

## Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

# REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear Early Childhood Professionals,

In this issue of REACH, we invite you to celebrate the Week of the Young Child, including your own contributions toward ensuring that every child receives the bright start they deserve. We also highlight Autism Awareness & Acceptance Month, reminding us there are many facets that contribute to the well-being of all children.

Did you know that play is an essential foundation of literacy? In this month's Coach's Corner, we share a variety of actionable tips for incorporating support for literacy throughout your program environment. And, as always, you'll find a variety of valuable professional development opportunities and program support information. Thank you for your dedication to Delaware's children!

With warm regards,

Kristy Sheffler  
Interim Co-Director, DIEEC

# DIEEC Action Items

## APRIL RAFFLE



Supporting Early Literacy

Classroom goodies raffle! Two winners each month for 3 months. This month: early literacy materials!

## Raffle Alert! 🎉

For the next three months, we will have two sets of classroom goodies to raffle off each month- **one for a family child care educator**, and **one for a classroom educator**. This month's raffle packs are full of materials to support early literacy experiences!

**To enter April's raffle:** Read our Coach's Corner article (directly below) and then answer a quick survey question. You can also follow [DIEEC's Facebook page](#) for another opportunity to enter each month!

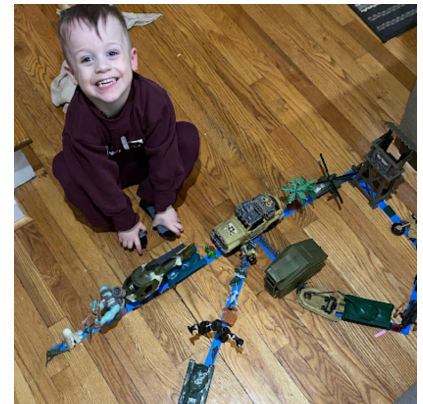
## DIEEC News

### Coach's Corner: Literacy in the Early Childhood Environment

This month, DIEEC's own Meghan Pallante shares some easy-to-implement tips for making your early childhood space a literacy-rich environment.

Want to enter our raffle for some great early literacy materials to use in your program? [Read the article](#), then fill out our quick survey question to tell us how YOU incorporate literacy throughout your program space!

Fill out our quick survey here: [www.udel.edu/0013382](http://www.udel.edu/0013382)



Try giant painter's tape letters with your little ones! See this month's Coach's Corner for more fun ideas. Image provided by Meghan Pallante/DIEEC.



2025 marks 60 years for the Autism Society! Learn more about their history and how to get involved.

## Meeting the Needs of All Children

**April is Autism Awareness & Acceptance Month.** The Autism Society of America's annual **Autism Is** campaign "recognizes that Autism is more than a diagnosis—it is identity, community, and a lived experience that encompasses both challenges and triumphs. By sharing authentic Autism stories and perspectives, the campaign fosters a culture of acceptance, inclusion, and belonging." Learn more at the [Autism Society](#).

### Here are two local resources:

- [Autism Delaware](#): Advocacy, support, and services for people on the spectrum and their families and caregivers.
- [Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism](#): Delaware's Autism Training and Technical Assistance Center.

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## Office Hours: DIEEC is Here for YOU!

Did you know that DIEEC has open, virtual office hours for family child care educators and center-based programs? These are in addition to any office hours that your Quality Improvement Specialist may hold. We can provide technical assistance and help get your questions answered. No appointment needed- just drop in. Open office hours are listed on [DIEEC's public calendar](#)- click on the event title and use the Zoom link to join.

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## Coming Soon: A Refreshed DIEEC Website

We're excited to share that [www.dieec.udel.edu](http://www.dieec.udel.edu) is getting a facelift! The site will have a new look, and it will be easier for you to find what you need. All information and resources related to DIEEC's role in supporting Delaware's Quality Improvement System will now be gathered in one convenient location on the site.

We're also adding a brand-new Resource Hub featuring materials from trusted sources. Whether you're looking for tools to enhance your practice or new ideas to inspire your work, the Resource Hub will be there to help. Stay tuned for the launch date of our new and improved site!

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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 [DIEEC 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!

# News from Our Partners

## Systems Change Framework Webinar: Register Now!

Looking for guidance on how to create meaningful, lasting change with and for the Early Care & Education (ECE) workforce? The Systems Change Framework is a blueprint and structure for the ECE system and community leaders to utilize when designing and implementing intentional, evidence-based change for early educators' compensation, career pathways, and work environments.

Join the [National Early Care & Education Workforce Center](#) (NECEWC) for a webinar on **April 22, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET** to learn about the Center's Systems Change Framework and the services the Center provides to support its understanding and use. [Register here.](#)



*Learn about the Systems Change Framework in the NECEWC April 22nd webinar.*

## Week of the Young Child: April 5-11, 2025

The Week of the Young Child (WOYC) is NAEYC's (National Association for the Education of Young Children) annual celebration of early learning, young children, their teachers, families, and communities. The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. [Check out NAEYC's activity resources for WOYC](#) or follow [NAEYC](#) and our state chapter, [Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children](#) (deaeyc) on social media to join the conversation. How will your program celebrate?

DIEEC is honored to support and partner with the many programs in Delaware that dedicate every day to giving children the best possible start!



*Join the WOYC conversation! Follow @NAEYC and @deaeyc for ideas and share how your program is celebrating! #WOYC25*

## In Bloom Conference: April 26, 2025 in Newark

Registration is now open for this one-day conference focused on “promising practices in nature-based early childhood education.” Join the community of practitioners working to bring early childhood education into the neighborhoods, parks, playgrounds, woods, and open spaces surrounding their schools.

- [Click here to view the conference flyer.](#)
- [Click here to register for the conference.](#)



*In Bloom Conference: Promising practices in nature-based early childhood education. There's still time to register!*

## Delaware State University Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education: Upcoming Information Sessions

Delaware State University (DSU) is hosting a series of information sessions about its Associate of Arts (AA) in Early Childhood Education program. The program is designed for working professionals, allowing you to gain hands-on experience while advancing your career. See the attached [flyer for info session dates and registration!](#)



*Join one of their information sessions to learn how you can get started!*

# Quality Improvement Planning

While the final deadline for Quality Improvement Award applications was March 15, 2025, Quality Improvement (QI) Specialists continue to be available throughout the year to support programs in their quality improvement journey. For more information on the QI process and working with a QI Specialist, please refer to the [Program and Policy Guide for Delaware's Quality Improvement System for Early Care and Education Programs.](#)

## Quality Improvement Resource Highlight: Creating Caring Communities for Learners

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 offering resources that focus on creating caring communities of learners. Early childhood educators strive to create environments where children feel safe, connected, and eager to learn.

- [The February 2025 issue of Natural Resources](#), published by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, offers several resources on this topic.
- This excerpt, [‘Who Am I?’ from the Zero to Three Critical Competencies Course Curriculum](#), shares information about what early educators can do to support infants and toddlers in developing a sense of self and belonging.
- [NAEYC’s Developmentally Appropriate Practice \(DAP\) Position Statement](#) includes a section on creating a caring, equitable community of learners.
- Interested in participating in observation and coaching related to this area? The CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) measure is a great fit! [Read more about DIEEC’s observation and coaching offerings](#) or [submit a request to participate](#).

## DIEEC Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs)

### Upcoming Free PLE Opportunities with DIEEC

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

| Title  | Hours | Level  | Start Date |
|--|-------|--------|------------|
| A Conversation with Leadership: Program Positivity PLUS                                    | 9     | Inter. | April 10   |
| Supporting Sensory Learning: Infants, Toddlers, and Beyond PLUS                            | 7     | Intro. | April 10   |
| Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: Supporting Children's Goals in Childcare & at Home PLUS     | 8     | Inter. | April 12   |
| Physical Activity Learning Sessions (PALS) PLUS  | 12    | Inter. | April 14   |
| Bridging the Connection Gap: Individualizing Relationships for Family Child Care Providers | 3     | Intro. | April 14   |
| Transitions- Microlearning Deep Dive with Coaching PLUS                                    | 4     | Intro. | April 14   |
| Flip It! Flipping the Challenging Behavior PLUS  | 10    | Inter. | April 16   |
| Anti-Bias Education: Identity  | 4     | Inter. | April 21   |
| Child Assessment for Administrators: Polishing the Lens PLUS                               | 10    | Inter. | April 22   |
| The Wonder of Outdoor Learning PLUS  | 10    | Inter. | April 22   |
| Individualized Teaching of Social-Emotional Skills: The Pyramid Model                      | 5     | Inter. | April 23   |
| Developing Relationships, Developing Brains: Infants and Toddlers PLUS                     | 8     | Inter. | April 23   |
| Supporting Sensory Learning: Infants, Toddlers and Beyond PLUS                             | 7     | Intro. | April 24   |
| Fun with Financial Wellness: Basic Budgeting for Beginners PLUS                            | 5     | Inter. | April 28   |
| Mindfulness Intermediate PLUS  | 7     | Inter. | April 29   |
| The Parent Voice: Engaging Families  | 5     | Inter. | May 1      |

## Virtual-Live and Hybrid Professional Learning Experiences

All of the PLEs listed below open on April 1. Click on each PLE name to learn more.

- [Self-Regulation and Play](#)
  - [Developing a Mission Statement for Your Family Child Care Program](#)
  - [STEAM: Tinkering to Making](#)
  - [Engaging Fathers](#)
  - [Assessment 101: Assessment for Positive Effect](#)
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## How to Access Former DEPDNow Trainings

Three of the former DEPDNow trainings can be accessed through DIEEC using an online platform called Canvas. Please note that the timing for this process has changed—you'll now need to allow up to 48 hours between registering for a course and beginning it. We appreciate your patience as we all navigate this new process together.

Steps to get started:

1. Register for a course
  - [Health & Safety Training for Child Care Professionals](#)
  - [Administration of Medication Certification](#)
  - [Maintaining Equity in Early Childhood: Suspension / Expulsion Prevention](#)
2. Within 24 hours, you will receive an email titled "UD Guest Account Invitation." Follow the instructions in the email to set up your account.
3. Within 24 hours after setting up your account, you will receive an email titled "Course Invitation" from Instructure Canvas. Click the "Get Started" button in this email to log in to Canvas and begin your course.

Additional information regarding DIEEC online and Canvas courses can be found [here](#).

**Additional courses.** The Office of Early Learning (OEL) has prepared a [chart to guide you in accessing trainings](#) similar to the others formerly available through DEPDNow. These can be accessed through the Office of Head Start's [Individualized Professional Development \(iPD\) Portfolio](#).