

R E A C H

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



October 2017



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



October Training

"Fall Back" into Professional Development

October's schedule has something for everyone from assessment courses for teachers to training on sensory learning. The menu is full (there's even a course on healthy eating!)

Full schedule is available at: <https://dieecpd.org/registry/calendar>

Budget Process News/Update - Stars and Tiered Reimbursement

As we've communicated, the budgeting process for this fiscal year and next continues to be at the forefront for state leadership as they try to balance the budget while continuing to support the important work you do in providing Delaware's youngest learners access to high-quality early learning.

Here's what we know:

- Despite a \$400 million budget shortfall this year, the state's Fiscal Year 2018 Final Operating Budget includes funds to maintain the Delaware Stars and tiered reimbursement at the same level as last year. However, even with this investment, there is not enough funding to expand Stars and tiered reimbursement in the 2018 fiscal year.
- For Fiscal Year 2018, no new program applications to Stars will be accepted.
- The state will continue supporting all programs at their current levels with tiered reimbursement.
- All current Delaware Stars participants at Star Levels 2, 3 and 4 will be held at their current level.

Teaching Strategies GOLD

Upgraded Platform News

Current Gold Users

Thank you to everyone who attended the in-person Teaching Strategy GOLD Upgrade sessions we offered this summer. We were glad to provide the support to transition to the upgraded platform. For current users that did not get a chance to participate, training is available online (in-person training is no longer offered). Please refer to "Introducing MyTeachingStrategies" course under "Develop"; My Course tab. This two hour online review of the upgraded platform will be Quality Assured through December 2017.

New Users

New users to Teaching Strategies GOLD will need to attend the six hour in-person session, Implementing Teaching Strategies GOLD, which includes all of the upgraded platform features.

Keep up with our Quality Assured training sessions by following us on Facebook.

- Additionally, the Governor and his administration have prioritized funding to support the growth of those programs that re-verified at a new Star level on or before June 30, 2017 and will be eligible for a higher star rating and tiered reimbursement rate.

Understanding your priorities is critical for the budgeting process. To this end, at the most recent Delaware Early Childhood Council meeting, an hour was dedicated to get your feedback and for state leadership to hear firsthand your questions and concerns. The meeting included input from Secretary of Education, Dr. Susan Bunting, OMB representative, Amy Bonner, and John Sheehan from the Governor's Office.

Here's what you told us:

- Providers and stakeholders shared that the freeze on tiered reimbursement does not equate to "maintenance," but rather represents "backsliding" in financial support, especially considering that reimbursement is based on the 2011 market rate.
- Providers stressed the importance of decoupling increased Star levels from increases in tiered reimbursement rates while the tiered reimbursement system is being revised. They explained that they want the opportunity to be able to verify at higher Star levels to reflect their hard work and commitment to continuous quality improvement.
- DeAEYC was also present and explained that there is a need for more advocacy from the early learning community. Programs were encouraged to contact their state representative to ensure their voices are being heard. DeAEYC also volunteered to visit centers and organizations to support providers and families in starting and continuing advocacy efforts. It was shared that this is an important time, as state departments are currently building their budget requests for next year.

Here's what's next:

- The Office of Early Learning shared that they are assembling a group of stakeholders to advise on revisions to the Stars QRIS and tiered reimbursement systems for sustainability.
- A decision will be made about allowing programs to move up a Star level without receiving the increased Tiered Reimbursement rate during this fiscal year.

We value your work on behalf of Delaware children and families, and we remain committed to continued investments in early learning. Thank you for your patience and understanding throughout this process.

You can continue to address your questions and concerns to Lin Nordmeyer, Stars Communication Manager, by emailing her at linnord@udel.edu

Capacity Grant: Apply by October 18th!!!

Funding for Programs in Delaware Stars

The Capacity Grant, managed by Children & Families First, is intended to provide resources to enhance the quality of early learning programs and to expand the supply of child care in Delaware.



The next deadline to submit an application for a Capacity Grant is October 18, 2017. Funding is available for programs already enrolled in Delaware Stars who meet certain criteria outlined in the Capacity Grant FAQs. You can reach the Capacity Grant Program Manager, Andrea Prettyman by email or call 302-389-7268 with questions.

Grant Application is available at:

http://family.cffde.org/PDF/Capacity_Assistance_Application_Jan2016.pdf

New Library Grand Opening!

Mark your calendar for the Route 9 Library and Innovation Center Grand Opening Celebration on

October 14th from 9 a.m. - 12. p.m.

The new library offers many activities and resources for young children. To get more information go to: <http://nccde.org/1389/Route-9-Library-Innovation-Center>

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