

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear Early Childhood Professionals,

Welcome to the October issue of REACH! This month, we feature a practical resource for learning about co-regulation, hands-on support sessions for CDA scholars, and the launch of a new virtual Conscious Discipline series. You'll also find details on upcoming drop-in office hours, time-sensitive opportunities like the CDA information session for educators, and a reminder for those working toward the upcoming November 15 Quality Improvement Award application deadline.

Be sure to check out the photos from DIEEC's August Block Party- the event was the highlight of our summer, and we are grateful for the opportunity to catch up with you in person and share moments together as a community. Thank you for the dedication and care you bring to Delaware's young learners every single day. We hope these resources support and energize your vital work this fall!

Warmly,

The DIEEC Team

DIEEC ACTION ITEMS

Planning to apply for the quality improvement award (QIA) by the November 15 application deadline?

Connect with your DIEEC Quality Improvement Specialist now! [READ MORE.](#)

Educator Information Sessions for CDA Supports- October 21

Interested in pursuing your CDA, but not sure where to start? Join DIEEC and ECIC ([Early Childhood Innovation Center](#)) for a live, 1-hour virtual information session on **Wednesday, October 21 at 1:30 or 6:30 p.m.** We will explain the range of CDA supports available to educators and answer your questions so you feel confident and supported in your next steps. The sessions are open to family child care educators, center-based classroom educators, and the program administrators who support them. Register here:

October 21, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

https://udel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_n00OQpHPREqSCDI suPKodQ#/registration

October 21, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

https://udel.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__RTWYjYkTyy8Q1f2 ft7DLw#/registration



*Learn how our CDA support programs can guide your journey. Sign up for the October 21 Zoom info. session today.
(Photo credit: iStock)*

CDA Application and E-Portfolio Hands-On Working Sessions

These FREE in-person working sessions are designed to guide you through two essential parts of the credentialing process:

- **Submitting Your CDA Application:** Receive step-by-step guidance to ensure your application is accurate, complete, and submitted with confidence.
- **Developing & Finalizing Your CDA Portfolio:** Get hands-on assistance gathering, organizing, and completing all required portfolio materials so your ePortfolio is polished and CDA Council-ready.

We offer monthly sessions in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties, as well as the City of Wilmington, for a total of four in-person support opportunities each month. No advance registration is required, and you can attend any or all sessions. October sessions are listed below.

All sessions are from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m

Monday, October 12: DIEEC, 461 Wyoming Rd., Newark, DE 19716

Tuesday, October 13: Sussex Resource Center at Little Einstein's, 20359 Sand Hill Rd., Georgetown, DE 1994

Wednesday, October 14: Early Childhood Innovation Center (ECIC) at Delaware State University, 1200 N. DuPont Highway, Dover, DE, United States, 19901

Thursday, October 15: WECEC, Stubbs Early Education Center, 1100 N. Pine St., Wilmington, DE 19801

Conscious Discipline: Handling Upset: The Adult-First Mindset Shift

Transform your classroom culture with **Handling Upset: The Adult-First Mindset Shift**, a virtual Conscious Discipline series on mastering self-regulation. Led live by a Conscious Discipline instructor, this practical cohort combines four 1-hour interactive Zoom sessions (**6:30 p.m. on October 26, November 16, December 14, and January 4**) with self-paced online modules to help you swap reactive moments for calm, confident connection.

Register here:

<https://dieecpd.org/registry/calendar/training/8916>



*Adult self-regulation comes first.
Empower yourself with the tools to lead
with calm. (Getty Images Signature)*

Let's GROW Outside! Applications Due October 14

This year's Let's GROW Outside cohort is open to programs and educators in Wilmington zip codes 19801, 19802, and 19805.

During this extended professional development experience, participants will learn about the benefits of connecting children and gardening, gain knowledge and skills needed to develop and sustain a garden, understand how to use a supplemental gardening curriculum, and plan for age-appropriate garden activities with children. As part of this experience, your program will receive FREE materials and tools needed for gardening.



Apply by October 14: For more information, testimonials from past participants, and to apply, visit [DIEEC's Let's GROW Outside webpage](#) or [review the attached flyer](#). See you in the garden!

Quality Improvement Award (QIA) Application Support for Family Child Care Educators

Need help completing your QIA application? Join one of our scheduled QIA Support Sessions, where a family child care network coordinator will be available to provide individualized guidance and assistance. Check out the flyer to learn how to sign up and get the support you need! You can access the flyer here:

https://dieec.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/FY27_quality_improvement_application_support_for_FCC_August_2026.01.pdf



*Whether you're just starting or finalizing your application, our coordinators are here to guide you step-by-step.
(Photo credit: Pexels)*

DIEEC Block Party Pics are Here!

Relive the fun and see if you can spot yourself in the crowd! Browse our photo album to see highlights, friendly faces, and moments from DIEEC's Block Party. View the photos here:

<https://dieec.udel.edu/dieec-block-party-photos/>



*DIEEC block party guests visited the Story Corner, a reflective space where members of the ECE community shared their personal stories.
(Photo credit: UD OCM)*

Provider Spotlight: What Fuels Us All

Got a long day ahead? We want to know what keeps your motor running! In place of our usual Provider Spotlight this month, we're turning the mic over to you- and we want every program in our community to weigh in!

In just one word, what fuels you on a long day?

Check out the words to see how our DIEEC team answered, [then drop your own one-word response here](#). We'll combine all of your answers into a community word cloud for next month's newsletter and on our website!



Whether it's coffee, purpose, teamwork, or music—tell us in a single word!

Coach's Corner: Introducing New Activities and Materials

Introducing new materials is a great way to spark creativity and refresh your space. Read the latest installment of Coach's Corner to learn how to audit your existing materials, determine the most impactful items to add, and thoughtfully plan how to share them with children. Read here: <https://dieec.udel.edu/quality-improvement-system/dieec-resources-for-you/coachs-corner/>



Spark new creativity with a quick check of what you already have
(Photo credit: iStock)

Children's Book Week

Guest reader signups and favorite read-aloud submissions are now closed. We're thrilled by the response from Delaware's early childhood community! Even if you didn't register, you can still follow along and join the fun from November 9 through 13. Check out our [Children's Book Week webpage](#) for more information and plenty of resources!

Congratulations to our Children's Book Week Early Bird Registration raffle winners!

- **Family Child Care:** Kimalee Brown, Divine Beacon of Hope, LLC
- **Center:** The Next Step Learning Center at Gumboro

Monthly Raffle for Early Childhood Educators

This month, we're raffling off two kits full of fun physical activity materials! [Read this month's Coach's Corner about introducing new activities](#), then [answer our survey question](#), and you'll be entered to win. The deadline is **October 23**.

Here are our lucky September raffle winners:

- **Center-based classroom educator:** Martha Berryman, St. Michael's School and Nursery
- **Family child care educator:** Carmen Wright, The Wright Choice Child Care



Congratulations! 🎉 Check your email- we'll reach out soon to get your prizes to you.

Meeting the Needs of All Children: Your Calm is Their Calm: Co-Regulation Strategies for Infants and Toddlers

Early childhood research shows that very young children don't learn to manage big emotions by being told to calm down; they learn by being calmed with. Because infants and toddlers lack the neural pathways to self-soothe, they rely on the steady, grounded presence of their caregivers to help settle their activated nervous systems.

This [article from Zero to Three delivers actionable, age-based strategies educators can apply immediately](#). Learn how switching from correction to co-regulation during daily routines, transitions, and tantrums actively builds the brain architecture young children need for lifelong resilience.



Co-regulation through shared presence and connection.
(Photo credit: Pexels)

Office Hours to Support Programs and Educators

DIEEC offers regular drop-in office hours for FCC educators and center-based administrators, with DIEEC staff ready to provide technical assistance and help get your questions answered. No appointment needed- just stop by!

Upcoming office hours

Center-based programs [use this Zoom link to join all center-based office hours](#).

- Tuesday, 10/13, from 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, 10/28, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Family child care educators [use this Zoom link to join all FCC office hours](#).

- Tuesday, 10/6, from 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- Monday, 10/19, from 1:30-2:30 p.m.

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!

NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

CDA Scholarship Applications are Now Open!

Child Development Associate (CDA) scholarship applications reopened on Tuesday, September 1, 2026. Whether you are beginning your CDA journey, ready to take the next step toward earning your credential, or preparing for renewal, there is a scholarship opportunity to meet your needs. Applications will be available for CDA Comprehensive, CDA Voucher Only, and CDA renewal options. [Visit the Early Childhood Innovation Center's CDA webpage](#) for more information and to start your application!

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

Plan Ahead for Support with Your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The November 15 Quality Improvement Award (QIA) application deadline will be here before you know it! As outlined in the [Program and Policy Guide for Delaware's Quality Improvement System \(QIS\) for Early Care and Education Programs](#), co-creating a QIP with a DIEEC Quality Improvement Specialist (QISp) is a prerequisite for applying for QIA funds.

Planning to submit a QIA by November 15? Programs should connect with their assigned Quality Improvement Specialist (QISp) **now** to ensure sufficient time to work collaboratively with your QISp, develop and finalize the QIP, and complete the required steps by November 15th. If you do not currently have an assigned QISp, click here to learn how to request QISp support (see p. 9 of the [ECE Portal Guide](#)).

Quality Improvement Award Application Deadlines for FY27

- November 15, 2026*
- January 15, 2027
- March 15, 2027

**State-funded (SFECEP), Early Head Start, and school district programs must apply by the November 15, 2026, deadline.*

Technical Support for Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TSG)/SmartTeach!

As of July 1, 2026, the Delaware Department of Education has contracted with the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) to provide TSG)/SmartTeach technical support. Whether your program is looking to establish an account or already has one, all questions related to TSG support can be sent to ecetechsupport@udel.edu.

All programs using TSG/SmartTeach as part of the Delaware Department of Education's (DDOE) free TSG/SmartTeach license are reminded to follow [DDOE's TSG/SmartTeach policies](#) and guidance.

Monitoring for adherence began July 1, 2026.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs) with DIEEC

DIEEC's 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](#).

Early Education Pathways

Head Start's iPD Portfolio has transitioned to Early Education Pathways (EEP). If you previously had an iPD account, you should be able to log in to EEP with the same credentials. [Visit the EEP webpage and learn more.](#)

Accessing Core Trainings on PDMS and Schoology

As of May 1, 2026, all new registrations for the following courses are available only on the Delaware Department of Education's PDMS/Schoology platform. PDMS is where you register for professional development, and Schoology is where you complete the course.

If you do not already have one, you will need to create an EdAccess account to use PDMS and Schoology. Click [HERE](#) to learn how to get started. Once you have an account, you can use the links below to register for and access the trainings.

- [Administration of Medication](#)
- [Health & Safety Training for Child Care Professionals](#)
- [Maintaining Equity in Early Childhood: Suspension/Expulsion Prevention](#)

An additional course, [Mandatory Reporting and Recognition of Child Abuse and Neglect](#), has also been added to PDMS and Schoology. This is a new version of the course previously available through the Office of the Child Advocate.

If you do not already have one, you will need to **create an EdAccess account to use PDMS and Schoology**. [Click HERE to learn how to get started](#). Need additional information? This [brief overview and toolkit](#) can be used to guide you through EdAccess account creation and requesting help.

Verifying training completion for PDMS/Schoology courses. When you complete one of the above courses in PDMS/Schoology, please **upload your transcript** to OCCL, rather than the PDMS certificate, to verify training completion.