# **LET'S GO OUTSIDE**

# DELAWARE INSTITUTE FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

**Outdoor Learning Grants Initiative** 

Children's and teachers' health and well-being depend on regular playing and connecting outdoors. Equitable access to outdoor spaces where children and their educators can learn, develop, play, and connect with nature and each other is a priority.

Developed an innovative 15-hour intensive professional learning experience (PLE) series to support early childhood professionals in learning about nature-based outdoor learning, design and select materials for an outdoor learning environment for their programs, and bring their outdoor learning spaces to life.

#### PLEs include:

Self-paced, in-person, live observation, and on-site coaching components.

Natural outdoor spaces enhance physical and mental health and well-being, promoting physical activity by offering various active play options to engage children of varying fitness levels, ages, and genders.

Spending time in nature promotes child-directed play that is imaginative, constructive, sensory-rich, and cooperative, resulting in improved social and emotional skills and higher satisfaction with life

Nature-based outdoor learning enhances educational outcomes, improving academic performance, focus, behavior, and love of learning.





WHAT CHILDREN ARE SAYING: "I've never been to a new world like this"

# **FAST FACTS:**

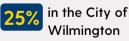
Through three cohorts, 43 programs have fully completed the series and are designated as **DIEEC** outdoor learning sites.



98 educators involved



Home-based and center-based programs from rural, urban, and suburban settings participated throughout Delaware.



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#### WHAT FAMILIES ARE SAYING:

"I cannot write enough about the positive impact of outdoor learning on our family. The two biggest areas of improvement were in the behavior of our child (and our child is a good and relatively easy child) and sleep habits of our child."





### WHAT EDUCATORS ARE SAYING:

"An outdoor classroom allows my kids to try different things and become more comfortable with the unknown. This setting promotes hands-on learning and a deeper understanding of how things work."

# www.dieec.udel.edu/lets-go-outside-outdoor-classroom-grants/