

## Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

## REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear Early Childhood Professionals,

Today, DIEEC begins our annual celebration of Children's Book Week. Having our DIEEC staff visit programs as guest readers this week is a wonderful opportunity to remember our **'why.'** There's nothing quite like sharing the joy of a good book with young children to connect us to the heart of early childhood education and inspire our work every day. I want to share one of my own favorites with you: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Eric Carle. The rhythmic, repetitive text captures toddlers' attention and invites them to join in – you can see the excitement on their faces as they anticipate and call out each new animal! It was a special book in our home – our board book was so well-loved that we went through two copies when my now-teens were small.

The 10th cohort of our popular wellness initiative for family child care educators, **Shining the Light On You**, is forming now—be sure to check out the details on the final information session and the new wellness kit! We also have some fun and practical tips in **Coach's Corner** on how you can use painter's tape to support classroom learning.

Please take note of the important updates from Delaware's **Office of Early Learning** regarding the **Quality Improvement System (QIS)** Guide and new requirements for programs preparing to apply for a Quality Improvement Award (QIA). Remember to utilize our drop-in **Office Hours** and free **Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs)**—DIEEC is here to support you!

Warmly,

Kristy Sheffler  
Interim Co-Director, DIEEC

# DIEEC Action Items

## Shining the Light on You

The 10th cohort of DIEEC's award-winning [Shining the Light On You](#) initiative, designed for family child care (FCC) educators is now forming! **There is one more opportunity to attend a required information session on Tuesday, November 4.** The new cohort will kick off in December.

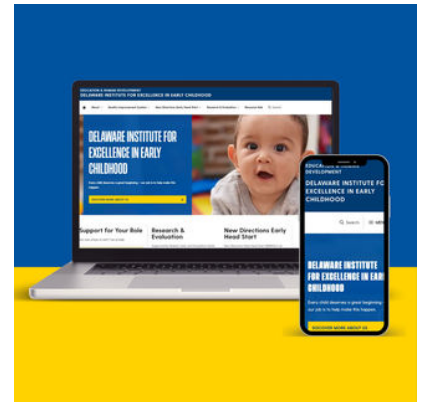
**NEW for this cohort:** All participants will receive a wellness kit stocked with carefully-selected supplies to support their journey, including a fitness tracker! Don't miss this opportunity to focus on your own health and well-being while earning up to 18 Quality Assured hours. [Sign up for the info session here.](#)

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## DIEEC News

### DIEEC Website Refresh

The next time you visit DIEEC's website, you'll notice a fresh design and streamlined organization. Over the next few months, we'll feature a section of the website in each issue of REACH to highlight the resources available to you, and ensure you can find exactly what you need.



### Children's Book Week Is Here!

DIEEC celebrates Children's Book Week to promote early literacy and provide resources to support your work in this critical area. This week, DIEEC guest readers are excited to be visiting early childhood programs across Delaware to share books and read with children!

We also want to thank everyone who shared a favorite read-aloud title with us over the past month. We've compiled all of the recommendations into a new resource for you: [From Our Bookshelf to Yours: Favorite Read-Alouds from Delaware's Early Childhood Educators.](#)



This is a list of books that Delaware early childhood educators, like you, enjoy reading to the children in their care. We hope you'll browse the list and perhaps find a new favorite for your children!

[Check out all of the resources currently available on our Children's Book Week page.](#) We hope you'll use these to celebrate the joy of reading all year round!

## Monthly Raffle for Early Childhood Educators

We have another exciting raffle for you! This month, we're raffling off two bundles of children's books. To enter:



1. In honor of Children's Book Week, **check out our list of favorite read-alouds (above).**
2. **Then, tell us about a new-to-you book** you're looking forward to sharing with the children in your program.

**Our October raffle winners were:**

- **Family Child Care:** Bonnie Aube
- **Center-based Educator:** Lori Hansen

**Congratulations!** 🎉 We'll reach out soon to get your prizes to you.

Raffle entries **close on November 21<sup>st</sup>.** [To enter click here.](#)

## Office Hours

Did you know that DIEEC offers regular drop-in office hours for FCC educators and center-based administrators? DIEEC staff is on hand and ready to provide technical assistance and help get your questions answered. See our upcoming office hours below. No appointment needed- just stop by!

| Center-Based Programs                                       | Family Child Care Educators                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Zoom link for ALL center-based office hours</a> | <a href="#">Zoom link for ALL FCC office hours</a> |
| Tuesday 11/11 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.                        | Tuesday 11/4 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.                |
| Tuesday 11/25 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.                      | Monday 11/17 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.                |
| Tuesday 12/9 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.                         | Tuesday 12/2 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.                |

## Provider Spotlight: Jamie Bowden, Lil Rascals Learning Center

Meet Jamie Bowden, owner of Lil Rascals Learning Center, whose mission is to create a "home away from home" for staff and children. Jamie wanted to ensure her staff had the specific tools needed to successfully navigate challenging behaviors, knowing this would lead to calmer classrooms. By hosting an on-site Professional Learning Experience (PLE) for her entire team on the topic of understanding children's behavior, she's attempting to build consistency across all staff in terms of both knowledge and practice. Read more about Jamie's philosophy and how DIEEC's on-site PLE supported her goals. [Read Jamie's full story here.](#)



*Finding staff was a learning curve, but Jamie's focus was clear: build a sense of family for the children and the team. (photo by Stephanie Thompson/DIEEC)*

## Coach's Corner: 10 Things You Can Do with Painter's Tape

Things get a bit sticky this month as Meghan Pallante, DIEEC quality improvement specialist, explores all the fun and learning that can happen when you've got painter's tape on hand in the classroom! [Check out these fun tape activities here.](#)

*Painter's tape magic! So many ways to play and learn with this simple tool. (photo by Meghan Pallante)*



## Meeting the Needs of All Children: Four Goals of Anti-Bias Education

"A basic premise in anti-bias education is 'We are all the same. We are all different. Isn't that wonderful!'"

[This NAEYC article explores the four core goals of anti-bias education](#), which help you create a supportive learning environment that "supports children's development of a confident sense of identity without needing to feel superior to others; an ease with human diversity; a sense of fairness and justice; the skills of empowerment; and the ability to stand up for themselves or for others."

Anti-bias education is not something extra you have to make time to implement separately; it can be interwoven in all aspects. For example, “the common curriculum topic of harvest time can include respecting and making visible the people who grow, pick, and transport our food.”

Whether you’re just considering what this could mean with your program or you’re looking to build on what you’re already doing in this area, we encourage you to check out the article.

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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 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!

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# Updates from Our Partners

## Whole Child Learning Network

Shared on behalf of DIEEC’s partners at the Delaware Department of Education. This workshop series kicks off on November 6th and spans the school year. School staff and partners are invited to explore universal strategies to reduce (and ultimately eliminate) nonacademic barriers to learning. Licensing hours earned will be represented on your PDMS transcript. [Please see the attached flyer](#) or contact Teri Lawler at [teri.lawler@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:teri.lawler@doe.k12.de.us) for more information.

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## Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Professional Development Opportunities

Shared on behalf of DIEEC’s partners at the Delaware Department of Education. You are invited to join a series of 8 free, live, virtual Collaborative Conversations. Kicking off on November 10th, each session includes a 30-minute presentation followed by 30 minutes for questions and conversation. [Read the flyer for more information, dates, and the Zoom link.](#)

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## Resources for Delaware Families

**Delaware 211** connects people in Delaware to essential resources throughout the state. The LIVE Helpline is free, confidential, and available in multiple languages. Their Delaware-based resource specialists are experts in compassionately connecting people with health and human services resources across the state. Assistance is available for emergency housing, utility payments, food, mental health, substance abuse, and more. **Call or text 211** to get the support you need, or to help the families you serve connect to the support they need.

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## New Safety Newsletter from the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL)

OCCL has launched a periodic newsletter focused on supporting early childhood professionals in promoting the physical, mental, and emotional health of children. In case you missed the initial email, please note that **OCCL is requiring the removal of water beads from all early childhood programs effective immediately.** [You can view the Safety Newsletter here.](#)

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# Quality Improvement System

## Quality Improvement Planning

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and the Early Childhood Excellence Team have updated Delaware's Quality Improvement System (QIS) Guide. As explained in the email [sent by DIEEC on Thursday, 10/29](#), programs applying for Quality Improvement Awards (QIAs) should review these changes before submitting a Quality Improvement Award application. [View the guide HERE](#); the update history on page 3 offers a concise summary of the changes.

As in previous years, to be eligible for a FY26 QIA, programs must be actively engaged in quality improvement efforts. With the support of a DIEEC Quality Improvement Specialist (QISp), programs will reflect on their areas of growth and build a quality improvement plan (QIP).

Developing a QIP is a multistep process, and requests to work with a QISp will be scheduled in the order they are received. New requests from family child care programs are currently being scheduled for January/February. Contact your DIEEC quality improvement specialist about scheduling.

## Applying for a Quality Improvement Award?

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) account requirement. As programs prepare to apply for Quality Improvement Awards (QIAs), they should note new requirements for this year. The Office of Early Learning is requiring programs to have an ASQ account and engage in training for the formative assessment tool their program is using (e.g., TS GOLD, Funshine, etc.).

Accessing your [ASQ portal](#). If you need to register or do not have access to your ASQ portal, please use the [ASQ Support Request Form](#). Once your request has been processed, you will be contacted via email with your login information for you to access your portal. You can find step-by-step guidance in the [ASQ Provider Manual for Early Childhood Programs](#), and you can learn more about Developmental Screening by visiting [Delaware's Developmental Screening Resources webpage](#).

Training for formative assessment tools. Program staff must engage in the training for the formative assessment tool used. Documentation of training will be accepted in multiple formats based on the training available for that particular assessment tool. Training must be completed, and documentation must be uploaded to the [Delaware ECE Portal](#) when applying for a QIA. QIA funds may be used to support training on formative assessments that are research-based.

### Key dates for Quality Improvement Awards:

- There are three remaining application deadlines: 11/15/25, 1/15/26, and 3/15/26.
- School districts, SFECEPs, and EHS-CCPs must apply on or before November 15, 2025.
- To be eligible for an FY26 award, programs must:
  - Hold a certificate or be licensed by the Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing by January 15, 2026, AND
  - Be open and serving two or more children AND
  - Have a visit scheduled with their Quality Improvement Specialist by February 1, 2026.

## Professional Learning Experiences

### Opportunities with DIEEC and Our Partners

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](#).

To view the current list of OEL-approved training opportunities, click here:

[Professional Development, Coaching, and other Professional Learning Experiences for the Early Care and Education Workforce](#).