

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

DIEEC EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AWARDS



THE AWARDS

DIEEC's Excellence in Early Childhood Awards acknowledge and honor the **critical role** of Delaware professionals who exemplify the best in quality early care and education. Our overall goal is to **elevate the importance** of the early childhood education profession in the public eye.

This document contains an overview of the award process, including nomination and application instructions. If you have questions or need assistance with any of the steps in the process, please contact us at: ecinstitute@udel.edu



AWARD CATEGORIES

There are three award categories:

1. Center-based educators (one winner, one runner-up)
2. Family childcare educators (one winner, one runner-up)
3. Early career educators (one winner)

The winner in each category will receive a personal stipend and recognition via DIEEC social media and newsletters, a one-year membership to deaeyc, a yard sign for display at the program, and a plaque. Gift cards to be used for enhancing the classroom environment will be provided to winning family child care educators and to the programs of winning center-based and early career educators.

Contact us at ecinstitute@udel.edu, or visit our website at www.dieec.udel.edu/dieec-excellence-in-early-childhood-awards



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
EDUCATION &
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

ALL nominees/applicants must:

- Be an educator of children between the ages of birth through pre-kindergarten **AND**
- Be employed in one of the following types of programs: family, large family, center-based, or school-based program.
 - The program must have a current OCCL license in the state of Delaware.
 - The program must fully comply with all applicable state regulations.

In addition, the following criteria must be met:

Criteria	Center-based educators	Family child care educators	Early career educators
Role	• Lead teacher or • Assistant classroom teacher <i>(administrative educators are not eligible- see below)</i>	Family child care educator	• Early childhood intern • Assistant teacher or • Lead teacher
Time at current program	At least 18 months in current program	At least 18 months operating current program	No more than 2 total years in the early childhood field
Hours	At least 30 hours per week in a program that operates full-day OR at least 15 hours per week in a program that operates part-day.		

Not Eligible to Apply

- Floaters, substitutes, temporary teachers, and teachers with part-time hours.
- Educators of school-age children in early childhood education programs. (i.e., before/after school educators).
- Administrative educators (staff with administrative responsibilities preventing them from being a full-time teacher).
- DIEEC Educator of the Year Award winners from 2022 to present.

Additional Eligibility Notes

- Only educators who are nominated or who nominate themselves during the nomination period may apply for an award.
- Only one educator may be named per application.
- Co-lead teachers or teaching teams are not eligible to share this award (only one recipient will be awarded).
- The winner and runner-up will not be selected from the same program site.



AWARD TIMELINE

1. Nominations

Educators may be nominated by administrators, colleagues, or current parents, OR they may self-nominate.

February 28 - March 28, 2025

2. Applications

Eligible nominees complete the application and provide two letters of support.

April 1 - April 30, 2025

3. Review

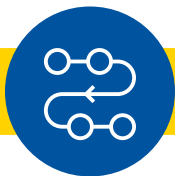
External review panel reads anonymized applications and selects winners and runners-up.

May 2025

4. Winner Announcements

Winners receive public recognition, a personal stipend, and gift cards to enhance their classroom environment.

June 2025



AWARD PROCESS

Nomination period: February 28 - March 28, 2025

All applicants must first be **nominated** for an Excellence in Early Childhood Award.

There are two ways to be nominated.

1. Administrators, colleagues, or parents of current students may nominate an eligible early childhood educator OR
2. Eligible educators may self-nominate.

All nominations are made by completing the [nomination form](#).

Please fill out one form for each nomination.

Nominated educators who meet all eligibility requirements will be invited to submit an application for an Excellence in Early Childhood Award.

Application period: April 1 - April 30, 2025

Eligible nominees who wish to apply for the award will fill out an application form and submit two letters of support.

Application instructions for nominees

1. Fill out the [online application form](#).

- a. Responses on the application form must be the original work product of the applicant.
- b. Applications completed or modified by anyone other than the applicant (e.g. grant writer, director, or administrative staff) will be disqualified.
- c. Legible handwritten applications are acceptable.
 - i. You may print out the Google form for this purpose.
 - ii. Please sign and date the completed, printed form at the bottom.
 - iii. Email a copy to **ecinstitute@udel.edu** or mail to:

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood
DEECA 2025
501 South College Ave
Newark, DE 19716

2. Obtain two letters of support.

- a. Letters of support must be written by an administrator, colleague, or current parent.
- b. [A printable letter of support request is available](#). Please provide a copy to the two people who will write your letters.
- c. One letter should be from the person who nominated you. If you are self-nominated, your letters can be from any of the people listed above.
- d. Please do not submit more than two letters. Only the first two letters received will be considered.

Applications and letters of support must be received/postmarked by April 30, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.

Review of applications: May 2025

- All complete, eligible applications and letters of support are reviewed by an external panel.
- The panel is comprised of members of the early childhood education community, including winners from previous years. DIEEC staff do not participate in the review process.
- During the review process, applications and letters of support are identified only by a number. Names and other identifying information are removed.
- The panel will select all winners and runners-up.
- Once the panel has identified winners and runners-up, DIEEC is notified and contacts the winners.

Winner announcements: June 2025

DIEEC will announce our Excellence in Early Childhood Award winners in June. Winners will be celebrated in DIEEC's monthly newsletter, REACH, on social media, and via other appropriate media outlets, if applicable. More details will be shared closer to the announcement date.

We look forward to honoring the outstanding work being done in the early childhood education community!