

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear early childhood professionals,

Welcome to summer! This month's resource highlight focuses on summer safety, highlighting resources designed to help your program prepare for fun activities while prioritizing safety.

We're kicking off the new fiscal year with a lot of activity. Applications are open to join upcoming cohorts for the Pyramid Model or the Zero to Three Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators. Not sure if one of these opportunities is a good fit for your program? Fill out the interest form to learn more! We also have a full calendar of professional learning experiences available on the DIEEC registry at no cost to you.

Don't miss the provider spotlight below. Mary Waters and Meghan Eudy, our Early Childhood Educators of the Year, share more about their programs and their perspectives on their roles as educators.

With warm regards,

Kristy Sheffler
DIEEC Deputy Director

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DIEEC Action Items

Professional Development- Kickstart Yours Today!

We're excited to share that DIEEC has a record number of professional learning experiences (PLEs) on the calendar for the coming year.

DIEEC also has a packed calendar of in-depth PLEs in store. Below we describe our upcoming cohorts of Zero to Three Critical Competencies and the Pyramid Model offerings. In the winter and spring of 2025, look for the return of our very popular [Let's Go Outside](#) and [Shining the Light on You](#) initiatives.

Zero to Three Critical Competencies and Pyramid Model cohorts forming now

Applications for DIEEC initiatives are open

Over the course of the next year, we'll be offering **6 cohorts of our new Pyramid Model series**, which focuses on supporting preschool educators to promote young children's healthy social and emotional development, leading to better social skills and fewer less challenging behaviors.

We'll also be offering **6 cohorts for our new Zero to Three Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators series**, which focuses on supporting infant and toddler educators to promote social-emotional, cognitive, and language and literacy development.

Both initiatives include workshop sessions, classroom observations, and follow-up coaching.

You can find more details on our [webpage](#). If you're ready to commit, the application link is included on the page. Need more information to decide which cohort is right for your program? [Fill out our interest form](#) so we can invite you to an upcoming information session.

Quality Improvement Planning

Connect with your Quality Improvement Specialist

All licensed early care and education programs have access to DIEEC quality improvement specialists to guide their quality improvement efforts. Now is the perfect time to review your plan from last year and consider the steps that would make your program even better! Ready to start working on a new plan? Reach out to your Quality Improvement specialist about scheduling.

Provider Spotlight

DIEEC's 2024 Early Childhood Educators of the Year

In this month's provider spotlights, DIEEC Early Childhood Educator of the Year winners Mary Waters and Meghan Eudy share their perspectives on their role as early childhood educators- in their own words.

Read Mary's Provider Spotlight to learn more about how Mary finds inspiration, builds connections with families, and meets challenges on a daily basis in her program.

In Meghan's Provider Spotlight, you'll learn how she stays current in the field of early childhood education, what excites her about each new day, and what she wants those outside the field to know about the importance of our work.



Read [Mary's Provider Spotlight](#) to learn more about how Mary finds inspiration, builds connections with families, and meets challenges on a daily basis in her program.



In [Meghan's Provider Spotlight](#), you'll learn how she stays current in the field of early childhood education, what excites her about each new day, and what she wants those outside the field to know about the importance of our work.

Coach's Corner

Summer is the perfect time for sensory play! Gloriously messy activities can be taken outside, and water play can keep everyone cool. In this month's Coach's Corner, [Meghan Pallante offers lots of easy and engaging ideas for you to try](#) in your own program.



Image provided by Meghan Pallante

Summer Hours at DIEEC through August 30

Monday–Thursday 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Friday 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

- Our main phone line, 302-831-3239, will be staffed during these hours.
- You may also email us at your convenience at ecinstitute@udel.edu and you will receive a reply during business hours.
- You can visit our website anytime at www.dieec.udel.edu.

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) will continue to prioritize the same five key practices for fiscal year 2025. We are highlighting one key practice each month, sharing resources that Delaware programs can use as they work towards higher levels of quality in the highlighted practice.

This month, we are highlighting CQ-KP4 (classroom-based programs)/CQ-KP6 (FCC): Implements practices to recruit, maintain, and orient high-quality educators, consultants, and contractors (as needed). Take a look at the resources linked below to see how you might be able to use them in your program.

- [Ensuring New Hires' Success with Onboarding Best Practices](#)
- [Strategy Guide: Employee Engagement and Retention](#)
- [Employee Retention Strategies. You Can Apply Today](#)

If you have a resource to highlight or something that you're doing in your program that we can highlight, we'd love to hear about it! Submit your ideas to ecinstitute@udel.edu to be included in a future edition of REACH.

Resource Highlight

Summer means plenty of outside exploration and play! This month's resources highlight summer safety. Make sure your program is ready to splash, cool off and explore SAFELY.

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1 through 4. The importance of safety and active supervision around ALL types of water cannot be emphasized enough. [These guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) focus on keeping children safe around water, even when it's NOT swimming time.



[These summer safety tips from Head Start's Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center](#) cover weather, hydration, sun protection, insect repellent, water safety and helmets. There's a printable PDF version too!

This article from [Nemours KidsHealth addresses what type of sunscreen to use](#), as well as how, when, and where to use it.

If you or your staff needs a quick refresher [on playground safety, DIEEC's most recent microlearning](#) has you covered!

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Highlight

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

Purchase of Care Updates for 2024-2025

Please [click here to find the proposed Purchase of Care \(POC\) policies and rate changes](#) as compiled by the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (deaeyc) in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services. This information was shared during the June 20, 2024 Early Childhood Provider Call.

Wilmington Early Care & Education Council (WECEC)

This summer brings the retirement of several well-known faces at WECEC.

Lynn Jezyk has been the Executive Administrative Assistant for WECEC since August 2017, keeping everything organized and everyone informed.

Patti Lynch has been the program manager for WECEC since February 2021 and held numerous other roles prior to that. Notably, Patti oversaw WECEC's pilot project supporting early childhood professionals pursuing their CDA. In all of her roles, her passion for helping the early childhood community has shone through.

Dr. Whitney Williams, current chair of WECEC, is also retiring. Dr. Williams has served as the principal at Stubbs Early Learning Center and Dual Generation Center, as well as supervising the Parents as Teachers program.

All three will be deeply missed, and we wish them the best in their next personal and professional chapters. We recognize and thank them for their effort and leadership in the early childhood community, especially for the city of Wilmington.



In Case You Missed It

It's a Wrap on Season 2 of the X, Why, Z Podcast

Season 2 of the X, Why, Z podcast wrapped up with a fantastic episode featuring Dr. Nefertiti Poyner, an early childhood specialist and lead trainer with the Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC). Check out the episode, "It Starts with You" and gain insight, helpful tips, and suggestions around resilience and self-care. You can find ["It Starts With You" and all of our previous X, Why, Z episodes](#) on the DIEEC website.



DIEEC Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs)

Upcoming Free Opportunities

DIEEC's professional learning experiences (PLEs) are available at no cost to you. Check out these upcoming offerings.

Virtual-Live and Hybrid Professional Learning Experiences

- [Flip It! Flipping the Challenging Behavior PLUS](#), a 10-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/6. Also available starting on 7/23.
- [Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: Supporting Children's Goals in Childcare and at Home](#), a 6-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/8.
- [Using Responsive Care Techniques to Foster Social-Emotional Development](#), a 5-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/8.
- [Strengthening Business Practices: Staff Recruitment and Retention for Center-Based Administrators and Large Family Child Care Providers PLUS](#), a 6-hour introductory experience starting on 7/9.
- [Relationship-based Care for Infants and Toddlers for Family Child Care Professionals-PLUS](#), a 5-hour introductory experience starting on 7/9.
- [The Wonder of Outdoor Learning PLUS](#), a 10-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/9.
- [Play for Development and Learning PLUS](#), a 10-hour advanced experience starting on 7/9.
- [Creating a Cost-Effective Outdoor Learning Environment for FCC Educators](#), a 3-hour introductory experience starting on 7/10. Also available starting on 7/30.
- DAP PLUS: [Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Care and Education Fourth Edition PLUS](#), a 10-hour introductory experience starting on 7/15.

- [Helping School Age Children Reboot Their Brain](#), a 3-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/16.
- [The Business of Early Childhood: The Art of Strengths-Based Observation and Feedback for Leaders](#), a 12-hour advanced experience starting on 7/16.
- [Child Assessment for Teachers: The Power of Practice PLUS](#), a 10-hour introductory experience starting on 7/17.
- [Fun with Financial Wellness: Basic Budgeting for Beginners](#), a 4-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/22.
- [Authentic Community Engagement](#), a 5-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/22.
- [Implementing Teaching Strategies Gold](#), a 7-hour introductory experience starting on 7/23.
- [5 Strategies for a Happy and Healthy Classroom](#), a 3-hour introductory experience starting on 7/25.
- [Child Assessment for Teachers: The Power of Practice PLUS](#), a 10-hour introductory experience starting on 7/29.
- [Developing Relationships, Developing Brains: Infants and Toddlers](#), a 5-hour intermediate experience starting on 7/29.

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

Additional Professional Development Options for Delaware Early Childhood Professionals

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) 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.

FREE option

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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