

August 2021



REACH

a newsletter for Delaware's Early Childhood Professionals

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

This month we celebrate the value of community partnerships! Please review this month's edition of REACH as we hear from Dr. Tennell Brown who shares how the Bellevue Learning Center effectively engages in partnerships within the community to enhance the lives of children and families in her program. We also celebrate the Wilmington Early Childhood and Education Council (WECEC) as they move into their new location at Stubbs Elementary. WECEC is a wonderful example of how collaborative, community partnerships make a positive difference for our early care and education community. New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS) is another example of how effective partnerships can improve the early care and education services provided to children and families. NDEHS works with other agencies to support children's emotional, physical, and cognitive development, while empowering parents and guardians to be their children's first teachers.

Finally, DIEEC continues to take applications for the Child Care Stabilization Grant program. Please reach out to us if you need assistance in completing your application by calling **1-877-351-2841** or emailing at StabilizationFund@udel.edu.

Rena Hallam
DIEEC Director



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Community Partnerships - Dr. Tennell Brown's Perspectives Bellevue Learning Center

This month we feature Dr. Tennell Brown, director of education, Bellevue Learning Center, who shares her thoughts on the importance of building community partnerships. As September approaches, building relationships with parents and caregivers has increased significance, with many early childhood education programs welcoming new families. Engaging families with events and activities are great ways to build community.

There are many benefits from building partnerships with your school district and surrounding private schools. Schools can provide helpful information on kindergarten readiness, registration deadlines, family events, workshops, etc. Having connections with elementary schools can help ease the transition for prekindergarten students moving on to kindergarten.

And don't forget the numerous opportunities to build partnerships with your community's organizations: for example, libraries, community centers, and the fire and police departments.

Check out this video for even more ideas.



STABILIZATION GRANT

Funds continue to be available for all licensed early childhood education programs from the Delaware Early Education and Child Care Stabilization Fund. The goal of these grants is to help early childhood professionals stay in business and make child care more affordable for families.

We are in the middle of round two and have received over 500 applications. As a reminder, the funds can be used numerous ways, including supporting the workforce through funding salaries, providing recruitment and retention bonuses, and providing benefits.

Here are additional [examples](#) of how funds can be used. These examples are attached to the end of this publication

Don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions. We are here to support you!

Call on **1-877-351-2841**

Email at StabilizationFund@udel.edu

Visit the [Stabilization Fund Landing Page](#)

NEWS & UPDATES

WECEC Resource Center New Location September Opening

The Wilmington Early Care and Education Council (WECEC) Professional Development Resource Center (PDRC) is joining the dynamic community at the Stubbs Early Education Center. Dr. Whitney Williams, her staff, and the other community partners are working with the with the Professional Development Resource Center to achieve WECEC's mission:

"The mission of WECEC is that all children of Wilmington have access to an integrated early childhood system which fosters collaboration among existing programs, and identifies gaps in the current delivery system for children birth through eight years old."

In addition to a new location, the center has a new leader - Patti Lynch is the WECEC PDRC Coordinator. "I'm excited to collaborate with early childhood professionals, families, and community partners to increase the quality of early care and education experiences for the young children in the city of Wilmington," said Patti.

The center offers support services such as:

- Career advisement for Early Care and Education (ECE) Professionals
- Mentoring for persons pursuing professional development opportunities in ECE
- Scholarships for Training for Early Care and Education (TECE) 1 and 2 which are now available on two different educational platforms; as eligibility requirements are met, and funding is available
- Lending Library with professional development resources including curriculum books, bilingual literature, and more
- Laminating, photocopying, bookbinding, die-cutting, and computer use on-site

The center will officially open for the community by September 15, 2021. Please feel free to reach out to Patti Lynch, WECEC PDRC Coordinator, by [email](mailto:wececresourcecenter@gmail.com), wececresourcecenter@gmail.com or at 302-353-7970.

SPOTLIGHT NEW DIRECTIONS EARLY HEAD START

The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) is a group of initiatives and programs housed at the University of Delaware with the collective goal of improving the lives of young children and their families by providing exemplary services for the early childhood community.

Many of our readers are familiar with our continuous quality improvement initiatives such as Delaware Stars and our professional development offerings; however, the Institute also includes New Directions Early Head Start (NDEHS). This program is a federally funded initiative committed to empowering and supporting pregnant women, infants, toddlers and their families. It is unique in that it is a collaborative effort, bringing together the university

and a group of non-profit agencies to provide direct support to children and families in New Castle and Kent counties.

The staff of 20 supports families by providing the best services for them and their very young children to promote children's success and families' self-sufficiency. This work includes home-based services and partnerships for offering comprehensive center-based care for children zero – thirty-six months and pregnant women. Additionally, the staff helps coordinate services for children with special needs.

NDEHS partners with centers in Wilmington, Neighborhood House Inc. and Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center, and in Newark with the Early Learning Center at the University of Delaware. Additionally, NDEHS provides home-based services throughout Wilmington and New Castle and Kent counties. Services in Kent county are provided through a partnership with Delaware Early Childhood Center (DECC).

NDEHS is currently recruiting pregnant women and families for their services. If you would like to learn more about the program, please check out our [website](https://www.ndehs.udel.edu/), [https://www.ndehs.udel.edu/](https://www.facebook.com/NDEHS.UD/?view_public_for=104340617996217) or [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/NDEHS.UD/?view_public_for=104340617996217).
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Stabilization Grant - Common Fund Request Examples

Personnel costs, benefits, premium pay, recruitment, and retention:

- Examples of retention bonuses to staff who are employed during the grant period
 - Retention Bonus – Center-based example:
 - \$150,000 requested
 - Broken down as follows: 25 full-time staff including administrators receive a \$5,000 bonus each (25 x \$5,000 = \$125,000). Ten part-time staff receive a \$2,500 bonus each (10 x \$2,500 = \$25,000). Total distributed equals \$150,000 in this category.
 - Bonus – Family/Large Family childcare example:
 - \$30,000 requested
 - Broken down as follows: a \$25,000 salary bonus for FCC provider and a \$5,000 bonus for substitute. Total distributed equals \$30,000 in this category.
- Examples that support recruitment efforts:
 - Recruitment bonuses for new center-based staff example:
 - \$5,000 requested
 - Program is engaging in hiring efforts and plans to pay \$1,000 per new full-time employee paid after 2 months employment. Funds must be spent within 6 months of receiving them.

Rent or mortgage payments, utilities, facilities maintenance and improvements, or insurance:

- Example of using funding to cover commercial mortgage cost:
 - A small center's monthly mortgage is \$7,500. The program requests \$67,500 to cover mortgage costs for 9 months, starting from April 2021.
- Example of using funding to promote access to healthy and safe outdoor learning space:
 - Child care program requests \$15,000 to be used toward fencing around playground area, furniture to move routines outside, and a shade structure.

PPE, cleaning and sanitation supplies and services, or training and professional development related to health and safety practices:

- Example of using funding to promote health and safety:
 - Child care program provides a quote from their cleaning company and requests \$10,800 for the recurring monthly cost of \$1,200 to cover their cleaning service from April 2021 through December 2021. The program mentions in their request

that cleaning costs have increased as more in-depth processes are taking place to ensure a hygienic environment and reduce viral contaminants. Funds must be spent within 6 months of receiving them.

Purchases of or updates to equipment and supplies to respond to COVID-19:

- Example of equipment to respond to COVID-19:
 - Child care program provides a quote and requests \$5,000 for installation of automatic hands-free sinks to help reduce the likelihood of children and staff touching the sink during handwashing.
 - Child care program provides a quote and requests \$7,000 toward technology equipment (laptops, printers) to document data, and engage in more effective communication with families and state agencies.

Goods and services necessary to maintain or resume childcare services:

- Examples of requesting funds in this area:
 - Child care program provides documentation from their food service company to support their request of \$18,000 to cover their \$2,000 monthly food service bill from April 2021 through December 2021.
 - Child care program provides documentation from their property management service company to support their request of \$9,000 to cover their property maintenance bill of \$1,000 monthly from April 2021 through December 2021.

Mental health supports for children and employees:

- Examples of requesting funds in this area:
 - Child care program provides a quote in support of their request for \$5,000 to cover the cost of contracted mental health services and consultation provided directly to children in the program
 - Family child care provider requests \$2,000 to pay a substitute so the FCC provider can increase the number of days she can take off for personal and training purposes.
 - Child care program provides a quote in support of their request for \$10,000 to cover the cost of a supplemental social/emotional curriculum and related materials for 6 classrooms, and training for 15 staff members including 14 teachers/assistants and one administrator.