



June 2013



In This Issue

[PRACTICE TIPS](#)

[CHALLENGE NEWS](#)

[PARTNER NEWS](#)

[SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL SUCCESS](#)

[POLICY & TRENDS](#)

[NEW RESEARCH](#)

CHALLENGE NEWS

New Website and Social Media Connections Offer Great Resources for Families!



The new [GREAT STARTS DELAWARE](#) website, launched by the Office of Early Learning and developed with key partners in Delaware's early childhood system, offers some outstanding resources for families with young children. The website is also optimized for use on cell phones to enable families to have access on the go and is now connected to [FACEBOOK](#) and [TWITTER](#).

Connecting visitors to a searchable database of early childhood programs including [DELAWARE STARS](#) early learning programs convenient to where families live, work and attend school is one of the key features of the new website.

"Our goal is to have families use the website as a resource to learn more

PRACTICE TIPS

CREATIVE SUMMER FUN!



Summer weather often motivates us to spend time outside with children for work and play. Here are some easy and fun activities to inspire

creativity in children of all ages!

TRY SOME DIFFERENT WAYS TO PAINT OUTDOORS!

Infants and toddlers will love to paint with water.

Fill buckets with water and give them different kinds of painting utensils - thick and wide household brushes or rollers, smaller easel brushes, etc. Encourage them to paint the sidewalk and outside walls. No muss, no fuss!

On a hot day, children can paint with ice cubes.

Fill ice cube trays with water. Add a drop or two of food coloring or washable tempera paint to each cube. Freeze. Head outside and hand each child a piece of paper and a cube - watch what happens as the ice melts! (You can put a small piece of a straw in the cube before it freezes to make a handle for children to hold as they paint.)

Here's a great recipe for sidewalk paint:

- * 2 tablespoons of cornstarch
- * 4 Tablespoons of water
- * Food Coloring

It will wash right off with a little bit of rain but what great scenery until then!

LET'S BLOW BUBBLES!

This is an simple recipe with at-home ingredients.

- * 4 cups water

- * 1 cup dish detergent

- * 1/4 c. corn syrup (strengthens the bubbles so they don't pop right away.)

Use pipe cleaners wound into shapes, kitchen utensils like slotted spoons or cookie cutters for wands

HERE'S A UNIQUE IDEA FROM [PINTEREST](#)

about just how important early learning is for young children, how to find quality early learning programs and have easy access to the most current information about the development of children from birth to five," said Executive Director of the Office of Early Learning, Harriet Dichter. "There are also opportunities for families to interact with the website and the community."

New Collaborative Initiative Launched by Next Generation and Clinton Foundation

Next Generation announced that they have joined with Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to launch [TOO SMALL TO FAIL](#), an initiative

focused on improving outcomes for children from zero to five. The collaborative will promote new research on the science of brain development, early health and early learning and identify steps parents, caregivers and community members can take to improve the lives of young children.



New Incentives for Delaware Stars Programs!

The Office of Early Learning is pleased to announce three new incentives for programs in Delaware Stars:

CORE Awards

The Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (DAEYC) is excited to be managing the Compensation, Retention and Education (CORE) Awards. Designed to recognize early learning professionals who work in Delaware Stars program for attaining additional education and credentials and for committing to working in high quality programs, CORE Awards will be available this fall. Awards to individual early educators promote workforce stability and professional development.

[MORE](#)



Infrastructure Fund

The Infrastructure Fund focuses on building and technological improvements to early learning programs enrolled in Delaware Stars. The

Make a slide or a river bed out of aluminum foil. Use the extra wide, heavy duty kind. Unroll a 25 foot roll. Fold up about 2-3 inches on each of the long edges to make a tunnel. Pour water down the middle. Children can send cars or boats or other small toys down the river!

SUMMER READING TOGETHER

Painting with Picasso by Julie Merberg; Bubble Trouble by Joy N. Hulme; Spot Goes to the Beach by Eric Hill; One Hot Summer Day by Nina Crews; It's Summer by Linda Glaser.

These activities address many Early Learning Foundations!

Infants and Toddlers-- Social Emotional: Self Awareness; Discoveries: Sensory Awareness, Play, Spatial Awareness, Cause and Effect, Persistence, Curiosity and Problem Solving; Physical Development and Health: Fine and Gross Motor and Sensory;

Preschoolers--Approaches to Learning: initiative and Curiosity; Science: Sensory Awareness and Scientific Exploration; My Family, My Community, My World: Places and Spaces Geography; Creative Expression: Visual Arts and Dramatic Play; Physical Development and Health: Fine Motor and Gross Motor

Fund welcomes Delaware Stars 2-5 programs and particularly those with a special focus on those serving children in high needs areas and those programs participating in the State's Purchase of Care program. Stars programs must demonstrate in the application their plan how the funds will be used and will result in movement of the program higher Stars quality rating. The Fund also serves public and charter schools seeking early childhood licensure for preschool programs in order to participate Delaware Stars.

Applications will be available online in August at the [CHILDREN & FAMILIES FIRST WEBSITE](#)



The goal is to provide funding for up to 30 Delaware Stars programs by the end of 2013. Questions or requests for any additional information may be directed to Children and Families First, Inc. at INFRASTRUCTUREINFO@CFDE.ORG. Flyers, emails, general mailings will be sent out to Stars programs through the summer with additional information.

Young Child Developmental Screening

Using Ages & Stages



Easter Seals Delaware & Maryland's Eastern Shore

is coordinating and offering Ages and Stages Screening (including the Social-Emotional component) to Delaware Stars programs that elect to work toward meeting the Child Screening Standard (LO2) as part of the program's Quality Improvement Plan. For those programs, and at no cost to the program, Easter Seals will provide Ages and Stages Screening professional development, the Screening Kit with materials and free online access. Programs interested in more information about the screening and supports may call Tina Ullman at 302-253-1104 or email her at TULLMAN@ESDEL.ORG

Governor Markell Weighs in at Reading Skills Forum

Students who aren't proficient readers early on are more likely to struggle later, and the third grade has developed into a critical signpost of a child's academic future. [RESEARCH FROM THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION](#) found third graders whose literacy skills fell short were four times more likely to drop out of school down the line.

To further conversation on the issue, [WASHINGTON POST LIVE](#) hosted a forum on Tuesday, June 4 with Delaware Governor Jack Markell; Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant; and New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez and six state education chiefs from Georgia, Maryland, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia and Washington State. Co-sponsored by the Campaign for Grade-



Level Reading, the forum discussion centered on plans for focusing on the third-grade literacy benchmark.

Governor Markell made clear that early childhood education was a priority when he declared, "You can't fix third grade literacy only focusing on third graders." He went on to discuss the steps that Delaware is taking to promote early childhood education. "High quality early childhood education is an important part of third grade success and beyond."

Investment in early education may be best crime-prevention tool

An Op-Ed written for the News Journal by Delaware Office of Early Learning Executive Director Harriet Dichter and Drewry Nash Fennell, Executive Director of the Delaware Criminal Justice Council makes a compelling argument that early learning education is an effective long-term way to increase public safety. Published in the June 16 edition of Delaware Online and appearing in the News Journal on June 17, the article discusses the promotion of high quality early education through Delaware Stars and cites persuasive research supporting the effect of early childhood education in reducing crime.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)

New Director of Childhood Business Partnerships for Office of Early Learning

The Office of Early Learning is delighted to welcome Ranie Good to the staff as Director of Childhood Business Partnerships. Ranie's job is to recruit and support up to 25 business leaders from throughout the state to become knowledgeable about early childhood and to serve as public advocates for public investment in the work. The Office of Early Learning's partner in this work is the Delaware Business Roundtable, which will sponsor the group, to be called the Commission on Early Learning and the Economy. [TO LEARN MORE](#)



PARTNER NEWS

Partners Star in Reaching Families to Promote Early Learning

Thanks to the **Delaware Center for Teacher Education, Office of Clinical Studies at the University of Delaware** for distributing Delaware Stars family brochures, family early learning outreach cards, tote bags and fans at Newark Day and the University of Delaware's Alumni Day, attended by more than 5,000 people in early June. Located in the giant white tent on the Green, the hub



for events and a luncheon for families with children, their staff reached more than 250 people. Our thanks to Linda Zankowski, Ed. D, and her staff for volunteering to partner with our office for this promotional event!

Another great partner is the **Help Me Grow Call Center** whose staff, led by Anna Maloney, regularly staff community



events and promote the promotion of early learning and Delaware Stars as a guide for families looking for early childhood programs for young children. On a rainy May 19th Down Syndrome Association Buddy Walk, attended by more than 2,000,

they spoke directly to more than 30 people who expressed interesting in knowing more about early learning and gave family outreach cards to many more.

The **Delaware Adolescent Program (DAPI)** partnered with us to promote the importance of early learning for young children and the use of Delaware Stars as a guide for families looking for early childhood programs for their children at its May 15th annual Mother's Day 5K Run, a fun family event held in Wilmington's Brandywine Park. An information table, easily identified by the Delaware Stars table cloth, attracted runners, spectators and park visitors with great give-aways and family-friendly information which reached at least 50 people.



The **Sussex Child Health Coalition's Family Night** in late May was another event where the Office of Early Learning worked to reach families to promote the importance of early learning. Devona Williams (pictured right) shared information about the importance of early learning with more than 150 people at the event.

Partners In Advocacy

Support in National Early Learning Day of Action

Thanks to **Children and Families First** and the **United Way of Delaware** for their action taken to move Delawareans to advocate to support early learning as part of the National Day of Action.

[TO READ THE FULL TEXT](#)

Impressive Turnout for Delaware Early Childhood Advocacy Day



The 2013 Early Childhood Advocacy Day was sponsored by the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (DAEYC)

This annual event provides an opportunity for early learning providers to visit Legislative Hall, talk to their legislators, attend the Early Childhood Rally on the steps of Legislative Hall and attend a session of the House of Representatives.

This year, Senators **Bethany Hall-Long**, **Ernesto Lopez** and Representative **Quinton Johnson** joined in the rally. The legislators expressed their support for early learning and praised the work being done by early learning professionals statewide. [MORE](#)

On the Radio

Two terrific PSA's by the Delaware State Education Association are running on radio stations throughout the first state through June 22. Narrated by Frederika Jenner, president of the DSEA, the spots promote early learning and things to do over the summer to prevent learning loss. Thanks to Deb Stevens at DSEA for sharing this information!

The PSAs are posted on our [GREAT STARTS DELAWARE](#) Facebook page. Click the [LINK](#), to see the posts, then click the arrow to play. OR listen for them on WDEL 1150AM, WSTW 93.7FM, WJBR 99.5FM, WAFL EAGLE 97.7FM, WDSB 94.7FM. WJKS KISS 101.7FM or WWFG Froggy 99.9FM.

United Way offers IM40 Training on Developmental Assets for 0-8 Year Olds



The United Way of Delaware will conduct a 1 1/2 day interactive training on the Search Institute's developmental assets for 0 - 8 year olds. This training is open to parents and caregivers of young children and the staff of early child care and education programs (center- and family home-based). The training will include a combination of presentations, small group work and sustainability discussions. Participation in the training will include the

opportunity to acquire six quality assured training hours from Office of Child Care Licensing (Delaware Stars points).

[FOR DETAILS AND TO REGISTER](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL SUCCESS

Delaware Stars Programs Reinvest Tiered Reimbursement Incentive Funds To Enhance Program Quality

Delaware has developed financial incentives for providers to participate in Delaware Stars. Tiered Reimbursement, paid quarterly to Star 3-5 programs serving children with the Purchase of Care public subsidy, is one of the first incentives offered. Here are examples of programs that elect to reinvest the payment back into their programs to enhance program quality, resulting in benefits for children. We also heard how key Delaware Stars has become in motivating and enabling participating programs to strive for continuous quality improvement.

We spoke with **Thelma Jamison** of Our Future Child Care in Wilmington, **Pam Harper** of The Children's Secret Garden in Dover, **Jennifer Marrero** of Alpha Kids in Newark and **Nicole Mumford** of Cozy Critters Child Care in Frankford. Click here to read what the child care professionals have to say about their experience with Delaware Stars.

Thelma Jamison at Our Future Child Care in Wilmington said that the funds have allowed her to purchase a much-needed computer and printer for the center, classroom materials and art supplies and new cubbies that were necessary because of increased enrollment. In addition, Thelma was able to give a hardworking teacher a well-deserved raise as well hire an additional teacher for the program [MORE](#)

POLICY & TRENDS

EARLY EDUCATION

Preschool for All Proposal Would Provide More Resources for High-Quality Early Childhood Education in Delaware

Delaware stands to gain additional resources if President Obama's Preschool for All proposal is adopted by Congress. The additional funding would benefit over 900 children with respect to early childhood education and over 2700 additional families

Getting the Facts Right on Pre-K and the President's Pre-K Proposal

This policy report from NIEER clears up some common misconceptions about preschool's effectiveness and benefits, particularly in regards to the Obama administration's recent fact sheet on investing in early education.

would benefit from the Home Visiting program.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS RELEASE](#)

10 Ways to Involve Fathers in Their Children's Education

This article was posted on the Early Childhood Research Professionals group discussion page on LinkedIn. It offers sound advice and specific tips to Early Childhood educators on encouraging fathers to become more involved in the educational process.

[FULL ARTICLE HERE](#)

Click here for the [FACT SHEET](#)

CHILD HEALTH

New Handouts in the Backpack Series

[THE BACKPACK CONNECTION SERIES](#) has added several new handouts on Biting, Managing Bedtime, Time Management and Sharing.

Early Childhood Education Produces Long-term Health Benefits

The potential health benefits of early childhood education programs are quite large, especially for children living in poverty. In their downloadable report,

[EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: PATHWAYS TO BETTER HEALTH](#),

by Allison Friedman-Krauss and Steve Barnett.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Zero to Three Publishes Policy Recommendations

ZERO TO THREE has published a paper on Policy Recommendations for the Administration and 113th Congress.

Click here for a copy of [PUTTING INFANTS AND TODDLERS ON THE PATH TO SCHOOL READINESS](#)

QRIS

New Resource from the Goffin Strategy Group

The second edition of the Early Childhood Education Leadership Development Compendium: A View of the Current Landscape seeks to answer three questions:

1. How is the ECE field addressing its needs for leadership?
2. What programs are available to support leadership development and who is being served?
3. What can be learned

about the field's definition(s) for and approach to leadership development based on descriptions provided by self-reported programs?

[TO LEARN MORE](#)

NEW RESEARCH

EARLY EDUCATION

American Preschools Lag behind Other Nations

High-quality early childhood education is essential to student success, yet compared to other countries around the world, the United States lags far behind on preschool. The United States trails behind more than two dozen countries in terms of preschool enrollment.

Click here for the eye-opening [INFO-GRAPHIC](#) related to this article.

Studies Find Vocabulary Instruction Lacking

Children's vocabulary is a key ingredient of learning to read with comprehension, but recent research finds limited instruction in vocabulary in kindergarten -- and too little to enable children with small vocabularies to close the vocabulary gap that is evident long before they begin school.

Read all about it at [STUDIES FIND VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION LACKING](#)

HOME VISITING

Disconnected Mothers and the Well-Being of Children

A new research report from the Urban Institute, [DISCONNECTED MOTHERS AND THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN](#), shows that many of the circumstances disconnected mothers face pose major risks to children's development. This paper provides potential interventions to help disconnected families.

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Infant Development: Babies are Linguistic Geniuses

According to Patricia Kuhl, co-director of the Institute for Brain and Learning Sciences at the University of Washington, babies all over the world have an amazing capacity to learn multiple languages until the age of the seven, when the ability begins to decline.

Enjoy Dr. Kuhl's fascinating and thought-provoking TED Talk. [THE LINGUISTIC GENIUS OF BABIES](#)

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