

AUGUST 2022



Dear early childhood educator:

Like many during summer, we're getting outside, but we're doing it with our professional learning experiences. In the first article of this issue, learn more about the "Let's Go Outside" initiative, our outreach to provide grants and training so programs can create outdoor spaces and facilitate learning through exploration and play.

We also are offering indoor fun by hosting a summer version of Jeopardy. Sign up today and enjoy downtime with your peers - you deserve it.

Check out other news and updates, including opportunities to participate in several family child care initiatives.

Fall is always busy, so we encourage you to savor what's left of summer.

Rena Hallam
DIEEC Director



"Let's Go Outside" Takes Off

Did you know that the average child spends up to 44 hours a week on a screen and less than ten minutes a day playing outdoors?!

DIEEC's learning environments team and the University of Delaware Lab School are partnering with early childhood programs through the "Let's Go Outside" initiative. Together, they are determined to reverse this trend.

The initiative is underway with 22 program leaders and educators engaging in professional learning experiences to power and promote nature-based outdoor play and learning. And when asked about their experience, participants responded with one word, which are featured above.

"We are passionate about outdoor learning because of the documented mental health benefits of spending time outdoors and connecting with nature," said Christine Skrobot, DIEEC associate director of early childhood: learning environments. "Mentally healthy children are ready to tackle whatever life throws at them and have a more positive quality of life." - [Continue here.](#)
<https://bit.ly/3oOGFne>. The article is also attached to the end of this publication.

News and Updates

AAP Updates Infant Safe Sleep Guidelines

Each year 3,500 infants die of sleep-related infant deaths, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). These deaths include Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed.

The AAP has updated its safe sleep guidelines with new evidence-based safe sleep recommendations and other strategies for preventing sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ) has put together safe sleep resources below for health professionals, parents and families, early childhood educators, and other caregivers.

- [Video quiz: How Sleep Safe Savvy are You?](#) <https://bit.ly/3Jqzvz9>
- [Safe Sleep Childcare Infographic](#) <https://bit.ly/3ShewTo>
- [Safe Sleep Myths and Facts](#) <https://bit.ly/3OU0oN9>

Also, NICHQ is hosting a webinar this month to address this topic. Details included [here.](#)
<https://bit.ly/3QvFsNJ>

PreK in Family Child Care Project (PKFCC) Kickoff: Webinar Recording Available

In many states, family child care educators deliver public pre-kindergarten in their homes, but we know little about implementing these initiatives here in Delaware.

DIEEC Director Rena Hallam and DIEEC Research Director Jason Hustedt are partnering with researchers at the Erikson Institute and the Equity Action Coalition to launch a new PreK in FCC Project to better understand state and city strategies, successes, and challenges in delivering PreK in FCC settings.

In July, the Erikson Institute hosted the "PreK in Family Child Care Project (PKFCC) Kickoff" webinar. During this event, Rena Hallam joined other researchers to introduce the project and share a conceptual framework for the equitable inclusion of FCC in PreK initiatives.

In case you missed it, the webinar recording is available [here.](#)
<https://www.erikson.edu/research/prek-in-family-child-care-project-pkfcc/#video>



Jeopardy is Back: Returns August 24

Join your early childhood friends and colleagues and participate in a summer-themed version of DIEEC Jeopardy. Win fun prizes and enjoy some well-deserved down time.

DIEEC Jeopardy
Wednesday, August 24
7:00 p.m.
Sign up [here](https://bit.ly/3OTZlaz)
<https://bit.ly/3OTZlaz>

Family Child Care News

"Shining the Light On You"

Health and Wellness Initiative Open to Participants

We're excited to offer our professional development initiative "Shining the Light on You" again to family child care educators. This 15-week program focuses on improving participants' health and well-being through weekly group discussions on stress management, mindfulness, nutrition, physical activity, time management, and financial wellness.

Participants can also meet individually with a certified health and wellness coach to work on their individual wellness goals. And "Shining the Light on You" is approved for up to 15 quality assured hours under the professionalism competency area.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSciPiI7B1JyulruaC5ic5SjNZznreS5WTGSJLJ1AArAmcxPcg/viewform>

FCC Networks Update



The Sussex Family Child Care Network's first in-person event was on June 9. The focus of these networks is to assist FCC educators interested in participating in publicly sponsored programs such as the Delaware Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) and Early Head Start.

The pilot group met at Grotto Pizza, where they started the process of building relationships and discussing goals. Molly Van Sickle, home-based child care professional development coordinator, facilitated the meeting.

On July 28, a special "Childcare Management Software Demo Night" event took place. This virtual event included live demos from two different childcare shared service platforms. FCC Network Ambassadors from the pilot group answered questions and chatted with attendees interested in joining a network.

Want to learn more about FCC Networks? Click [here](https://www.dieec.udel.edu/family-child-care-networks/), <https://www.dieec.udel.edu/family-child-care-networks/>



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Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

501 South College Avenue Newark, DE 19716

ecinstitute@udel.edu

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VOICES FROM THE FIELD

“LET'S GO OUTSIDE” TAKES OFF



At the Lab School camp, directors and educators had the opportunity to see outdoor learning in action, reflect on child engagement, and think about how to add meaningful outdoor learning experiences to their own programs.

Written by Lin Nordmeyer



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Part of the professional development offered with the "Let's Go Outside" initiative includes providing participants with the opportunity to connect with each other to explore play and emergent curricula.

The initiative is underway with 22 program leaders and educators engaging in professional learning experiences to power and promote nature-based outdoor play and learning. And when asked about their experience, participants responded with one word. These included: "exploratory," "adventurous," "curious," and "stoked!"

"We are passionate about outdoor learning because of the documented mental health benefits of spending time outdoors and connecting with nature," said Christine Skrobot, DIEEC associate director of early childhood: learning environments. "Mentally healthy children are ready to tackle whatever life throws at them and have a more positive quality of life."





The Delaware Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Project Learning Tree Curriculum) and Delaware State Parks (Growing Up WILD) share a supplemental outdoor curricula.

"We are spreading the health, wellness, and cognitive benefits of outdoor learning environments to approximately 2,000 children (and the educators they work with) across the state!"

DIEEC has received applications for round two of the Let's Go Outside initiative and is currently in the middle of randomly selecting the next group of ECE professionals who will participate in these professional learning experiences and receive grants for materials and supplies for outdoor classrooms.

Penny Whitehouse, founder of Mother Natured, said it best: "Restore balance. Most children have the technology, school, and extracurriculars covered. It's time to add a pinch of adventure, a sprinkle of sunshine, and a big handful of outdoor play."

