

February 2021



Message from the Director

In this issue of REACH, we spotlight Delaware's innovative family child care community. In our "Voices from the Field" section, we highlight an initiative by a group of family child care professionals to serve local families through food donation. We also share our successful "Shining the Light on You" virtual event designed to promote self-care for family child care professionals during this challenging time.

This issue also includes an introduction to Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Delaware's Inaugural Associate Secretary for Early Learning Support. We welcome Yvette to our state and look forward to her many contributions.

We also celebrate "Black History Month." Although celebrating diversity is something we promote and celebrate year-round, you will find links to resources to enhance your curriculum aligned with this year's theme, "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity." Finally, REACH also includes a "Resource Round-Up" of COVID and family assistance contacts, as well as some tips on staying mindful as we negotiate virtual meetings and sessions.

Happy February!

Rena Hallam, DIEEC Director

**MEET YVETTE SANCHEZ FUENTES:
ASSOCIATE SECRETARY,
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



I am humbled and proud to serve as the Associate Secretary for Early Childhood Support in Delaware and to be leading the early childhood strategy at the Department of Education. As we move into 2021, I am looking forward to looking beyond the crisis and working hard to support our child care workforce to meet the needs of children and families across Delaware.

I started my early childhood journey more than two decades ago serving and supporting migrant farm worker women as they made the bold move to start their own family child care business. What I learned quickly from these brave women, is that the impact of early childhood extends beyond the children we serve directly. I watched in awe as these women unknowingly become advocates and leaders for their communities. I look forward to working together to support Delaware's youngest citizens and in the words of civil rights leader and farmworker advocate Cesar Chavez, always remember que ¡Si Se Puede!

State of Delaware Vaccination Plan Update:

As of January 22, Delaware is now in Phase 1b of the vaccination roll-out plan. This means that essential workers, such as early childhood professionals, and those 65 years of age and older are eligible to receive the first dose of the vaccine.

Those eligible for vaccination can call **1-833-643-1715** or email vaccine@delaware.gov to request an appointment.

Still have questions? The recorded webinar below breaks down everything you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine and answers many commonly asked questions.



COVID-19 Vaccines:

Real Talk with Two Delaware Doctors

Have questions or concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine? Not sure if it's for you? Watch this video. Delaware physicians give straight answers to your questions. Get real with Dr. Joan Coker, an ear, nose and throat specialist with 23 years experience, and Dr. Veima Scantlebury, America's first African American female transplant surgeon. Hosted by Michelle Taylor, President and CEO of United Way of Delaware.



Dr. Joan Coker, M.D.



Dr. Veima Scantlebury, M.D., FACS



Michelle Taylor, President and CEO of United Way of Delaware



State of Delaware COVID-19 Website



Family Child Care Professionals Mobilize to Help Community

In December, a group of family child care professionals worked on a service project to give back to our community after a difficult year. This idea was generated during a weekly Community of Practice meeting, a time when family child care professionals meet to support each other and share ideas. The group adopted the name “Family Child Care Angels” and decided, with the help of their Delaware Stars Technical Assistant, to conduct a food drive. The Family Child Care Angels group consisted of 17 family child care professionals.

The group worked together to create a flyer to generate interest. Each early childhood education program put out a collection box for their families to safely drop off donations. At the end of the food drive, they'd collected 33 containers of food! Technical Assistant Meghan Pallante dropped off the donations to the Food Bank of Delaware. During such a difficult time, when we are not able to be together physically, this gave family child care professionals a chance to feel connected. Many of them expressed feeling joy and gratitude about being able to participate in this act of service.

Family Child Care Educator reflections:

“Participating in the FCC(Family Child Care)food drive gave me a feeling of GRATEFULNESS-to be grateful of what I have and being able to bless others.”-Desiree Bell, Children’s Laughter LFCC

“For us here at Sheila’s Dreams and Sheila’s Dreams TOO, it was a great pleasure to help the less fortunate at this time as we all try and safely navigate through this pandemic. We have been blessed to be able to be open and serve our community. We also look forward to doing it again.”- Stephanie Jackson, Sheila’s Dreams & Sheila’s Dreams TOO

“To me it’s important to serve the community especially when families and children are involved.”- Norami Perez, Lambs of Zion FCC

“It was a great honor and pleasure for me, my daycare children and families, and friends to participate in the FCC food drive. The opportunity was a great way to encourage children of all ages to give back to the community. It showed they can make a positive difference at any age. We look forward to adding this annually, to our list of give back events.”-Heather Wiktorowicz, Miss Heather’s Learning Center FCC

The Family Child Care Angels group plans to do another service project in the spring.



ZOOM MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness and Zoom - Helpful Tips to Improve Your Experience

We thank you for your continued dedication to engaging in professional development virtually. It's not easy and the experience can be full of challenges. Most of all, it can be exhausting.

The following video includes Melissa and Jessica, two of our instructors, sharing helpful tips for getting the most out of your Zoom experience. These tips build on practicing mindfulness to exploring ways to engage and preserve your energy.



Resources for You

Black History Month 2021 - A Call to Celebrate Daily

In 1976, President Gerald Ford designated February as "Black History Month," an annual celebration of African American's achievements and their central role in U.S. history. The month was an outgrowth of historian and author Dr. Carter G. Woodson's vision to promote Black Americans' accomplishments as early as in the 1920s. As the son of slaves, Dr. Woodson founded what was then Negro History Week, hoping that Black Americans' achievements would eventually become a seamless part of schools' curriculum.

We still have work to do, but change is happening, as eloquently reflected in Amanda Gorman's poem "The Hill We Climb" shared at the recent presidential inauguration. She joins so many talented artists, entrepreneurs, scientists, and other African Americans whose work have helped define our country.

Please click [here](https://www.oprahmag.com/life/q25954127/african-american-historical-figures/) (<https://www.oprahmag.com/life/q25954127/african-american-historical-figures/>) to see the breadth and depth of African Americans' many contributions throughout our history.

Here are additional resources to support this year's theme: "The **Black Family**: Representation, **Identity** and Diversity."

"44 of the Best Books by Black American Authors You Should Read in Your Lifetime"

<https://www.oprahmag.com/entertainment/books/q26187205/best-books-black-authors/>

Beautiful Gate Outreach Center

<https://www.bgate.org/>

National Coalition of 100 Black Women Delaware

<https://www.ncbwde.org/>

Every Man Counts Delaware (Better Dads, Better Lives)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/EveryManCounts/>

Christina Cultural Arts Center

<http://www.ccacde.org/>

As we make our way through the pandemic, it's easy to get overwhelmed and lose track of what resources are available to support you and your program.

We've compiled a list of essential websites and phone numbers for your easy reference.

COVID Alert DE App

<https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/covidalert/>

DE COVID Page

<https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/>

Delaware 2-1-1

<https://www.delaware211.org/index.php/search>

Help is Here DE/Delaware HOPE Line

<https://www.helpisherede.com/Get-Help?source=homepage-link#intro>

Food Bank of DE: Mobile Pantry Event Finder

<https://www.fbd.org/program/mobile-pantry/>

Food Bank of Delaware School Pantry Guide/Contact Info

<https://www.fbd.org/program/school-pantries/>

Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence

<https://dcadv.org/>

Beau Biden Foundation for the Protection of Children

<https://bit.ly/2Mi8IMp>

Delaware Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

<https://bit.ly/3tjdxFQ>

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
800-273-8255**



FAMILY CHILD CARE COMMUNITY GATHERING

"Shining the Light On You" Virtual Edition: Wrap Up

Pre-pandemic DIEEC launched "Shining the Light on You," an initiative focused on providing health and wellness opportunities for family child care professionals. We held the first event in the fall of 2019 and hosted the second event this past month.

On January 16th, more than 30 family child care professionals gathered virtually to spend a morning participating in different activities such as arts and crafts, exercise, journaling, cooking, and games.

At DIEEC we are committed to supporting the early childhood education community, especially during these challenging times. In addition to these events, we hold weekly Communities of Practice (CoPs) - a time for early childhood professionals to share and support each other facilitated by DIEEC staff members. If you are interested in joining a CoP, please email us [here](mailto:delawarestars@udel.edu). delawarestars@udel.edu. Please note that CoPs are open to all licensed early childhood education professionals.

In the meantime, stay tuned for more details of upcoming "Shining the Light on You" events.



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