UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

NOVEMBER 2026

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear Early Childhood Professionals,

Welcome to the November issue of REACH! Next week, we celebrate Children's Book Week (Nov. 9–13) with guest readers visiting programs across Delaware, a refreshed From Our Bookshelf to Yours read-aloud resource, and practical tips for inclusive storytimes. This issue also features highlights from the 5th Annual 1st State Family Child Care Conference, a well-deserved toast to our Family Child Care Network coordinators Tina Mays and Kim Cruz, and details on upcoming CDA working sessions, a Conscious Discipline offering, the Shining the Light on You wellness cohort, and QIA support. Thank you for your continued dedication to Delaware's young children and families!

Warmly,

The DIEEC Team

Delaware Department of Education

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DIEEC ACTION ITEMS

Recording and Resources from the Educator Information Sessions for CDA Supports

Missed the session or want to review the information shared? The recording and resources from the Zoom webinars held on October 21 are now available here: https://dieec.udel.edu/resource/cda-information-and-supports/



Photo credit: Pexels

CDA Application and E-Portfolio Hands-On Working Sessions

These FREE in-person working sessions with DIEEC and ECIC are designed to guide you through two essential parts of the credentialing process: submitting your CDA application and developing and finalizing your CDA portfolio.
View the flyer and Info here: https://mcusercontent.com/0a97a40a628fbcbb06ab6665a/files/49c40349-7e32-15fc-0b8f-e534ae7713d6/CDA_Portfolio_and_ePortfolio_Working_Sessions_Flyer_Oct._2026.pdf



Photo credit: Getty images pro

November sessions are from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m

Monday, November 16: (New Castle County) DIEEC, 461 Wyoming Rd., Newark, DE 19716

Tuesday, November 17: (Sussex County) Sussex Resource Center at Little Einstein's, 20359 Sand Hill Rd., Georgetown, DE 1994

Wednesday, November 18: (Kent County) Early Childhood Innovation Center (ECIC) at Delaware State University, 1200 N. DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901

Thursday, November 19: (City of Wilmington) WECEC, Stubbs Early Education Center, 1100 N. Pine St., Wilmington, DE 19801

New! Virtual CDA Working Sessions

In addition to the in-person sessions listed above, DIEEC and ECIC are now offering a monthly virtual session covering the same topics. This month's virtual session will take place on Friday, November 20. Registration is encouraged but not required. Use the following Zoom link to join: https://udel.zoom.us/j/91732502603

CDA working session registration: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfqt38OcEN2QcMJmGCyTlVgrtBUnqpBsZ2MWnWdV4JuULETZQ/viewform

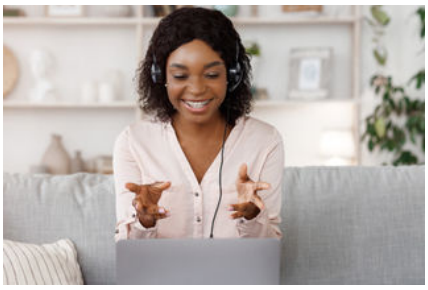


Photo credit: Getty Images Pro

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 **January 18, February 8, March 5, and March 22**) with self-paced online modules to help you swap reactive moments for calm, confident connection.

Register here:
https://dieecpd.org/registry/calendar/training/8918



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

Shining the Light on You- New Cohort Forming!

Shining the Light on You is DIEEC's award-winning 15-week program for family child care educators. Participants earn up to 18 QA (quality assured) hours while receiving group health coaching, FREE individual health coaching, and a kit stocked with essential supplies to support you in your wellness journey.

You must attend an information session to be considered for the cohort: Choose from **11/10/26 from 1:30 to 2:30** or **11/12/26 from 6:30 to 7:30.** Zoom link for both sessions: https://udel.zoom.us/j/92320808441



Download the flyer or visit our Shining the Light on You webpage to learn more. (Photo credit: DIEEC)

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

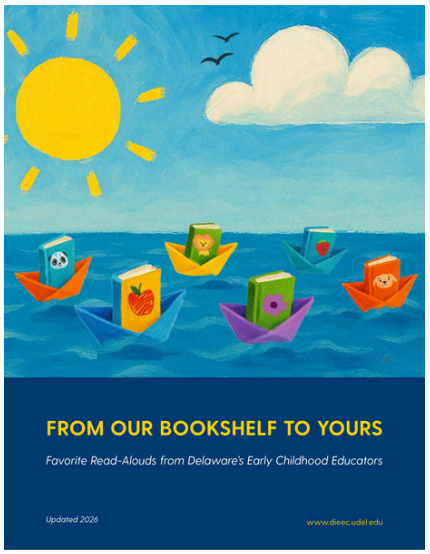


Whether you're just starting or finalizing your application, our coordinators are here to guide you step-by-step.
Photo credit: Pexels

Celebrate Children's Book Week with DIEEC (Nov. 9-13)

Next week, our DIEEC guest readers are heading out to Delaware's early childhood education programs to share the joy of reading! Follow along on Facebook and Instagram all week long for photos and highlights.

A big thank you to everyone who submitted their favorite read-aloud titles! We've refreshed our resource, From Our Bookshelf to Yours: Favorite Read-Alouds from Delaware's Early Childhood Educators. Check it out on our Children's Book Week webpage and find more great resources to support early literacy in your program.



Coach's Corner: From Storytime to Playtime: Creating Open-Ended Book Extensions

This month, Meghan Pallante shares how simple, child-led activities can extend storytime into rich, hands-on exploration in your classroom. Using I Am a Bunny as our guide, learn practical strategies for setting up open-ended interest areas and prop boxes that deepen comprehension through meaningful play. Read here: https://dieec.udel.edu/quality-improvement-system/dieec-resources-for-you/coachs-corner/



Photo credit: DIEEC

Meeting the Needs of All Children: Inclusive Read-Alouds

As we prepare to celebrate Children's Book Week, we are reminded that for children birth to 5, engagement during storytime rarely looks like sitting perfectly still! Consider reimagining storytime to welcome every learner. The first five tips in Reading Rockets' guide on **20 Ways to Adapt the Read Aloud in the Inclusive Classroom** are particularly relevant to our youngest learners, highlighting how simple adjustments, such as giving children text-related objects to hold or individual visual copies to follow along with, can keep active young minds engaged without requiring them to sit motionless. Other tips in the article may be more useful for programs serving older children.



Photo credit: Getty Images Signature

Rooted in Excellence: Celebrating 5 Years of Family Child Care Empowerment

What a day we had celebrating the fifth anniversary of the 1st State Family Child Care Conference! The day included 12+ targeted breakout sessions, our peer-led Program Spotlights, CEHD (College of Education and Human Development) Dean Rena Hallam's announcement of the new Home-Based Child Care Research Initiative at DIEEC, and special remarks from Lt. Gov. Kyle Evans Gay. Our keynote panel was a highlight of the day, inspiring attendees to step up to the microphone and share their own experiences and perspectives.



A huge thank you to everyone who joined us in elevating the profession. We hope you left feeling inspired, appreciated, and proud of the important work you do every day! *(Photo credit: Courtney Foster/DIEEC)*

Cheers to Tina Mays and Kim Cruz!

We are incredibly proud of our Family Child Care Network Coordinators, Tina Mays and Kim Cruz, who were honored at this year's 1st State Family Child Care Association "Toast to Equality" gala for their dedication and excellence in supporting family child care educators in Delaware. They may have been surprised, but we weren't- we see the intentional work that they put in to connect individual educators to a community where they can share ideas, tackle challenges, grow as business owners, and feel truly seen and supported in their vital work.



Thank you, Kim and Tina, for elevating the family child care profession every day! *(Photo credit: DIEEC)*

Coast Day

Our team was excited to have a table at the University of Delaware's Coast Day in Lewes last month. The event was a great opportunity to connect with the community, raise awareness about the importance of early childhood education, and engage children in our "Dig Into a Story" box.



Photo credit: DIEEC

Monthly Raffle for Early Childhood Educators



This month, we're raffling off two kits full of fun physical activity materials! Answer this month's survey question to be entered to win: What book character are the children in your program currently obsessed with? The deadline is **November 23**.

Here are our lucky October raffle winners:

- **Center-based classroom educator**: Amanda Dorian from Newark Montessori Preschool
- **Family child care educator:** Tracey Campbell Albarran from Tracey's Little Wonders

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

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, 11/10, from 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, 11/25, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Family child care educators use this Zoom link to join all FCC office hours.

- Thursday, 11/5, from 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- Monday, 11/16, from 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, 12/1, 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

Kindergarten Registration Supports

Delaware Readiness Teams is offering several different supports for families with children who will be age 5 on or before **August 31, 2027**.

Early childhood programs can request Registration Information Postcards to distribute to families using this form.

Please share the following support option with parents, families and caregivers:
Kindergarten Registration Assistance Office Hours. Receive assistance with kindergarten registration and navigating school choice. **Free and open to the public**.

CDA Scholarship Applications are 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 accountt, 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.