

## Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

# REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

One thing we can all agree on in the early childhood education community is this: Early literacy is a critical building block of child development. The week of November 4 is national Children's Book Week, and DIEEC staff are excited to be visiting programs across Delaware as guest readers. Throughout this issue of REACH, you'll find resources and tips to celebrate and support early literacy in your own program, this week and beyond.

Another key element of early childhood education? Movement and active play! Check out our upcoming Physical Activity Learning Sessions for an opportunity to create experiences that will get your children moving while having fun!

If your program hasn't yet created a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), we encourage you to get started now. This month's issue has information about upcoming deadlines, updates to the Quality Improvement System (QIS) guide, and how to co-create your QIP with a Quality Improvement Specialist.

As we move into the season of holidays and celebrations, know that DIEEC is thankful for the partnership we have with the early childhood education community and for the opportunity to support you in creating high-quality experiences for Delaware's children.

With warm regards,  
Kristy Sheffler  
DIEEC Interim Co-Director

# DIEEC Action Items

## Early Childhood Educator Leadership Board- Apply Now

Are you an enthusiastic early childhood educator with a passion for making a lasting impact? We invite YOU to apply for the DIEEC Early Childhood Educator Leadership Board, becoming a driving force in shaping DIEEC's strategies, supports, and initiatives, and elevating Delaware's early childhood community to new heights.

[Applications are open through November 30!](#)

## Spark Your Children's Love for Active Play with PALS

The Physical Activity Learning Sessions (PALS) professional learning experience (PLE) is back! This hybrid multi-session PLE will show you how to incorporate physical activity throughout the day, with playful routines and engaging activities. You'll be empowered to design enriching physical experiences tailored to the children in your program. Participants receive a duffel full of materials to support active play in their own programs! Register now for our [PALS experience starting in January 2025](#).

# DIEEC News

## On-Site Supports

DIEEC offers a variety of opportunities for program-wide or classroom-based professional development that conveniently take place right at your program location. If you are working with a DIEEC Quality Improvement specialist, be sure to ask if these supports would be a good fit for your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Not working on a QIP at the moment, but interested in learning more about how these supports can benefit your program? Visit the pages below for more information.

**Observation and coaching:** Observations can help educators move through their continuous quality improvement journey using a reflective and intentional approach. DIEEC can help you select an observation tool that is related to your goals, in areas such as teacher-child interactions, peer-to-peer interactions, the physical program environment, and more. Learn more about the observation tools and request an observation on our [observation and coaching webpage](#).

**On-Site PLEs:** DIEEC offers opportunities for program-wide Quality Assured (QA) professional development to take place at your program for your entire staff. We have several professional learning experiences available for on-site delivery that are aligned with state-identified priority key practices. See our [On-Site/Online Learning page](#) for more information.

## Provider Spotlight: Jessica Arce

Forging a strong and lasting relationship with families is important to family child care (FCC) educator Jessica Arce. [Read more about Jessica's program](#), and how the connections she makes also help to keep her program fully enrolled.

[Para leer el artículo de Jessica Arce en español haga clic aquí.](#)



*Jessica Arce, Family Child Care Professional  
Image by Stephanie Thompson*

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## Coach's Corner: Reading, Language and Literacy Tips for Children's Book Week

Strong social and emotional skills can lead to success in personal relationships and the workplace; they also have a positive impact on self-awareness and self-regulation. Developing these skills is an integral part of early childhood education. [In this month's Coach's Corner](#), Meghan Pallante provides tips for incorporating social and emotional learning into your daily experiences with children.



*iStock image*

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## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Highlight

DIEEC's book selections for our 2024 Children's Book Week celebration are aimed at helping the programs that host our guest readers build diverse libraries. Here, we share resources that will help ALL programs select high quality diverse books.

- Rudine Sims Bishop explains why diverse books are so important for children in this [Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors](#) video.
- To see an example of a quality diverse book, enjoy this award winning [film version of the children's book Hair Love](#).
- For more information on selecting quality diverse children's books, try using this [Children's Books Checklist](#).

For further exploration of books for various ages, the [We Need Diverse Books site](#) has many features which lead to discovering children's books on many aspects of culture, identity, and life experience. It is searchable, which makes it possible to enter keywords (e.g., ability, south Asian) and find examples of books and insights. You can also go directly to their [Where to Find Diverse Books](#) page to view their suggestions in multiple categories.

## 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](#). Click on an event name to get all the details: who, what, when, where and how to join in!

# Quality Improvement Planning

## The Quality Improvement System (QIS) Program and Policy Guide has been updated!

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has made updates to the QIS Program and Policy Guide. If you are working on a Quality Improvement Award application, be sure that you are referring to the most recent version of the manual. You can [view the manual on DIEEC's website](#), and you can find a summary of recent updates starting on page 2 of the guide.

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## FY25 Quality Improvement (QI) Award Deadline

The third application deadline for the FY25 QI Award is January 15, 2025. Keep the important information below in mind if you would like to apply by January 15.

- **Please begin planning NOW if you wish to submit an application by January 15.** Keep in mind that, due to office closures for the winter holidays, DIEEC Quality Improvement Specialists will NOT be available between 12/21/24 and 1/5/25.
- **Your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) must be co-created with a Quality Improvement Specialist** to be eligible for the award.
- **The program leader is responsible for connecting with their QI Specialist.**
  - **If you already have a QI Specialist**, you can reach out to them directly.
  - **If you do not yet have a QI Specialist**, you must request support through the Delaware Early Care and Education portal. See the [Program Portal Guide](#) for information about how to use the portal and request QI Specialist support.
- **Developing a QIP is a multi-step process.** You will need to meet with your QI Specialist several times. To ensure your plan is developed and submitted on time, we encourage you to connect with your specialist as early as possible.
- **QI Specialists are working with programs on a rolling, first-come, first-served basis.** Programs that are not able to submit by the next deadline of January 15, 2025 will have one additional opportunity to apply for the FY25 QI award (by March 15, 2025).

QI Specialists are available to support programs in their quality improvement journey regardless of their intent to apply for a QI Award. For more information on the QI process, working with a QI Specialist, or applying for an award, please refer to the [Program and Policy Guide for Delaware's Quality Improvement System for Early Care and Education Programs](#).

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## Quality Improvement Resource Highlight

Each month, we share resources that Delaware program leaders can use to support themselves and their staff as they work towards higher levels of quality.

This month, we're focusing on resources that support **adult social and emotional learning (SEL)**, a key component for fostering a positive, high-quality learning environment for children.

Here are two options that could be used to support staff with their own social and emotional learning.

- Conscious Discipline offers a variety of podcast episodes. Here are some that focus on supporting educators' social and emotional learning.
  - ['Setting Health Boundaries'](#)
  - ['The Most Challenging People at Work and the Opportunity They Offer You'](#)
  - ['How to Deal with Friday Mess and Monday Madness'](#)
- [Focus Area 2 in CASEL's Guide to Schoolwide SEL](#) is all about Strengthening Adult SEL. Review the information to learn more about its importance, evaluate where your program is, and discover ideas for how to move forward.

Your Quality Improvement specialist can assist you in selecting the most suitable resources for your QIP.

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.

# DIEEC Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs)

## Upcoming Free Opportunities

DIEEC's professional learning experiences (PLEs) are available at no cost to you. You can browse and register for a variety of PLEs on the [DIEEC professional learning experience calendar](#). Check out these upcoming offerings:

### Virtual-Live and Hybrid Professional Learning Experiences

- [Creating a Cost-Effective Outdoor Learning Environment for FCC Educators](#), a 3-hour introductory course starting on **11/11**.
- [Understanding Children's Behavior as Communication for Family Child Care Professionals PLUS](#), a 4-hour introductory course starting on **11/11**.
- [Transitions: Emotions in Motion](#), a 3-hour intermediate course starting on **11/12**.
- [Child Assessment for Teachers: The Power of Practice PLUS](#), a 10-hour introductory course starting on **11/13**.
- [Supporting Sensory Learning: Infants, Toddlers, and Beyond](#), a 7-hour introductory course starting on **11/13**.
- [Understanding Children's Behavior as Communication](#), a 4-hour introductory course starting on **11/18**.
- [Inspiring Peak Performance: Competence, Commitment and Collaboration](#), an 8-hour intermediate course starting on **11/19**.
- [A Series of Conversations for Family Child Care Networks: Understanding Head Start Program Performance Standards - Inclusion](#), a 3-hour intermediate course starting on **11/20**.

### Self-Paced Professional Learning Experiences

All of the PLEs listed below will begin on **December 1st**. Click on each PLE name to learn more.

- [STEAM: Tinkering to Making](#)
- [Leadership: Promoting Safety, Trust, and Cooperation](#)
- [Introduction to Delaware's Early Learning Foundations](#)
- [School Age: Building Community with Partner Schools](#)
- [6 Pillars of Character Building for School Age Children: Community of Practice](#)

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

**Beginning December 1, 2024**, the following trainings will be available through DIEEC on a new online platform called Canvas:

- Health and Safety Training for Child Care Professionals
- Administration of Medication
- Maintaining Equity in Early Childhood Classrooms: Suspension and Expulsion Prevention

Details regarding how to access these courses in Canvas will be shared at a later date.

DEPDNow trainings will be discontinued as of January 1, 2025. If you are currently enrolled in any DEPDPNow training, please ensure you complete it by December 31, 2024, to receive credit on your Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) transcript. This change **ONLY** pertains to trainings offered on the DEPDPNow site. DIEEC and iPD trainings will continue to be offered.

## 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/3Yz8zaa>. 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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