

DECEMBER 2022

REACH

a newsletter for Delaware's Early Childhood Professionals

Dear early childhood educators,

As we wrap up 2022 this month, it's a great time to reflect on the year. Take a few moments to recognize everything you've accomplished! What are you proud of? What would you like to focus on improving? We took some time to look back as well, and you can see some of our learnings in the wrap-up, reflections, and provider survey articles.

We have an interesting perspective to share in Voices from the Field this month. Molly White opened Just in Time Learning Academy during the pandemic and shares her experience.

DIEEC will be spending time in December highlighting New Directions Early Head Start. Check out the article below as an introduction, and you'll see more to come on our social media channels throughout the month.

Wishing you a wonderful winter season!

With kind regards,
Kristy Sheffler
DIEEC Deputy Director

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Voices from the Field

DIEEC and Just in Time Learning Academy Partner for Long-Term Success

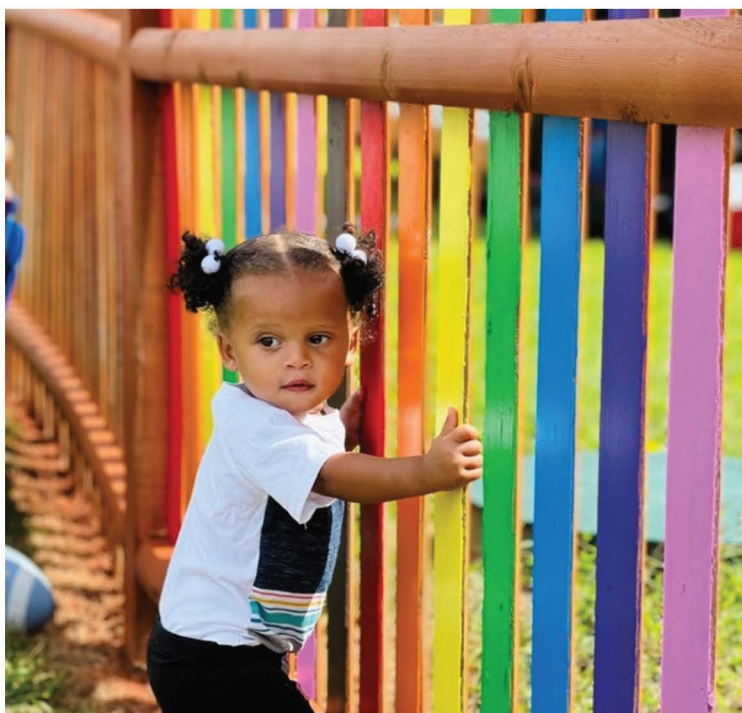
Molly White's passion is providing families with a child care experience that fits the learning needs of each child while supporting the family, ultimately building community. To fulfill her vision, Molly opened her center in Milford during the beginning of the pandemic in the spring of 2020.

But according to Molly, the opening was "just in time," because this crisis provided her center with a more significant opportunity to serve her community.

"Even in times of uncertainty, there are opportunities for innovation, creativity, and personal growth," said Molly.

Her partnership with the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) helps Molly explore these possibilities.

Continue reading this feature here:
bit.ly/3hfVH5u



New Directions Early Head Start

Get to Know New Directions Early Head Start

This month, our editorial content focuses on New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS). NDEHS is a part of DIEEC because of a shared mission: "The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood improves the lives of young children and their families by providing exemplary services to the early childhood community."

NDEHS is a federally funded program through the National Head Start organization. Head Start serves children ages three-five years old. In contrast, Early Head Start supports children from birth to 36 months and those who are pregnant through two service models - home-based and center based - in New Castle and Kent Counties. Its mission is to promote children's success and families' self-sufficiency through community collaboration and partnerships.

NDEHS home-based model is individualized and takes place during weekly visits with the family. NDEHS also provides services to children in community early care and education programs. NDEHS partners with UD's Early Learning Center, Delaware Early Learning Center, Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center, and Neighborhood House.

During this season, NDEHS supports the children and families in its program with two fundraising initiatives: Bundle Up Baby and Toy Drive. NDEHS is collecting cold weather gear such as coats, hats, mittens, car seat covers, and blankets to keep the young children in the program (and their siblings) warm this winter.

Link to Bundle Up Baby: bit.ly/3ULihR9

Link to Annual Toy Drive: bit.ly/3h6mqS0

Fall 2022 Wrap Up

DIEEC OUTREACH

Here, There, and Everywhere!

This fall was busy for DIEEC, with three outreach initiatives to connect with the early childhood community. At the end of October, we launched a podcast, X, "Why," Z: Reflections from Early Childhood Education Professionals. New content drops on the last Friday of every month. In November, the episode featured a conversation with Rhondalin Cannon-Tingle and Colleen Millman, DIEEC's early childhood educators of the year.

You don't want to miss these insightful and fun exchanges with professionals from across the country who explain their "why" for working in early childhood. Listen today from our podcast page or wherever you stream your podcasts.

Here is the link to our podcast page: <https://www.dieec.udel.edu/x-why-z-podcast>

We were excited to be back in programs for Children's Book Week during the first week of November. Our volunteer readers shared various age-appropriate books focused on math with more than 50 licensed programs throughout the state.

Finally, on Saturday, November 12, we held the inaugural 1st State Family Child Care Conference at UD's Virden Center in Lewes. Seventy-five family child care educators spent the day listening to a guest speaker, participating in professional learning experiences, and networking with each other.



Check out this special video highlighting moments of the 1st State Family Child Care Conference. You may recognize some familiar faces.

Link to video: <https://vimeo.com/770922203>

Coming in 2023

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

As we usher in 2023, we wanted to share professional learning experiences that focus on you. The New Year is often a time for goal setting, and we hope your well-being is at the top of the list. To this end, in January we're offering:

- Caring for the Care Giver: Walking the Talk PLUS
- Giving Care to the Caregiver for Family Child Care Professionals PLUS
- Mindfulness – A Resilience Practice

We're also excited to share that we are offering new professional learning experiences for administrators. Be sure to check out:

- The Leader's Role in Giving Care to the Caregiver
- The Leader's Role in Building Authentic Community Engagement PLUS

To register for these professional learning experiences go to the registry calendar at:
<https://dieecpd.org/registry/calendar>

DIEEC – 2022 Reflections

December is a great time to pause and reflect on the last year – what worked, what are areas of improvement. Reflection is essential for active learning and is critical in the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process. It helps us create meaning and inform decisions.

Like you, we are engaged in continuous quality improvement, and reflecting has helped us gain insights about how we can better serve the early childhood education community.

We are evolving and thought summarizing some of the transitions would be helpful to ground us for the coming year.

- In alignment with the state's work on revising the early childhood support system, our new teams recognize the unique needs of each of your roles and are designed to support you – family child care educators, program leaders and administrators, and early childhood classroom educators.
- DIEEC technical assistants (TAs) are available to partner with program leaders throughout the continuous quality improvement (CQI) cycle, supporting you in setting goals, understanding and accessing available supports, and developing strategies to help you achieve your goals.
- As part of DIEEC professional learning experiences (PLEs), all of our workshops now include a follow-up component to support educators in implementing what you learned

DIEEC - 2022 Reflections (cont'd)

Finally, we've launched several initiatives based on the needs of the early childhood field.

- Through the DIEEC CDA cohorts, many of you are working on earning your CDA credential.
- Family child care networks are helping family child care educators come together to support each other, collectively access resources, and work towards participating in publicly funded programs.
- With "Let's Go Outside," we're seeing new outdoor learning environments popping up throughout the state as a result of your interest in exploring the power of learning in nature.

We're excited to partner with you in 2023!

DIEEC ECE's Provider Survey - Your Voice

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM YOU

As we mentioned in last month's REACH, we will spotlight your responses from the ECE Provider Survey and include areas of alignment while outlining what we are doing to address your feedback better.

You shared:

Of our DIEEC supports, communities of practice (CoP) were the most popular among family child care educators, administrators, and leaders.

We love that you have value for the CoPs. Currently there are nine CoPs meeting regularly, and we are evaluating how this format can be used to address other areas.

By way of background, a CoP is an opportunity for Delaware's educators to gather regularly to network with one another, share, and problem solve around common 'dilemmas,' and reflect and grow in their teaching and business practices. Each CoP is facilitated by a DIEEC technical assistant.

Please note Community of Practices are open to all licensed programs.

If you are interested in joining, please contact:

Family child care educators - Kristy Smith, email: kcsmith@udel.edu

Leaders and administrators - Jen Potts, email: jpotts@udel.edu