

FEBRUARY 2022



Dear Early Childhood Professional:

There is a little more than one month until spring arrives! The winter months can feel long, so we're hoping you find ways to fuel your spirit until warmer weather arrives. Our "Voices from the Field" series is a real mood booster in this month's newsletter.

Our editorial theme for February is legacy. We asked several of our early childhood professionals what legacy meant to them. Their feedback is inspiring. Our field is defined by individuals who do this work because they are passionate about caring for and educating young children. And because of this investment, the field's impact can transcend generations. We are interested in your thoughts on legacy. Email us ecinstitute@udel.edu and share what comes to mind when thinking about this topic. You may see your ideas featured on one of our social media outlets.

The remainder of the newsletter includes updates and news. Want another mood booster? Join us for DIEEC's Jeopardy Event. It's a fun way to meet other professionals, learn, and win great prizes. Additionally, we included information on a webinar we're hosting this week for family child care professionals on the potential impact of Build Back Better legislation covering universal pre-kindergarten. The State announced a Request for Proposals for Early Head Start spots in programs. Finally, we shared an update on The Stabilization Fund. Eighty-eight percent of eligible programs applied for these grants in Delaware, with about \$60 million distributed.

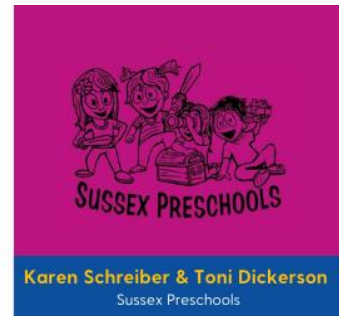
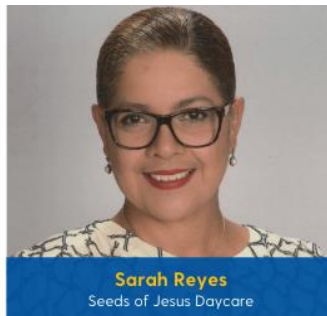
Rena Hallam
DIEEC Director

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Leaving a Legacy in Early Childhood

Early childhood professionals influence future generations daily by caring for and educating infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The work is truly a calling often answered by multiple generations of family members. To this end, legacy is the focus of our editorial content this month.

We reached out to several early childhood professionals to get their insights on legacy. In our Voices from the Field series this month, we feature Michelle Williams of Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center, Sarah Reyes from the family child care program "Seeds of Jesus Daycare", and mother and daughter, Karen Schreiber and Toni Dickerson. They own and operate multiple sites in Sussex County.



Read their Legacy Interviews Here:

- [Michelle Williams](#)
- [Sarah Reyes](#)
- [Karen Schreiber & Toni Dickerson](#)

The interviews are also attached to this publication.

WHAT'S NEW?

News & Updates for February

Stabilization Fund Update

We have some impressive statistics to share about the Delaware Early Education and Child Care Stabilization Fund administered by DIEEC. The Stabilization Fund is federally-funded money to help programs stay in business and subsidize families' child care costs.

With the application process closed, 88% of eligible programs submitted applications. There were 389 centers and 472 family child care programs statewide that applied for the fund. As of January 20, close to \$60 million has been paid to programs.

As previously announced in January, we are able to grant an additional award to all programs that have received a stabilization fund sub-grant and continue to remain open and serving children. The award will be based on the original application submitted for your program – no additional application is necessary.

Programs that have verified their initial Stabilization Fund sub-grant awards will automatically be moved forward for payment, with the distribution of these awards to begin this month.

The award amounts will be as follows:

- Small Family Child Care programs: \$7,000
- Large Family Child Care programs: \$7,000
- Small Center Child Care programs: \$37,000
- Large Center Child Care programs: \$49,000

Read the full announcement [here](#). The Announcement is also attached to this publication.

These sub-grants are vital in helping retain and reward the workforce and give programs the ability to upgrade their facilities to prevent the spread of COVID.

Early Head Start Slots Available - Request for Proposals

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) has posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking professional services for Delaware early childhood programs to provide comprehensive early learning services for infants, toddlers, and their families, under the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

Please view the First Start Delaware – Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) RFP details at the following link: <https://mmp.delaware.gov/Bids/Details/6692> or at DDOE's Bid Solicitations website: <https://bids.doe.k12.de.us/#home>. The deadline for submitting bid responses is March 3, 2022 at 2:00 pm.

The State of Delaware will allow written requests for clarification of the RFP. All questions should be submitted no later than February 10, 2022 and posted on DDOE's website at: <https://bids.doe.k12.de.us/#home>. All questions will be consolidated into a single set of responses and posted on both DDOE's website and the State's website at www.bids.delaware.gov by the date of February 17, 2022.

Attention Family Child Care Professionals:

"A Dialogue with DIEEC - Build Back Better" this Wednesday, 2/9

Join us this **Wednesday, February 9 at 6:00 p.m.** as we discuss the "Build Back Better" legislation. Attendees will hear more from Kim Krzanowski from the department of education, who will share a presentation focused more on family child care, in follow-up to the Build Back webinar held in December. This webinar will also include time for discussion and information about family child care network opportunities, a shared support that facilitate business practices (e.g. budgeting, substitute pools, and other shared service options). Nationally, FCC networks have emerged as a promising strategy to address FCC shared services needs.

Details are:

Wednesday, February 9 at 6:00 p.m.

*Registration is required and closes on
Wednesday, February 9 at 3 p.m.*

Zoom Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/3AEbPCV>

For those unable to attend, a recording will be available.

Play Jeopardy with Us - Date Set for February 22

DIEEC's Jeopardy events are a big hit, so we're hosting another round in February. Play alone or with coworkers from your program; it doesn't matter - you will have fun, learn interesting early childhood facts, and win great prizes.

Details are:

Tuesday, February 22 at 7 p.m.

*Registration is required and closes on
Friday, February 18 at 4 p.m.*

[Register here.](#)



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Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

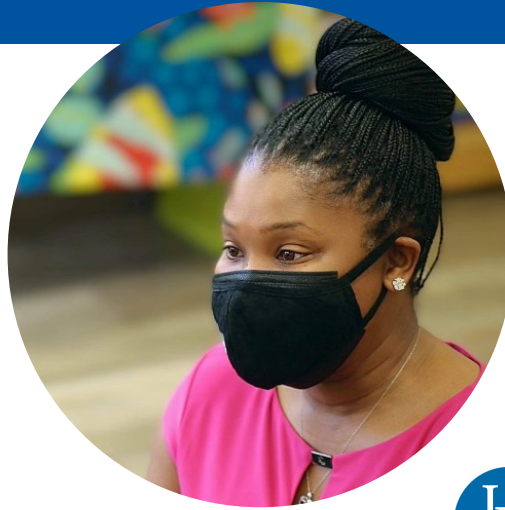
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FEBRUARY 2022

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Creating a Legacy in Early Childhood Education



with Michelle Williams of
Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center



What comes to mind when you think of the word “legacy?”

“Impact and making a positive difference comes to mind when I think of the word legacy.”

Can you give an example of the impact of your work as it relates to legacy?

“Having a positive influence on generations of families who enroll their children in Hilltop programs because of our relationships. An example is we host an annual Girl Boss Summit to empower girls and to let them know that, not only is it alright for them to be in leadership positions/roles, but they can also succeed in them.”



“We host an annual Girl Boss Summit to empower girls and to let them know that, not only is it alright for them to be in leadership positions/roles, but they can also succeed in them.”

Image provided by
Michelle Williams

Provide background on how you chose early childhood as your profession. Were there other family members in the field who influenced your work?

“Early childhood chose me. Hilltop was my first and is the only full-time job that I’ve had. I am in my twenty-first year! I came here after completing a year of AmeriCorps service with Public Allies Delaware. Prior to that I was a student at the University of Delaware. I did my practicum/internship with Northern Delaware Early Head Start (where I first met Heidi Beck), now known as New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS). I started at Hilltop as the lone family service worker for both NDEHS and ECAP and worked my way up to now being the executive director of the organization. Being able to build relationships and make connections with the children and families, seeing them succeed/achieve goals, as well as being able to relate to many of their lived experiences, has kept me in the field.”

“There were no family members in the field, but I brought my sister in to volunteer in ECAP. She quickly became a substitute, an assistant teacher and now a lead teacher (19 years later).”

What keeps you motivated to continue serving young children?

"The joy of seeing children and families meet their goals keeps me motivated. To be able to listen and be the support person that is needed also brings me joy. The gratitude that is shown by the families when they receive food baskets and grocery store gift cards for the holidays. The smiles that are on the children's faces when we have special events or when they receive their gifts for the holidays melts my heart. Attending high school graduations of former participants is truly a great feeling. All of these and many more experiences let me know that my efforts are well worth some of the challenges that are endured in doing this work."

When your current children are adults, what would you like them to remember about their experience in your care?

"The loving and family-like atmosphere that Hilltop provides."

"The friendships and relationships that were established."

"Teachers who were impactful."

"I want them to be able to have 'remember when' stories that they can share and have good laughs about. Since most children come in as infants and stay until they are in middle school, I also want them to remember some of the mistakes they make so that they are knowledgeable of the consequences that may come."



"The joy of seeing children and families meet their goals keeps me motivated. To be able to listen and be the support person that is needed also brings me joy."

Image provided by Michelle Williams



"Impact and making a positive difference comes to mind when I think of the word legacy."

Image provided by Michelle Williams

If you could go back in time and give your younger, professional self a piece of advice related to leaving your mark/legacy on the field of early childhood, what would that be?

"Do it because you love it! Be genuine! Be consistent (even when it's hard)! Give it all you got! Impacting lives is bigger than yourself! Be the change maker that you always hear about!"



"Being able to build relationships and make connections with the children and families, seeing them succeed/achieve goals, as well as being able to relate to many of their lived experiences, has kept me in the field."

Image provided by Michelle Williams

FEBRUARY 2022

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Creating a Legacy in Early Childhood Education



with Sarah Reyes of
Seeds of Jesus Daycare



What comes to mind when you think of the word “legacy?”

“When I think about legacy, the first thing that comes to mind is what I leave behind for our children. Unfortunately, the world is marked by social, cultural, and economic disparities. But what if we teach our children at an early age faith and cultural values?”

Can you give an example of the impact of your work as it relates to legacy?

“My mission is to teach our children values that exemplify the Bible's golden rule about love and respect for others, as Jesus commissioned to all of us. That is how Christian and bilingual education evolves as part of my professional mission and goal in early childhood. In our program, children learn to appreciate differences of cultures, races, languages, and faiths. I want to leave a legacy of Christian values, Spanish language acquisition, and culture to young children.”

Provide background on how you chose early childhood as your profession. Were there other family members in the field who influenced your work?

“My paternal grandfather was a significant influence in my childhood years. In my native Puerto Rico, my grandfather was our neighborhood guitar teacher. The neighborhood residents, specifically young children and youth, respected him as an instructor. His teaching skills and passion captured my attention and admiration. He was a role model who left behind a legacy of musicians, singers, and a community that shared its culture throughout younger generations. He was a model of education and cultural legacy to me.”



“Arely is one of my family daycare students, now an adolescent. I love Arely because she has been a miracle baby since birth with Moebius syndrome's, a rare neurological disease.”

Image provided by Sarah Reyes



Sarah and Arely (first on the left, pink shirt) at her program when Arely was a student in 2010.
Image provided by Sarah Reyes.

What keeps you motivated to continue serving young children?

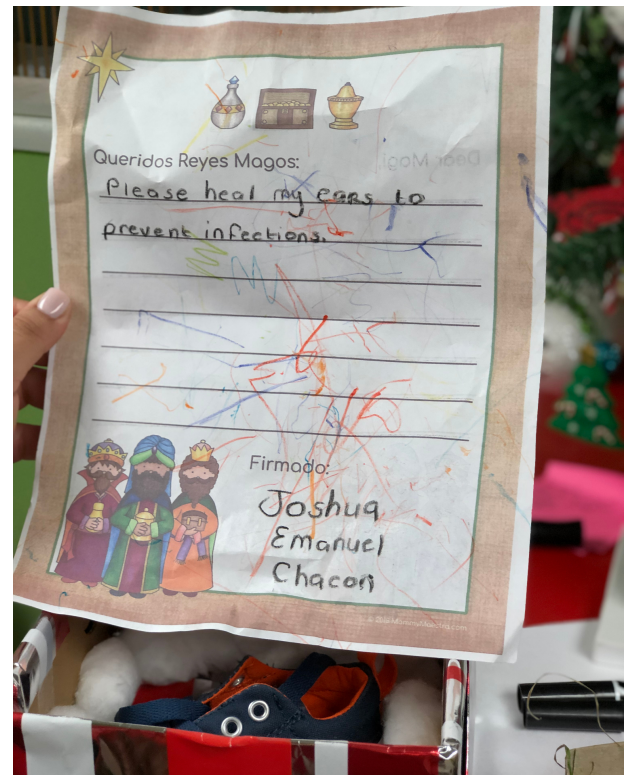
"I find my inspiration in my children. Because I was concerned about the quality of early childhood education for my children, in the spring of 2004, I decided to quit the art teacher position to become an early childhood professional as a family daycare. The acceptance of our diverse community has been my engine to continue with the mission of leaving a faith, cultural, and linguistic legacy to our young children. At present, I have expanded the school to a child care center where I continue providing quality education to young children. "

When your current children are adults, what would you like them to remember about their experience in your care?

"I want my students to make kindness, love, and empathy part of their lifestyle. My desire is that faith values and cultural legacy pass from generation to generation."

If you could go back in time and give your younger, professional self a piece of advice related to leaving your mark/legacy on the field of early childhood, what would that be?

"If I could go back in time, one piece of advice I would give myself would be to leave behind my insecurities. Teaching Christian values and culture has been one of the most valuable and rewarding professional experiences in my life. Maybe I can't eradicate the world's inequalities. But I can empower our children to be the change we all want for them. That is my legacy to future generations."



"In some Hispanic countries, the children collect some hay or grass in a small box and put it under their bed for the Three Wise camels as they come overnight to bring presents to children as they did with baby Jesus. In some other countries, the children write their wish letters to the Three Kings and put them inside a shoe under their bed. In our center, we teach about Jesus' birth to the children. The children decorate a box, get some grass for the camels, and write a wish letter for the three wise kings as a family project. On January 6, the parents and their children bring the letter and the box with grass to the center where the children get the presents after their nap. In the pictures, the letter and the box with the shoe belong to Joshua, a child who got sick from his ears often. His parents prayed and wished for Joshua's healing."

Image provided by Sarah Reyes

FEBRUARY 2022

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Creating a Legacy in Early Childhood Education



DELAWARE INSTITUTE FOR
Excellence in
Early Childhood

with Karen Schreiber & Toni Dickerson of
Sussex Preschools

What comes to mind when you think of the word "legacy?"

"The impact on others that you leave behind."

Can you give an example of the impact of your work as it relates to legacy?

"We are now seeing children of the children that we had in teen outreach programs years ago, and the fact that we were the person that they trusted with their children is heartwarming."

Provide background on how you chose early childhood as your profession. Were there other family members in the field who influenced your work?

"We both left our previous positions in order to serve children and families that were being overlooked by other programs."

What keeps you motivated to continue serving young children?

"The fact that children in our area still do not receive fair/equitable services based on their zip code, and are underserved, even after 20+ combined years of advocacy for us. When children aren't being served, neither are their teachers and families, and we try to fix that in all areas of our work."



When your current children are adults, what would you like them to remember about their experience in your care?

"We would want them to know they were loved and that someone put them first."

If you could go back in time and give your younger, professional self a piece of advice related to leaving your mark/legacy on the field of early childhood, what would that be?

"Stop waiting for a seat at the table, and build your own table."

DELAWARE INSTITUTE FOR
Excellence in
Early Childhood

Hello Early Childhood Professionals,

We are following up with final details for the additional funding that Delaware added to the Delaware Early Education and Child Care Stabilization Fund, announced by Governor Carney in November 2021. As a result of these added funds, we are able to grant an additional award to all programs that have received a stabilization fund sub-grant and continue to remain open and serving children. The award will be based on the original application submitted for your program – **no additional application is necessary**.

Programs that have verified their initial Stabilization Fund sub-grant awards will automatically be moved forward for payment, with the distribution of these awards to begin in February 2022.

The award amounts will be as follows:

- Small Family Child Care programs: \$7,000
- Large Family Child Care programs: \$7,000
- Small Center Child Care programs: \$37,000
- Large Center Child Care programs: \$49,000

If you would prefer NOT to receive this additional award, please notify us at StabilizationFund@udel.edu by **January 31, 2022**. If we do not hear from you, we will send an award letter when your award is processed.

Please note, as with the prior Stabilization Fund sub-grant awards, these funds will need to be spent on allowable expenses and verified within 6 months of award. We will follow-up to request the necessary documentation. Eligible expenses are those incurred January 1 – June 30, 2022, in the following categories:

- Personnel costs: wages, benefits, premium pay, bonuses
- Rent or mortgage payments, utilities, facilities maintenance and improvements, insurance
- PPE, cleaning and sanitation supplies and services, professional development related to health and safety practices
- Equipment and supplies to respond to COVID-19
- Goods and services necessary to maintain or resume childcare services
- Mental health supports for children and employees

Newly Licensed Programs: The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services and the Delaware Department of Education have also secured funding to support new programs that became licensed after December 1, 2021 and were not eligible to participate in the initial rounds of the Stabilization Fund. We will share further details, including eligible amounts, in April 2022.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Delaware's children and families,
The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood