

REACH

a monthly e-newsletter for Delaware's early childhood and school age programs



April 2020



You're here for Delaware's children and families.
We're here for YOU!

OUR PATH FORWARD

Supporting your programs while
navigating through COVID-19.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Martha Buell

Dear Members of the Early Care and Education Community of Delaware:

As the Director of DIEEC, I want to let you know that on behalf of everyone who works at DIEEC, we are grateful to you for your hard work and dedication to the children and families of Delaware.

According to the British writer G.K. Chesterton, "Gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder." We know that these are stressful and scary times, but we stand in wonder of your grace, strength, and

courage. As we face our new normal, with each day bringing new challenges, please know that the DIEEC is here to support you in any way we can.

Before we ever heard of this virus, you were already our heroes, and we know you are the heroes to the children and families in your programs. Your hard work and commitment to our field, and your spirit of caring always inspires us. For all you do for Delaware's children and families, and for all you will continue to do as we move forward in this crisis, please accept our deepest thanks and gratitude.

In this newsletter, our goal is to bring you some resources that might help you meet the challenges we are facing; we hope it is helpful.

[Delaware's Child Care and COVID -19 Site](#)

STRESS MANAGEMENT

**Insights from Diana Morello-DeSerio
Director, Early Learning Center, University of
Delaware**

Being a leader is challenging; being a leader during challenging and uncertain times is even more daunting.

To some of us it is counter to our belief as a leader to say.... It is OK to NOT be OK. As we are all in this collective experience of the unknown, we need to allow ourselves permission to feel - feel confused, feel angry, feel tired, and feel like we are connecting on levels we may have never experienced before; such as social media!

I have been following the work of Brene Brown for some time now and have been leaning on her research to remind myself that I can have feelings of uncertainty and still be a brave and courageous leader. In her book, *Daring Greatly*, Brown reminds leaders that vulnerability causes discomfort, and for many people, including leaders, we try to dismiss these feelings.

Yet, these are the feelings that great leaders acknowledge and name so they can find the place where they are needed and work with

HEALTH & SAFETY

As you know, hand washing is by far the best way to keep kids from getting sick and prevent the spread of germs. Now, amid this pandemic, it is even more critical in avoiding community spread.

We encourage you to be extra vigilant in making sure you and your children are actively engaging in washing your hands throughout the day.

As a reminder, please practice these hand washing guidelines:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold). Make sure the water isn't too hot for little hands.
2. Use soap and lather up for about 20 seconds. Antibacterial soap isn't a must — any soap will do.
3. Make sure you get in between your fingers, on the backs of hands, and under the nails where germs like to hang out. And don't forget the wrists!
4. Rinse and dry thoroughly with a clean towel.

others to find collective and creative ways to emerge with stronger relationships, commitments and programs.

[CONTINUE READING>](#) This resource is also attached to the publication.

Please check out the [additional resources](#) for more information. This resource is also attached to this publication.

TECHNOLOGY TIPS

It feels like in an instant, we went from face-to-face interactions to connecting virtually.

With this transition, we've had to learn quickly new technology while brushing up on our existing skills. Of the many platforms that we are using, Zoom is one of the most popular.

You do not need an account to participate on a Zoom call. When a host sends you an invite via email, click on the link and the meeting will open in your browser. Keep in mind creating a Zoom account is free and can easily be done by going to the Zoom website (<https://zoom.us/>). By having your own account, you can host meetings for up to 40 minutes long. Additionally, we recommend that you download the app on your phone. This gives you the same features with more convenient access.

A couple of essential things to keep in mind, test your set up before the meeting begins, and start it on time. Additionally, be sure to mute yourself when you're on a call; otherwise, background noise interrupts the call. And try to fully focus on the call. Be mindful of your nonverbal behavior like touching your face and doing other activities.

As referenced in our Professional Development section, we are adding virtual and online trainings for you to continue with your skill development. Included at the end of this publication is an overview of steps to help with participation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

First, thank you for your tireless work to care for and educate Delaware's young children. We appreciate your commitment to your work when things are running normally, and now, our respect for you is even more profound.

Because of the new circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 virus, we have added new virtual and online training opportunities to our calendar.

These options include a variety of trainings for various skill levels, and they focus on different competencies. We will continue to add more content throughout April.

We encourage you to continue with your professional development during this period. This time will be well spent by learning new skills and enhancing your current ones.

Visit our website

Remember, you are not alone. We are just a phone call away to support you on every front.

FINANCIAL INSIGHTS

Amid COVID-19 and the Governor's Executive Order 38 for Child Care, Delaware was faced head-on with the realization of the importance of our child care system along with the rest of the country.

The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) knows this all too well and continues to issue guidance to address the many concerns of providers who serve families receiving child care subsidy.

Fortunately, the state does have some flexibility regarding the use of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) appropriations and will see an increase of approximately 9 million dollars to the discretionary allocation due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Understandably the main concern voiced by the provider community was the financial impact of the pandemic on them as small businesses. As they began to see their enrollment decrease, providers were concerned that current child care subsidy policy would lend to financial ruin. DHSS received many calls and emails from providers expressing this concern.

After much discussion and collaboration with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), our federal oversight agency, other CCDF administering agencies, and the governor's office, we were able to share some of the CCDF policies that were relaxed as a result of this crisis.

At this time, providers who remain open; and who serve children receiving child care subsidy can bill and be reimbursed based on their enrollment rather than their attendance until April 30, 2020. This information was shared with providers via the DHSS listserv, the Office of Child Care Licensing, the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Wilmington Early Care and Education Council.

Providers can find this guidance and regular updates regarding COVID-19 and the Purchase of Care program on [MychildDE.org](https://mychildde.org) by clicking on the "Provider" tab and checking the "Latest News."

With the bipartisan signing of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which includes 3.5 billion dollars in emergency CCDF funding, DHSS is poised to provide some much-needed relief to the child care community. However, DHSS will need to ascertain exactly how much will be allocated to our state.

There has been no official communication from the Administration for Children and Families to date. DHSS will then need to carefully consider the specific parameters around the use of these additional funds. Depending on these parameters, the state may need to request waivers from ACF and/or approval to amend the CCDF State Plan. Finally, DHSS would need to determine the specific needs of the child care community and how to glean those needs to allocate funds accordingly. Please continue to check [MychildDe.org](https://mychildde.org) for regular updates.

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

Delaware Stars for Early Success, website: www.delawarestars.udel.edu

DIEEC Professional Development, website: www.dieecpd.org

Main: (302) 831-3239 | Fax: (302) 831-4223



DELAWARE INSTITUTE FOR
Excellence *in*
Early Childhood



RESOURCES FOR TEACHING PROPER HAND WASHING

[Handwashing Lesson Plan](#)

[CDC Handwashing Resources](#)

(A wealth of resources in English and Spanish – stickers, posters, facts, videos, podcasts. Follow the video link for informational videos that detail proper handwashing technique. “Wash Your Hands” is a short video on the bottom right-hand corner and appropriate for young children through all ages.)

[CDC Life Is Better With Clean Hands Campaign](#)

(Downloadable posters in English and Spanish illustrating proper hand washing techniques that can be hung by sinks and shared with families.)

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In her book, *Daring Greatly*, Brown reminds leaders that vulnerability causes discomfort, and for many people, including leaders, we try to dismiss these feelings. Yet, these are the feelings that great leaders acknowledge and name so they can find the place where they are needed and work with others to find collective and creative ways to emerge with stronger relationships, commitments and programs.

I am writing this today for everyone who feels alone, uncertain and just plain scared. You are not alone, and you have the ability and courage to weather this storm. Use this time to stay committed to all your relationships; especially staff, children and families.

We know we are essential, and we know we serve a population that even on a good day does not have a voice. We are the voice for our children and families and our charge is to provide ways to acknowledge our own vulnerabilities and work with our program teams and then the broader early learning/childcare community to help everyone understand why the birth to 5 age span is vital and must be supported. When we look back, ask yourself this question, "Did we practice the same principles of social-emotional learning and well-being with ourselves and with our staff that we promote with our children each and every day?"

Here are a few resources to help us feel connected:

<https://dieecpd.org/>
www.childcareaware.org
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
<https://brenebrown.com>
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>
<https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/>



VIRTUAL LEARNING

YOUR GUIDE FOR THE MOST EFFECTIVE ONLINE EXPERIENCE

Because of our recent circumstances, we are more dependent on online learning for professional development. Our goal is for you to get the most from this experience so to better equip you with the skills you need to implement best practice in your classroom.

To this end, the following includes suggestions about how you can most effectively utilize technology to create a positive learning experience.

1. JOINING AN ONLINE TRAINING:

You will need a device such as a **computer, a tablet, or a smartphone** with **internet access**.

Make sure you have a reliable signal. If Wifi is not readily available, we suggest using your smartphone. All video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and WebEx have an app that you can download on your phone.

Xfinity is also offering free Wifi by accessing the following resources:

- 1.) <https://www.internetessentials.com/>
- 2.) <https://wifi.xfinity.com/>

We also recommend you to **close all applications** that could influence the **connection speed**.

Some of the online content will be prerecorded for you to download. Please make sure your device has enough space for this file.

Make sure you log in to join the webinar **5-10 minutes before** the start time and follow the link you have received from the webinar organizer.

Once you click the link, a training prompt will open in your window. Depending on what platform you are using, you may need to fill in all the fields such as your name, e-mail address, and the password/ID number you received from an instructor.

When using Zoom, click the link sent to you via email or click on the **Meetings** tab to join a scheduled meeting and you'll automatically be brought into the meeting. More information can be found [here](#).

You **do not** have to have a **Zoom account** to attend a Zoom meeting or interview. You will be prompted to download the software, once you have clicked on the link that has been provided. You may also wish to create an account, but that is not required for participation.

2. PARTICIPATING IN AN ONLINE TRAINING:

Focus – Imagine you are in a classroom, and the teacher is right in front of you. To eliminate distractions, put your phone on silent (if you're using a computer) and close all the other windows on your computer.

Be sure to **mute yourself** if you are not speaking. This prevents audio feedback and makes it much easier to listen to those who are speaking/presenting.

Engage – Don't be afraid to ask a question. Also, because most webinar platforms have a chat section, you can communicate with your instructor this way.

Another tool to make sure you are focused and engaged is to take notes. **Write down key points**. These notes will be helpful when you complete the reflections portion of the training.

TECHNOLOGY DIFFICULTY?

If your frame freezes, be patient, it typically will be live again. However, if it persists, the best option is to log out and then log in again.