

Special Edition



a monthly e-newsletter for Delaware's early childhood and school age programs

2020 *Year of the Early Childhood Professional*

You're here for Delaware's children and families. **We're here for YOU!**



As we end this historic year, let's take a moment to reflect on the importance of your work in the field of early care and education generally and specifically how the field adapted to so many unforeseen issues and needs.

Last spring, many early childhood programs stepped up to become emergency child care sites – revising health and safety protocols, navigating new financial constraints, all the while supporting the children and families in your programs. During the summer, more of Delaware's child care programs

opened to meet the communities' increasing needs by offering high-quality programming while keeping children safe. As fall arrived, it became apparent that schools would not operate in a typical fashion and would be offering remote and hybrid options. Once again, Delaware's early care and education programs met the challenge of serving school-age children and supporting families who needed out-of-home care while their child participated in remote learning.

You – Delaware's early childhood professionals – made a difference this year as communities confronted COVID-19 and discovered new ways of working and being during this pandemic. So as we end this year, let's reflect on your accomplishments and the enormous impact you have made while hoping for a brighter 2021.

With Gratitude,

Rena Hallam
DIEEC Director

Essential Is...

“During this time, child care workers, like other essential personnel, are on the front lines adapting, adjusting and working to help Delaware get through this crisis. Our child care workers keep our children safe every single day, and now, they must do so under very difficult circumstances. We cannot thank them enough and we will continue to work with them during this time,”

*-Josette Manning
Delaware Children’s Department Secretary*



Creativity

Early childhood education programs created new ways that were safe for their children and families to celebrate key events like preschool graduation.



Expanding Our Kids’ World Child Care Center celebrated graduation outdoors while practicing social distancing and wearing face coverings.

Dedication

About half of all early care and education programs served as emergency child care sites to take care of and educate essential personnel's children during quarantine.



"We are very committed to our clients and know that they are relying on me to be open during a very scary time in our lives."

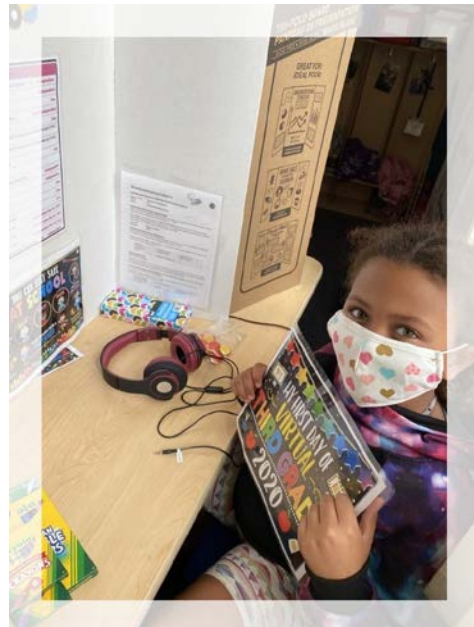
-Tressa Clemow, Lovebug Lane Learning Academy

Resilience

Early childhood education programs continue to adapt to rigorous safety and health requirements to keep their children, families, and staff safe. Additionally, many programs are overseeing remote and hybrid learning for school-age students.

"Carmen has gone above and beyond supporting the families with virtual learning. She purchased headphones for the kids and helped them decorate tri-fold boards to create individual work spaces."

The Wright Choice Child Care



Creating Community



When connecting almost seems impossible, early childhood professionals have found a way. From creating social media accounts and using apps to good old fashion parades, programs are building community.

"The entire team drove to every graduating prekindergartener's home. Wishing them congratulations while delivering boxes of sunshine and yard signs. These children and their families, who would have otherwise experienced a preschool graduation, were so elated."

-Delaware State University Early Childhood Laboratory School

Participating Virtually in Professional Development

More than 1700 early childhood professionals continued to polish and add to their skill sets by participating in virtual professional development.

OBJECTIVES PARTICIPANTS WILL EXPLORE:

Creating safe, positive places for children to learn and develop both in classroom and at home:

- Engaging families in new, creative, and effective ways
- Encouraging strong family relationships and help with separation

The slide also features a circular image of a woman with curly hair smiling while working on a laptop. To the right, a vertical stack of video thumbnails shows participants: Christine Skrobot, Meghan Keatt..., Joy Rowe, Jessica DeMese, Tim Skarmer, Alli Schell, and Menaga.

Collaborating



During the pandemic, close to 400 early childhood professionals participated virtually in Communities of Practices facilitated by DIEEC. During this time, early childhood professionals shared ideas and supported each other in navigating this crisis.

From all of us at DIEEC, we wish you a safe and healthy holiday season.

Website Resources & Updates

[Delaware's Child Care and COVID -19 Site](https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/child-care/phase-2/)
<https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/child-care/phase-2/>

[DIEEC COVID-19 Resource Page](https://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/delaware-institute-for-excellence-in-early-childhood-covid-19-resources/)
<https://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/delaware-institute-for-excellence-in-early-childhood-covid-19-resources/>

[Blueprint for Reopening DE Early Care and Education Safely Page](https://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/blueprint-for-reopening/)
<https://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/blueprint-for-reopening/>

Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

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