

## Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

## REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear early childhood professionals,

Welcome to the next edition of REACH, your trusted resource with information and supports for Delaware's early childhood community. This is an exciting issue!

Following our "Welcoming All Children" webinar last month, we're highlighting the Delaware Early Childhood Inclusion Guide as a support for early childhood programs and professionals working to meet the needs of each and every child and family. Not to worry if you missed the webinar – we're also including a link to the recording.

We're thrilled to announce this year's DIEEC Early Childhood Educators of the year – make sure to take a look at the message below from Delaware's first lady, Tracey Quillen Carney. Congratulations to the winners!

As we kick off Teacher Appreciation Week today, leading up to Provider Appreciation Day this Friday, check out the different awareness and recognition activities you can participate with.

Thank you for all that you do!

Sincerely,

Kristy Sheffler  
DIEEC Deputy Director

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# Upcoming Opportunities with DIEEC

## Welcoming All Children Resource Raffle

We've put together a great package of resources from our Welcoming All Children panel discussion. One lucky person will receive books and a poster to support welcoming all children at the winner's own program!

**You are eligible to win if you attended the webinar on April 10 OR if you view the recording on our website no later than May 19.** See the webinar recap below to access the recording, and look for the name of our winner in next month's REACH!

## Provider Appreciation is May 10!

Provider Appreciation Day, an initiative of Child Care Aware, recognizes child care providers, teachers and educators who care for the young children of working parents. At DIEEC, we know that you are tireless in your efforts, and our goal is to help the broader Delaware community understand and appreciate your invaluable contributions. Here are a few things you can do to raise awareness this week.



### On social media:

Add Child Care Aware's Provider Appreciation Day banner to your social media. It's formatted and ready to upload to Facebook in [English](#) or [Spanish](#). Banners for Instagram, Twitter, and Linked In are also available on [Child Care Aware's resource](#) page.

**Follow DIEEC** on [Facebook](#) and/or [Instagram](#). Throughout the week, we'll be posting information that shines a light on how important you are in our community. Share our posts - let everyone know that your role matters!

**Follow the #thankyouchildcare hashtag** on social media to see and share posts from other professionals and organizations in the early childhood community.

### With the families you serve:

On Friday, May 10, we will send out a short video that you can share with families via email, link on your website, and/or post to your social media. Share and let everyone know about the important work you do!

### Appreciation from DIEEC:

On Friday May 10, DIEEC will sprinkle some fun into the day. We'll be randomly drawing the names of 25 early childhood professionals to receive a special surprise from us. No entry needed- Keep an eye on your email- if you're a winner, we'll reach out!

# DIEEC News

## Winners of DIEEC's Early Childhood Educator of the Year Award

DIEEC's Early Childhood Educator of the Year Award acknowledges and honors the critical role of professionals in Delaware who exemplify the best in quality early care and education. Classroom educators who work with children ages birth through Pre-K in family and center-based programs are eligible for this award. We are thrilled to share that Delaware's first lady, Tracey Quillen Carney, is making the announcement of our 2024 winners! Watch the video announcement.



Watch the video here: <https://bit.ly/4b7J7f4>

**Congratulations to our winners and runners-up!** 🎉 We had many outstanding applications this year. Thank you as well to our review panel. Look for more information about our winners and the selection process on [DIEEC's Early Childhood Educator of the Year landing page](#).

## Welcoming All Children: Recap and Resources

Our April panel discussion on Welcoming All Children was so engaging that we ran out of time for the last few questions! Our expert panelists shared their perspectives on Universal Design for Learning, the Whole Child approach, culturally responsive practices, inclusion, and equity. **Thank you to our panelists and everyone who attended!**

We've compiled some resources for those who might want to dig deeper into these concepts. If you missed the webinar, you can [watch the recording...it's all on our website](#). Check it out!

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### Resource Highlight

As mentioned in the recap of our Welcoming All Children webinar, we have a collection of resources to share on the topics of Universal Design for Learning, the Whole Child approach, and diversity, equity and inclusion. We also want to ensure the early childhood community is aware of the [Delaware Early Childhood Inclusion Guide](#). Produced by the Delaware Department of Education, the purpose of the guide is to support early childhood professionals and programs as they work to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families.



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### Key Practice Highlight

As part of Delaware's revised [Quality Improvement System](#) for early care and education programs in Delaware, the Office of Early Learning (OEL) has prioritized five key practices for fiscal year 2024. We are highlighting one key practice each month, sharing examples of how Delaware programs are choosing to work towards higher levels of quality in the highlighted practice.

This month, we are highlighting **PCHQ-KP5: Implements inclusive practices and provides environments that are responsive to the developmental needs of all children enrolled in the program.**

- **Delaware Tech Child Development Center Terry Campus, Dover**, invested in making their cozy corners more welcoming and inclusive for children while also helping educators create a supportive classroom atmosphere. They are purchasing social-emotional competence support kits and Conscious Discipline materials like books and posters for preschool classrooms.
- **The Next Step Learning Center Inc., Selbyville**, is focusing on using outdoor learning environment materials that are inclusive of all learners by incorporating outdoor play materials for students with disabilities.

- **Jamie Hooks, a family child care educator in Laurel**, has chosen to focus on supporting individual children's needs in her family child care program. She has plans to attend Understanding Autism and Strategies for Child Care Providers, a workshop being held this month. In addition, she is researching inclusive activities to include in her daily lesson plans, including incorporating a picture schedule and learning to use sign language as a way to communicate with children who are not yet verbal.

We'd love to hear how your program is working toward quality in the five key practice areas! Submit your ideas to [ecinstitute@udel.edu](mailto:ecinstitute@udel.edu) to be included in a future edition of REACH.

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## More Microlearnings

Microlearning is a great way to learn new skills and information in bite-sized chunks! It is digestible, actionable content delivered in 5-10 minutes.

DIEEC is pleased to share that our most recent set of microlearnings for family child care educators is being made available in Spanish! [Four microlearnings in the series are now available in Spanish](#), with three more scheduled to be released by May 28.

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Nueva serie disponible ahora! ¡El microaprendizaje es una excelente manera de aprender nuevas habilidades y obtener información en porciones pequeñas y digeribles! Es contenido práctico entregado en 5-10 minutos. Nuestra última serie está enfocada específicamente en apoyar programas de cuidado infantil familiar para hispanohablantes, abordando temas como el mantenimiento de proporciones, prácticas de asistencia y prácticas de seguridad. [Cuatro microaprendizajes de la serie ya están disponibles en español](#), y se planea lanzar tres más antes del 28 de mayo.

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We are also happy to announce that our **next set of microlearning lessons is coming your way soon!** These microlearnings will cover four essential topics: **Diapering; Transitions; Playground Safety; and How to Read Stories with young children.**

[Sign up to receive new microlearning releases via email](#), direct to your inbox!

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Highlight

This month, we're sharing a few more Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) activities from programs that participated in DIEEC's [Anti-Bias Education: Diversity](#) professional learning experience (PLE) back in February. Two programs used a "loose parts faces" activity with children as the basis for discussing emotions and expressions.

Valerie Brown, lead Pre-K teacher at Cadence Academy Preschool - Smyrna, shared that the idea to use pool noodle sections for facial features came from a unit on Tubes and Tunnels.

[Check out the article and the rest of the photos here.](#)

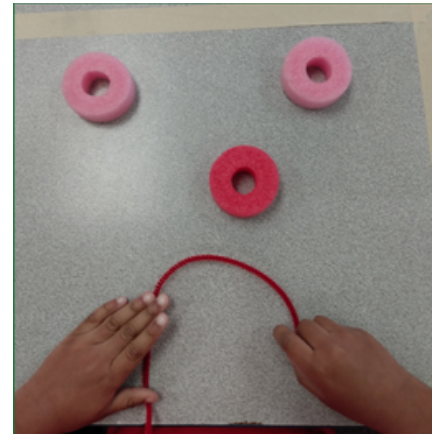


Image credit: Valerie Brown/Cadence Academy Preschool

## Coach's Corner: Supporting Families in Crisis

This month's Coach's Corner post tackles a crucial topic: supporting families in crisis. Meghan Pallante dives deep into how to be there for children and families facing difficult times. But preparedness is key! Meghan also shares tips on what you can do before a crisis strikes, explores different types of support available, and provides resources to bookmark for future reference. [Read about this important topic here.](#)



## News and opportunities from our partners in the early childhood education community

### Quality Improvement Award Documentation Reminder from OEL

If you received a Quality Improvement Award during the 2023-2024 program year, documentation sharing how you spent the funds is due to the Office of Early Learning by the close of business on May 15, 2024. Please upload documentation to the "Evidence" tab that can be found within your application on the Delaware ECE Portal.

If you need to make changes to your budget narrative, please forward requests to Takeisha Edmonds at [Takeisha.Edmonds@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:Takeisha.Edmonds@doe.k12.de.us). Prior to submitting your request, ensure the new items placed on the budget align with state prioritized key practices. You can find these prioritized key practices on page 11 of the [Guide to Quality Improvement for Early Care and Education Programs in Delaware](#). Reminders for how these funds can be used can be found on pages 15-18. **Requests for changes will not be accepted beyond May 15, 2024** as this is the deadline for programs to report on spending.

## Partner Highlight: Wilmington Early Care and Education Council (WECEC)

The mission of the Wilmington Early Care & Education Council (WECEC) is that all Wilmington children can have access to an integrated early childhood system which fosters collaboration among existing programs, and identifies gaps in current delivery systems for children birth through 8 years old.

WECEC has a Professional Development Resource Center (PDRC) located at Stubbs Elementary School in Wilmington. The PDRC offers resources and services with the goal of increasing the quality of early care and education for young children and their families in the City of Wilmington.

An array of services is available including a lending library featuring child development topics, die cuts, laminating, photocopying, scholarships for professional development, mentoring, and much more.

To learn more about WECEC and the resources available, email [wececresourcecenter@gmail.com](mailto:wececresourcecenter@gmail.com). You can also [follow WECEC on Facebook](#) to receive updates about activities and programs that support early childhood education.



## In Case You Missed It

### First State Family Child Care Association Meeting

Inspired by their participation in the National Association of Family Child Care's Leaders Shaping Leaders program, FCC educators Stephanie Jackson and Latonya Bruce have an exciting new project to share. They've championed the creation of a state-level NAFCC chapter with a vision to amplify voices, foster inclusivity, and reshape perceptions surrounding family child care in Delaware. This initiative, the First State Family Child Care Association, is driven by educators, for educators. **The association's next meeting will be held on May 14th at 6:30 p.m.**

To receive additional information about this meeting and updates on how you can get involved, please send an email to [1stStateFamilyChildCareAssociation@gmail.com](mailto:1stStateFamilyChildCareAssociation@gmail.com) with your name and preferred method of contact.

# DIEEC Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs)

## Upcoming Free Opportunities

As a reminder, DIEEC's professional learning experiences (PLEs) are available at no cost to you. **Check out these upcoming offerings:**

Virtual-Live Professional Learning Experiences

- [Creating a Cost-Effective Outdoor Learning Environment for FCC Educators](#), a 3-hour introductory experience **starting on 5/14**.
- [Understanding Children's Behavior as Communication for Family Child Care Professionals PLUS](#), a 4-hour introductory level experience **starting on 6/4**.
- [Leaders Bridging the Connection Gap: Individualizing Relationships PLUS](#), a 4-hour intermediate experience **starting on 6/4**.

You can browse and register for a variety of PLEs on the [DIEEC professional learning experience calendar](#).

Additional Professional Development Options for Delaware Child Care Professionals

The Delaware Department of Education has created a list of organizations that provide online training hours to meet the educational requirement for the CDA. The Office of Child Care Licensing will also accept training hours from these companies to meet annual licensing clock-hour requirements. This list can be found on their webpage: [Educator Requirements: Birth through Second Grade - Delaware Department of Education](#).

Scroll all the way to the bottom of the page to view the list.

Listed on the DDOE site above as "Head Start ECLKC," the Office of Head Start's [Individualized Professional Development \(iPD\) Portfolio](#) offers **free online courses** on child development and practical teaching strategies for infant/toddler educators and preschool educators.



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