

## Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

## REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear early childhood professionals,

This month, we're excited to share our theme of Men in Early Childhood. Male caregivers play an important role in young children's development but are underrepresented in the early childhood field. In Voices From the Field, we hear from Mr. Darnell Couch, classroom educator at St. Michael's School and Nursery, about his experience as an early childhood educator. We will also be releasing an exciting episode of the DIEEC podcast, X, "Why," Z: Reflections from Early Childhood Education Professionals, in which Irene and Meg spend some time talking with Dr. Calvin Moore, the CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition. Keep an ear out on March 31 wherever you stream your podcasts!

We share a few more announcements below as well. Take a look at the Upcoming Activities section so you can mark the dates for Week of the Young Child and DIEEC Early Childhood Educator of the Year activities. We also have an update on a couple of ways we've been working to streamline our communication with ECE educators. Finally, we are excited to share an announcement that DIEEC was named a partner in a federally funded early care and education workforce initiative.

As always, please reach out with any questions, suggestions, or concerns you may have – [ecinstitute@udel.edu](mailto:ecinstitute@udel.edu).

With kind regards,  
Kristy Sheffler  
DIEEC Deputy Director



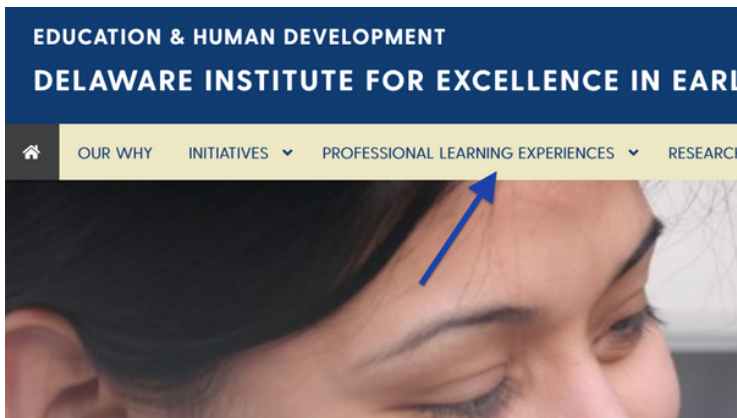
## CONNECTING WITH YOU

### We Heard You and We're Making Changes

We continually look for ways to be more effective in communicating with you. To this end, we are streamlining our website and professional learning experience (PLE) confirmation process.

### Website Update - One Stop for DIEEC

We have integrated the DIEECDP and Delaware Stars websites to give you a 'one-stop' experience with all of your DIEEC resources. On the DIEEC website, [www.dieec.udel.edu](http://www.dieec.udel.edu), you can learn about supports specific to your role and find other relevant resources to help you in your work. You can now also access the DIEEC calendar and register for professional learning experiences – just click the 'Professional Learning Experiences' at the top of the page."



### Professional Learning Experience (PLE) Reminder Process - Text Message Included

Your work demands that you are constantly on the go, and taking a call or checking an email is often challenging. We've heard you, so you will now get a text message in addition to getting an automated phone call to remind you of an upcoming PLE. Please note the call will be a recorded message, not a live voice.

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

### "Mr. D" Does His Part: The Influence of Men as Early Childhood Educators

It is imperative to have men in early childhood education, but why? According to recent research by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), early childhood education plays a critical part in young children's gender identity development. When young children do not have relationships with male teachers and caregivers, traditional gender stereotypes become reinforced.

For Darnell Couch, a classroom educator at St. Michael's School and Nursery, the answer for his career choice is simple: "I absolutely love children."

Darnell has spent his 25-year career working in early childhood education, primarily teaching four-year-olds. At 18 years old and the oldest of five children, with lots of babysitting in his background, Darnell started working at a center. He had no idea that what began as a way of making extra money would turn into a career and his passion.

"I pour love into each child and am committed to being there for them," said Darnell. "I give them what I have, and they become a part of my heart."

continue here: [bit.ly/3ZlzcA](https://bit.ly/3ZlzcA)



Image: Darnell Couch and his classroom of children

### X, Why, Z: Reflections from Early Childhood Education Professionals

#### Dr. Calvin E. Moore, Jr. Trailblazer in Early Childhood Education

We are excited to have our first male guest, Dr. Calvin E. Moore, Jr., featured in March's podcast. During this conversation, Dr. Moore shares some of his 30-year journey in early childhood education. He started as an assistant teacher at a Head Start program and went on to serve in the Obama Administration. Along the way, he held roles as a teacher, center director, and various leadership positions in early childhood at the state and federal levels.

Currently, Dr. Moore is the CEO of the Council for Professional Recognition. He's the Council's first CEO to have received the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Dr. Moore points to the CDA as the catalyst for jump starting his career. "It gave me the confidence to go on and get my bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees," said Moore.

Moore also talks about being a man in a field predominantly of women. He notes that in 1991, two to three percent of men worked in early childhood, and that percentage has stayed the same. He continues championing more men in ECE because of the value of children having various perspectives.

Be sure to listen to the full conversation. This episode drops on Friday, March 31.

Visit: [www.dieec.udel.edu/whats-new/x-why-z-podcast](http://www.dieec.udel.edu/whats-new/x-why-z-podcast)



Image: Dr. Calvin E. Moore , Jr.

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

## **DIEEC Early Childhood Educator of the Year Nominations Open on April 3**

Spring is coming! And we can't wait because it's the time of year for several DIEEC exciting events and opportunities to engage with you.

Be sure to mark your calendar for the following.

## **Week of the Young Child April 1 - April 7**

DIEEC plans are coming together for the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) dedicated week to celebrate early learning, young children, their teachers, families, and communities. In partnership with the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (deaeyc), University of Delaware early childhood experts along with other state early childhood education leaders will participate in a panel discussion entitled "Challenging Behaviors: Partnering for Positive Outcomes."

This exchange will provide helpful strategies, including the value of engaging with families and community resources, to create lasting change. The event takes place on Wednesday, April 5 - final details and registration information coming soon.

We'll also mark the week by reaching out to connect with children – infant to 17 years old – in the foster care system.

## **DIEEC Early Childhood Educator of the Year Nominations Open on April 3**

As a part of our annual Provider Appreciation activities each May, we celebrate you with our "Early Childhood Educator of the Year" program. This event provides the ECE community with a way to recognize a family child care educator and a center-based educator to help create awareness for the profession.

You can nominate yourself or a colleague beginning April 3. Nominees must work 30 hours a week and have been in the field for at least six months.

Stay tuned for more details.

### **DIEEC Named Partner in Nationally Funded Early Care & Education Workforce Center**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) and five other partners a cooperative agreement to establish and operate the first-of-its-kind National Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Center.

In addition to UD, core partners include Child Trends, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, BUILD Initiative, ZERO TO THREE and the University of Massachusetts–Boston.

With a \$30 million investment over five years, the National ECE Workforce Center will coordinate and provide technical assistance and rigorous research to advance the recruitment and retention of a diverse, qualified, and effective workforce in early childhood care and education. Rena Hallam, DIEEC director, will serve as the principal investigator for the UD team.

"We are honored to be selected and to partner with these leaders to build a sustainable, equitable system to support the ECE workforce," Hallam said. "The National Early Care and Education Workforce Center will bridge the gap between research and technical assistance in helping states implement policies that positively impact the early childhood workforce. The center will help ensure that families of young children can access high-quality child care."