

## Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

## REACH

A newsletter for early childhood education professionals

Dear Early Childhood Professionals,

Welcome to the May issue of REACH! This month, we're celebrating our partnership with Delaware's early childhood education programs, highlighting the incredible 716 Quality Improvement Plans we've co-created with you. In this issue, you'll also find actionable ideas for supporting early literacy in our Coach's Corner article, information on upcoming professional learning experiences, and important updates from our partners, including a survey from the Delaware Department of Education's Early Childhood Support Team. Don't miss the opportunity to share your valuable perspective.

As always, we're here to support you in your vital work with young children and families. Friday, May 9, is Provider Appreciation Day. Please know that we appreciate you, and thank you for your dedication and commitment to Delaware's children!

With warm regards,

Kristy Sheffler  
Interim Co-Director, DIEEC

# DIEEC Action Items



Classroom goodies raffle! Two winners each month for 3 months. This month: early literacy materials!

## Raffle Alert! 🎉

This month, we are raffling off two bags of math materials to support the development of counting skills, number recognition, patterning, shape and color recognition, and simple addition or subtraction. There will be one family and one center winner.

To enter May's raffle: [Complete our survey about math activities](#) by **May 23**.

## Congratulations to our April raffle winners!

Family Child Care: Pooh's Place Daycare

Center-based Educator: Tanya W. from Ducklings Early Learning Center

# DIEEC News

## Celebrating YOU: Provider Appreciation Day is May 9

Spearheaded by [Child Care Aware of America](#) (CCAoA), Provider Appreciation Day focuses on sharing “gratitude for those who support the social, emotional and physical care of our youngest children.” In Delaware, there are over 900 licensed programs, employing 4900+ early childhood professionals, serving over 43,000 children. Child care contributes over \$326,000,000 to Delaware’s economy each year through direct revenue and by enabling parents of young children to participate in the workforce. And more importantly, beyond the economic impact, programs like yours provide high-quality experiences for children, setting them up for success.

Want to get involved and share information about the importance of child care? Fill out Child Care Aware’s interest form to download their Provider Appreciation Day toolkit and receive updates.

★ **Head over to our Facebook page on May 9-** we’ll be randomly drawing the names of 25 early childhood educators in honor of Provider Appreciation Day. Each winner will receive a gift card- check our post to see if you’ve won! ★



Celebrate on social media by using the official hashtag [#ThankYouChildCare](#)

## Celebrating a Year of Growth and Partnership!

DIEEC is proud to celebrate the past year of collaboration with Delaware's early childhood education programs. Over the past year, we've partnered with programs to co-create an incredible 716 Quality Improvement Plans!

Our dedicated Quality Improvement Specialists have worked hand-in-hand with these programs, providing guidance and expertise to identify areas for growth and develop tailored plans for success.

This collaborative effort reflects our shared commitment to enhancing the quality of early childhood education and fostering a brighter future for Delaware's children. Thank you to all the programs that have partnered with us on this journey!

Learn more about Delaware's [Quality Improvement System](#) for Early Care and Education Programs.

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## Our Continuous Learning to Support Your Quality Improvement

In April, staff from DIEEC, New Directions Early Head Start, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, and the Delaware Department of Education completed a 3-day training in partnership with the Pyramid Model Consortium. The Infant/Toddler Foundation Training of Trainers (TOT) helps expand the reach of Pyramid Model practices that support early childhood social and emotional development.

Just like the early childhood professionals we work with, we're always learning and growing so we can provide the strongest possible foundation for the quality improvement journeys of Delaware's early childhood programs!

[Read more about the Pyramid Model and fill out our interest form](#) to be notified when new cohorts are forming.

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*They say 'the best teachers are always learning,' and we couldn't agree more! Staff from DIEEC, New Directions Early Head Start - University of Delaware, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, and the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) completed a three-day Infant/Toddler Pyramid Model Training. (Image by Stephanie Thompson/DIEEC)*



## Coach's Corner: Literacy in the Early Childhood Environment: Part 2 of 3

In our [April Coach's Corner article](#), we explored ideas for creating literacy-rich environments for children. This month, DIEEC Quality Improvement Specialist Meghan Pallante focuses on [ways to support young children's emerging literacy through low- and no-cost activities](#).

*Infants: During routines, describe your actions. For example, state each step of diaper changing or detail the taste, color, and texture of foods during mealtimes. Image: iStock*

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## Meeting the Needs of All Children

Our opinions, our past, our environment, and so much more influence our behaviors and our current practices. Awareness of this influence and our current beliefs leads intentional early childhood educators to be reflective and continue to grow in responding in supportive ways to infants and toddlers in their care. [This article shares information and insights on how to support each and every child and family](#).

For more articles on supporting infants and toddlers, visit the [Rocking and Rolling section of the NAEYC \(National Association for the Education of Young Children\) website](#).

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## Office Hours: DIEEC is Here for YOU!

Did you know that DIEEC has open, virtual office hours for family child care educators and center-based programs? These are in addition to any office hours that your Quality Improvement Specialist may hold. We can provide technical assistance and help get your questions answered. No appointment needed- just drop in. Open office hours are listed on [DIEEC's public calendar](#)- click on the event title and use the Zoom link to join.

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## Coming Soon: A Refreshed DIEEC Website

We're excited to share that [www.dieec.udel.edu](http://www.dieec.udel.edu) is getting a facelift! The site will have a new look, and it will be easier for you to find what you need. All information and resources related to DIEEC's role in supporting Delaware's Quality Improvement System will now be gathered in one convenient location on the site.

We're also adding a brand-new Resource Hub featuring materials from trusted sources. Whether you're looking for tools to enhance your practice or new ideas to inspire your work, the Resource Hub will be there to help. Stay tuned for the launch date of our new and improved site!

## Summer Hours at DIEEC

From **May 27 through August 29, DIEEC will be on summer hours.** Our main phone line, 302-831-3239, will be staffed Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. You may also email us at your convenience at [ecinstitute@udel.edu](mailto:ecinstitute@udel.edu) and you will receive a reply during business hours. You can visit our website anytime at [www.dieec.udel.edu](http://www.dieec.udel.edu).

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## News from Our Partners

### Early Care and Education Provider Survey

The Delaware Department of Education's Early Childhood Support (ECS) Team, in collaboration with the National Center for Children in Poverty at Bank Street Graduate School of Education, invites you to share your voice through a short but important survey.

#### What is the survey about?

The ECS Team wants to better understand the experiences of Delaware early care and education (ECE) professionals—like you—when it comes to seeking and receiving support for addressing children's social-emotional needs and challenging behaviors. Responses from all ECE staff across Delaware—including teachers, teacher assistants, interns, paraeducators, classroom aides, administrators, coordinators, and family/large family child care owners and staff— are welcome.

#### How your responses will be used:

Your experience is essential to building a stronger, more responsive ECE professional support system. Your anonymous feedback will guide the Delaware Department of Education in strengthening support systems for ECE staff across the state. By identifying what's working well and where improvements are needed, your responses will help shape more effective resources and close existing gaps.

Take the survey here: [https://bankstreet.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8ldDMRG4mfE7tS6](https://bankstreet.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8ldDMRG4mfE7tS6)

## Early Childhood Advocacy Day 2025: Tuesday, May 13 in Dover

On **Early Childhood Advocacy Day**, coordinated by First State Pre-K, advocates and lawmakers come together to discuss key issues, from supporting families and the early learning workforce to the local economy. This is an in-person event. [Register here](#) to join the conversation and support our profession!



## Quality Improvement Planning

As part of this year's quality improvement planning process, programs were asked to develop a method for measuring progress toward their selected goal. To complete this process, the post-assessment—along with your original pre-assessment—must be uploaded into WELS.

For additional details about the pre- and post-assessment process, please see page 6 of the [Program and Policy Guide for Delaware's Quality Improvement System for Early Care and Education Programs](#).

### Quality Improvement Resource Highlight: Child Development Resources

Each month, we share resources that Delaware program leaders can use to support themselves and their staff as they work toward higher levels of quality.

This month, we're offering resources focusing on understanding a child's development. These resources will support you in recognizing how children grow, learn, and express themselves at different stages. Whether you're looking for quick reference guides, activity ideas, or deeper insights into developmental milestones, these resources are here to strengthen your practice and deepen your connection with the children in your care.

- **Zero to Three's Baby Brain Map:** An interactive tool that helps you explore how a child's brain develops from birth to age three and how early experiences shape brain growth and lifelong learning.
- **CDC's Developmental Milestones:** A free tool that helps families and educators track children's developmental milestones and provides guidance on how to support healthy growth and when to act early on possible concerns.

Your Quality Improvement Specialist can assist you in selecting the most suitable resources for your Quality Improvement Plan.

If you have a resource to share 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](mailto:ecinstitute@udel.edu) to be included in a future edition of REACH.

# DIEEC Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs)

## Upcoming Free PLE Opportunities with DIEEC

DIEEC’s professional learning experiences (PLEs) are available at no cost to you. You can browse and register for a variety of PLEs on the [DIEEC professional learning experience calendar](#). Check out these upcoming offerings:

### Virtual-Live and Hybrid Professional Learning Experiences

Title	Hours	Level	Start Date
<a href="#">Positive Behavior Management PLUS</a>	8	Inter.	May 8
<a href="#">Transitions: Emotions in Motion</a>	3	Inter.	May 12
<a href="#">Advanced Assessment for Administrators: Data-Driven Decision Making PLUS</a>	10	Adv.	May 15
<a href="#">5 Strategies for a Happy and Healthy Classroom PLUS</a>	6	Intro.	May 19
<a href="#">Creating a Cost-Effective Outdoor Learning Environment for FCC Educators PLUS</a>	7	Intro.	May 19
<a href="#">Building Future Success in School Age Children</a>	5	Inter.	May 22

## How to Access Former DEPDNow Trainings

Three of the former DEPDNow trainings can be accessed through DIEEC using an online platform called Canvas. Please note that the timing for this process has changed—you'll now need to allow up to 48 hours between registering for a course and beginning it. We appreciate your patience as we all navigate this new process together.

Steps to get started:

1. Register for a course
  - [Health & Safety Training for Child Care Professionals](#)
  - [Administration of Medication Certification](#)
  - [Maintaining Equity in Early Childhood: Suspension / Expulsion Prevention](#)
2. Within 24 hours, you will receive an email titled “UD Guest Account Invitation.” Follow the instructions in the email to set up your account.
3. Within 24 hours after setting up your account, you will receive an email titled “Course Invitation” from Instructure Canvas. Click the “Get Started” button in this email to log in to Canvas and begin your course.

Need help with the steps above? Take a look at [our Canvas Access instructions](#).

Additional information regarding DIEEC online and Canvas courses can be found [here](#).

**Additional courses.** The Office of Early Learning (OEL) has prepared a [chart to guide you in accessing trainings](#) similar to the others formerly available through DEPDNow. These can be accessed through the Office of Head Start's [Individualized Professional Development \(iPD\) Portfolio](#).