

June 2021



Message from the Director

Let's Go Outside! – We are so excited to share our new professional development offerings on outdoor learning. As we head into the summer, we hope that you will take some time to think, reflect, and plan for new and exciting outdoor learning opportunities for the children in your care. Katie Pollock, UD's laboratory school master teacher, shares her insights below on outdoor learning.

In this month's edition of REACH, we also highlight Little Faces, a center-based and family child care program in Sussex County who has worked hard to partner with community to invest in staff during the pandemic. We also provide a wrap-up of our

"Provider Appreciation" celebration and share our gratitude for the work of Delaware's early childhood community. Finally, please remember to apply for the child care stabilization program – and if you have questions, we are here to help. Check out the article below for information and support.

Happy Summer!

Rena Hallam
DIEEC Director



"Little Faces" Investment Makes for Staff's Happy Faces

Christina Edwards is an administrator and owner of both a family child care and early childhood education center in Georgetown, Del. Her "Little Faces" family child care program is for infants to two years old. Her center is for one-year-olds through school age. Chris's programs have not only survived COVID, but they have thrived because of her commitment to each employee.

"We had a couple of scares during COVID and had to close for two weeks," said Chris. "But I'm always looking for different techniques to maintain and motivate my staff."

Her "techniques" included both professional development and personal attention. Amid all the chaos of COVID, Chris still took time to hold an in-service professional development day. She tapped into DIEEC's expertise and invited Kyma Fulgence-Belardo, a technical assistant, to lead a day focused on mindfulness.

"This day allowed me to learn more about my teachers," said Chris. "As a result, I have been able to build stronger relationships."

"Chris is committed to professional development for each of her staff," added Lea Attarian, DIEEC technical assistant. "She always looks for and suggests workshops to help each teacher build their skill sets."

Her focus on relationships extends to her families and communities. These partnerships have become even more essential during COVID. For example, the Georgetown Public Library supplies Little Faces with many different arts and crafts along with other resources for the children. The children check out books each month that support the program's monthly themes. Another great example of community support is when a local nail salon opened on a Sunday and treated each staff member to a day of pampering. Refreshed and rejuvenated, her staff returned on Monday, ready to take on all the rigor of operating through COVID.

"Chris consistently goes above and beyond to serve her staff and families," said Alyssa Stein, DIEEC technical assistant. "She's always willing to participate in Communities of Practices (CoPs) and share her knowledge with her colleagues."



Stabilization Grant Resources

As of May 17, you can apply for subgrants through the Delaware Early Education and Child Care Stabilization Fund. The Fund's goal is to help early care and education programs stay in business and get back on their feet from the impact of the pandemic.

The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) is administering the fund with the following resources to support you.

- A dedicated team of Stabilization Fund Technical Assistants which include
 - Andrea Prettyman
 - Alyssa Stein
 - Sue Taylor
 - Holly Griest
 - Amanda Mackey
 - Hayley Waters
 - Lea Attarian
- Hotline 1-877-351-2841 and email stabilizationfund@udel.edu
- Stabilization landing page that includes the application, FAQs, and webinars <https://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/delaware-early-education-and-child-care-stabilization-fund/>

Provider Appreciation Wrap Up

Friday, May 7 was "Provider Appreciation Day," but at DIEEC we celebrated your work all month.

First, our resident Coach's Corner blogger, Meghan Pallante, wrote a narrative poem about what the world would be like without you, included here. Our staff took that idea and created a video that's featured below.

This approach highlights how essential you are to making our society function on many levels. Thank you!

We also continued with our "Gifts of Gratitude" campaign by giving away classroom materials twice a week, announced on Facebook.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q93NIJ90_8s

Participate in Jeopardy Event

What is a way to win prizes and build teamwork?

Mark Your Calendar for June 17, 6:30 p.m.

June's "Gifts of Gratitude" theme will be centered around a fun live (Zoom) Jeopardy game. The Jeopardy Game for centers is set for June 17 at 6:30 p.m. Soon after, we will offer a second game to family child care professionals. We have a great selection of teaching materials as prizes.

We would love for you and your staff to participate. Participating in this game is a great team-building opportunity or a way to spend some fun time with your hard-working staff.

We will have the following categories: DIEEC, New Directions Early Head Start, STEAM, Literacy, Mindfulness, and Outdoor Play. You can follow our social media regarding this fun event on both the DIEEC PD and DE Stars Facebook pages. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our Outreach Coordinator, Meg McClary

[Register here](#)



Enriching Professional Development for Outdoor Learning and Strengthening Business Practices

As you think about how to invest in your program by using the Delaware Early Education & Child Care Stabilization Fund subgrants, the following professional learning opportunities can provide valuable insights.

Strengthening Business Practices: Fiscal Management (Part 1 and 2) – Budgets, Planning, Projections, Financial Reports, and Internal Controls

This workshop is part of the Strengthening Business Practices for Child Care Programs series, a business practice curriculum designed by The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance. The content and activities are designed to strengthen early childhood professionals' foundational knowledge of sound fiscal management and business operations.

This training consists of two parts (1 and 2) – You must attend both sessions in order to receive 6 hours of quality assured training.

In addition, we are offering two different outdoor learning workshops. Both virtual options, one self-paced and one live, explore the benefits of outdoor learning spaces and how they can be incorporated into every program's layout.

Outdoor Classrooms: Wonder, Explore, Learn (Virtual, Self-paced)

The Wonder of Outdoor Learning PLUS (Virtual, Live)

Below, Katie Pollock, Master Teacher from the University of Delaware Lab School, discusses the value of outdoor learning and its endless benefits for young children



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xgfXdqYP-A>



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