

DELAWARE INSTITUTE FOR Excellence *in* Early Childhood

The purpose of this message is to provide an update regarding ongoing work related to early care and education.

For the remainder of 2021, the Delaware Stars redesign will be paused, and program verifications will remain suspended. Due to staffing shortages, the Early Childhood Support Team is prioritizing tasks that are focused on supporting the workforce and stabilizing programs.

Specifically, the Office of Early Learning is focused on

- distributing federal stabilization funds to stabilize programs,
- implementing federal quality funds to support the workforce,
- developing a seamless system that will align standards and monitoring,
- building out supports to implement the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential process,
- creating a framework for a compensation scale to demonstrate the need for additional resources, and
- planning the transition of Part C in preparation for potential Universal PreK.

The Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) has also experienced staffing shortages in both our Dover and Wilmington offices. OCCL has prioritized conducting on site visits to providers. As a result, specialists spend most days in the field and may be slower in responding to your phone calls and emails. Please know that we are doing our best to meet the needs of all providers as quickly as we can.

Programs currently receiving tiered reimbursement support will continue to receive funds at their current rate, through June 30, 2023. The Early Childhood Support Team is working to redesign the current Tiered Reimbursement process to distribute funds to more programs through quality contracts starting in the fall of 2023. Stars ratings will be removed from public websites until further notice.

I encourage programs to continue to access the technical assistance, training, and coaching supports that are available through the DIEEC. The current offerings are aligned with the proposed new system and with recommended practices for quality services to support children and families. Please visit <https://www.dieec.udel.edu/> to learn more or sign up.

I also encourage programs to request a stabilization fund sub-grant to help with expenses and ensure that programs are able to stay in business. Information can be found at <https://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/delaware-early-education-and-child-care-stabilization-fund/>.

In addition, programs can apply for non-profit grants at [DE Relief Grants - Division of Small Business - State of Delaware.](#)

I recognize that for some, this process is taking much longer than anticipated. Please know that the Early Childhood Support team continues to work to support programs now as well as to prepare Delaware for the future to ensure that all children succeed in school and life.

Please reach out to me directly with any questions at yvette.sanchezfuentes@doe.k12.de.us

Thank you for all you do. Yvette