applying for a Quality Improvement Award

***Make sure your staff list is current on the Delaware Early Care and Education portal.***

An important message from the Office of Early Learning (OEL). Many programs are preparing to apply for the first round of Quality Improvement Awards. This year the Office of Early Learning is requiring programs to ensure their staff lists are current on the Delaware Early Care and Education Portal prior to applying for an award. According to page 17 of the [Program and Policy Guide for Delaware's Quality Improvement System \(QIS\) for Early Care and Education Programs](#), "...each staff person is required to create a profile to ensure program lists are accurate. All staff included on a budget narrative for a salary increase and/or bonus, must have an accurate profile on the Delaware ECE Portal."

Get a head start on implementing this requirement! Program leaders should:

- Check staff lists on the Delaware ECE Portal.
- If a staff member is missing on your program's list, request that the staff member create a profile on the Portal and identify your program as their place of employment.
- Prior to applying for a Quality Improvement Award, check your staff list again to be certain that all employees are represented.

#### **Key Dates for Quality Improvement Awards:**

- The Delaware Early Care and Education Portal will open on September 3, 2024, at 8 a.m.
- The first application deadline will be September 15, 2024, for an October award.
- School districts must submit applications by the first two deadlines: September 15, 2024, or November 15, 2024.

## **News and opportunities from our partners in the early childhood community**

### **Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (deaeyc) Resource Center Open to Members and the Public**

Deaeyc has a new resource center in Newark dedicated to early childhood educators and families with young children! It is both a lending library and a space where individuals can come to use tools and materials. The center is open to the public and includes additional benefits specifically for deaeyc members. To find information about hours, location, and more, visit [www.deaeyc.org/resourcecenter](http://www.deaeyc.org/resourcecenter). Next open dates are Thursday, September 19 from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. and Saturday, September 21 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

## Family, Friend & Neighbor Appreciation Week is September 8-13

Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) care is a broad term encompassing home-based child care provided by caregivers who typically have a previous relationship with the children for whom they care. Many families use more than one child care arrangement, often combining center-based or family-based child care with care provided by grandparents or neighbors. Learn more about the celebration on [Home Grown's website](#).

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## In Case You Missed It

### Important Update from the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)

Starting January 1, 2025, DEPD Now trainings will be discontinued. If you are currently enrolled in any DEPD Now training, please ensure you complete it by December 31, 2024, to receive credit on your Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) transcript. For more information, see the Online Learning section of our [On-Site/Online learning page](#).

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### DIEEC Public Calendar

DIEEC's public calendar is a great way to keep up with what's happening in the early childhood community. Upcoming events are listed on the bottom left side of our homepage, and you can also [click through to the full calendar](#). Hover over an event name to get all the details: who, what, when, where and how to join in!

# DIEEC Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs)

## Upcoming Free Opportunities

DIEEC's professional learning experiences (PLEs) are available at no cost to you. Check out these upcoming offerings.

### Virtual-Live and Hybrid Professional Learning Experiences

- **Bridging the Connection Gap: Individualizing Relationships**, a 3-hour introductory course starting on 9/12.
- **Anti-Bias Education: Identity**, a 4-hour intermediate course starting on 9/14.
- **Advanced Assessment for Administrators: Data-Driven Decision Making**, a 9-hour advanced course starting on 9/16.
- **The Business of Early Childhood: Mission and Vision: The What, Why, and How**, an 8-hour advanced experience starting on 9/16.
- **The Business of Early Childhood: Your Influence, as a Leader, in Creating a Great Place to Work**, an 8-hour intermediate experience starting on 9/18.
- **A Series of Conversations for Family Child Care Networks: Understanding Head Start Program Performance Standards- Family Engagement**, a 3-hour intermediate experience starting on 9/18.
- **Transitions: Emotions in Motion**, a 5-hour intermediate course starting on 9/26.
- **The Business of Early Childhood: Mission and Vision: The What, Why, and How**, a 7-hour advanced experience starting on 10/1.
- **Implementing Teaching Strategies Gold**, a 7-hour intermediate experience starting on 10/2.
- **Individualized Teaching of Social-Emotional Skills: The Pyramid Model**, a 4-hour intermediate experience starting on 10/3.

### Self-Paced Professional Learning Experiences

All of the PLEs listed below will begin on October 1st.

- **Outdoor Classrooms: Wonder, Explore, Learn**
- **Assessment 101: Assessment for Positive Effect**
- **Introduction to the Pyramid Model**
- **School Age: Building Community with Partner Schools**
- **Developing a Mission Statement for Your Family Child Care Program**
- **Center-Based Child Care: An Introduction to Designing an Operating Budget**



## Additional Professional Development Options for Delaware Early Childhood Professionals

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has created a list of organizations that provide online training hours to meet the educational requirement for the CDA. The Office of Child Care Licensing will also accept training hours from these companies to meet annual licensing clock-hour requirements. This list can be found on their webpage: <https://bit.ly/3Yz8zqa>. Scroll all the way to the bottom of the page to view the list.

### FREE option

Listed on the DDOE site above as “Head Start ECLKC,” the Office of Head Start’s Individualized Professional Development (iPD) Portfolio **offers free online courses** on child development and practical teaching strategies for infant/toddler educators and preschool educators. <https://bit.ly/3WxJ8TI>.



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