



Delaware Early

Childhood

e-news

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IN THIS ISSUE

[Challenge News](#)

[Partner News](#)

[Spotlight on Local Success](#)

[Policy and Trends](#)

[New Research](#)

[Practice Tips](#)

[Join Email List](#)

Challenge News

Health Ambassadors' Community Baby Showers Celebrate and Educate Families in Wilmington

Nearly 400 people, pregnant women and their families, have enjoyed "Community Baby Showers," a new twist on the traditional baby shower organized by health agencies committed to helping families give their



children the best possible start in life. The Wilmington Health Ambassadors from Christiana Care, Claymont Community Center, Henrietta Johnson Medical Center and Westside Family Healthcare, invite people to the baby showers and continue to be an on-going resource for families.

On arrival, guests receive a "key message" card, which they use at three infant health education stations, where their card is stamped. The card serves as a raffle ticket for gifts including umbrella strollers, pack-n-plays, breast pumps and gift baskets with infant care items. Health agencies including home visiting programs such as Parents as Teachers, New Directions Early Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families America share information about their programs. Held at local churches, including United Methodist Church of the Atonement in Claymont, First and Central Presbyterian Church in Rodney Square, Ezion Mt Carmel Methodist Church and Fair Baptist Church in Southbridge, these community baby showers are a great way to reach those who need health information most. One new mother at the Southbridge baby shower reflected: "I think the event was very successful...the food was delicious. It was really fun, and I am glad I won something. I learned that you should wait 18 months after you had a baby to conceive again. I also learned how the baby's supposed to sleep...on their back instead of sleeping on their stomach."

Guests enjoy a healthy meal while engaging in an interactive discussion with a parent who leads conversations on stressors of parenting, such as sleepless nights, relationship changes and finances, as well as joy, first steps, unconditional love and dreams for the future. Participants talk about recognizing and using their "village," including the resources and supports provided by health agencies and their personal support system of family, friends and neighborhoods to help them have a healthy family.



The next baby shower, focused on the Latina Community, is scheduled for Saturday, April 20, from 1:00 -3:30 p.m. at St. Paul's School in Wilmington. To register for the Latina Shower, call [302-655-5822 ext 351](tel:302-655-5822). For more information on the Wilmington Health Ambassador Program, call Danielle Cooper at [302-428-6582](tel:302-428-6582).

Spring 2013

The Delaware Office of Early Learning (OEL) is [seeking a half-time consultant](#) (20 hours of work each week) to serve as the lead staff for the establishment and staffing of the Delaware Business Roundtable's Commission on Early Education and the Economy. This Commission will serve as the state's leading business voice in support of state-level public investment in effective early learning programs. The Office of Early Learning is responsible for staffing this new Commission of the Roundtable, as part of its ongoing community engagement and sustainability work for early learning and child development. To learn more, go to: <http://decc.delaware.gov/files/2013/03/Commission-Job-Position-3-20-13.pdf>

NOTE: Past editions of the Office of Early Learning e-news, a monthly Delaware early childhood update, as well as this current edition may be viewed at www.DECC.delaware.gov, look for the Early Learning Challenge grant section. We appreciate the Delaware Early Childhood Council posting the e-news and other Office of Early Learning documents to the website and encourage readers to check out the site for Council information as well as to view Office of Early Learning documents posted there which may be of interest.

Partner News

Enhanced Website Offers Improved Delaware Stars Search

The Office of Child Care Licensing in the Children's Department has a great new feature on its child care search component. Now, when someone searches for children care on this site, the Stars programs come up first! This new feature will be valued by parents and families with young children, so share the good news! Here is the link: <http://www.apex01.kids.delaware.gov:7777/occl/>

City of Wilmington Stars Outreach Event on March 26, 2013

City Council Member At-Large Justen Wright invited Delaware Stars, the United Way of Delaware and the Office of Early Learning to work with him to host a special event on March 26 at 6:00 pm for licensed child care providers in the City of Wilmington who want to know more about Delaware Stars, including how to join. The event will be held at St. Michaels School, 700 N. Walnut Street, Wilmington, Delaware and features providers in Stars and staff from the Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood. To register, call [302-577-5300](tel:302-577-5300) or email earlylearning@state.de.us

Welcome Jennifer Ranji, the new Secretary of the Delaware Children's

Department

Serving as the Educational Policy Advisor to Governor Markell from September 2009 to July 2012, Jennifer provided leadership in the development of the Race to the Top and Early Learning Challenge. Jennifer brings considerable experience as a committed advocate for children, and we welcome her!



Welcome Valerie Smirlock, the new Professional Development Specialist at Delaware Stars

Join with us in celebrating an addition to the Stars team, Valerie Smirlock, who is leading the recruitment strategy to enroll new providers into Stars. She comes with great ideas to enhance the Stars recruiting efforts!

Spotlight on Local Success

Babies Learning from Birth at Delaware Tech Terry Campus Child Development Center

Parents who know that babies begin learning at birth seek out high quality infant care, says Kim Pridemore, Director of the Delaware Tech Terry Campus Child Development Center, a Star 5 program since 2011. Recently one parent told her, "I could not go back to work if I had not found a great infant care program for her."

Here's how our high quality programs approach infant care:

Curriculum: Teachers prepare individualized, developmentally appropriate weekly lesson plans which are posted for parents to see. The listed activities are used by the staff to engage babies to help them learn. Playing peek-a-boo as the infant is developing object permanence awareness is an example. Parents are encouraged to use these activities and learning techniques at home during the week. Teachers use every opportunity to engage the child, using expressive language while talking and eye contact, including feeding and diaper change time to build the adult-child relationship. Responsive caregiving designed to maximize adult-infant positive interaction is at the heart of the experience.



Environment: The Delaware Stars Quality Improvement and Rating System uses the Infant Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) to assess the quality of the classroom environment. Scoring a 5, the highest rating, this program features plenty of "belly time," where infants and their teachers are on the floor together exploring, playing and engaging in developmentally appropriate activities through the day.

Continuity of Care: Each of the teachers takes responsibility for being the primary caregiver for one or two infants in the class. The continuity of the primary caregiver for each baby ensures the development of a strong, ongoing responsive caregiving relationship with regular interaction and the eye contact, language and touch that, over time, promotes positive child development.

Family Engagement: Teacher-parent communication is a crucial to great infant care. Many parents stop in or call in during the day see how their child is doing. A daily update sheet prepared by the staff goes to the parent each afternoon with notes on the child's temperament, feeding, diaper change results and activities. Family fun events, held monthly, promote family engagement through activities for parents, children and the teachers such as the sweetheart luncheon in February or a movie night for all.

To learn more about high quality infant care or about joining Delaware Stars, contact Delaware Stars at [302-831-3239](tel:302-831-3239).

Policy and Trends



INFANTS AND TODDLERS:

Brief on Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers: ZERO TO THREE and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)'s [joint policy brief](#) focuses on creating supports for, and expanding access to, quality child care for infants and toddlers.

Baby Talk: This free, one-way listserv is distributed every other week, featuring no-cost resources. To join the listserv, send an email with no message to subscribe-babytalk@listserv.unc.edu. To suggest resources, please contact Camille Catlett at camille.catlett@unc.edu

Little Kids, Big Questions: ZERO TO THREE's podcast series, Little Kids, Big Questions, addresses some of the most common (and challenging) issues facing the families of babies and toddlers, such as helping a baby learn to sleep through the night, dealing with a picky eater, and learning to set limits on children's behavior. These questions-and more-are covered in this series of 12 podcasts, each of which features an interview with an expert that focuses on how to apply the research of early childhood development to your daily interactions with your baby or toddler. Download the podcasts in English or Spanish at <http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/parenting-resources/podcast/>, and check out the additional resources on each topic.

10 Ways Babies Learn When We Sing to Them: Babies learn many different things when we sing to them. For example, when you sing to a baby, he or she bonds with you and your voice. Singing makes yours the first and most important voice in his or her life. The baby learns that you love him or her. For more information, go to <http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/music-math-more/10-ways-babies-learn-when-we-sing-them>

EARLY EDUCATION:

Early Childhood Education as an Essential Component of Economic Development: With an eye toward states in the New England region, this [report](#) from the Political Economy Research Institute of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst examines the long-term economic benefits that result from supporting high-quality pre-K programs, making the case for states to invest in universal preschool education.

Child Care Subsidy Policy as a Way to Improve Access: A new [report](#) by CLASP, "States Can Shape Child Care Subsidy Policies to Improve Access and Continuity", suggests some states' child care policies are not flexible enough in covering time that parents spend outside of work and school, or in reimbursing providers for absent students.

The Path to a Competitive Workforce Begins with High-Quality Early Education: This [research summary](#) from Strategies for Children contains facts and figures - both nationwide and Massachusetts-specific - on the long-term benefits of investing in preschool.

Frameworks for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood: Descriptions and Implications:

This [paper](#), jointly published by the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the National Head Start Association, offers guidance on using frameworks for early intervening services in programs serving children birth through age 5.

QUALITYstarsNY Recruitment Project Evaluation Report: The goal of the recruitment project was to recruit suitable applicants for the 2012-2014 implementation of QUALITYstarsNY. Early care and education programs were recruited and selected primarily from communities within and around Persistently Low Achieving public schools. The New York City Early Childhood Professional Development Institute, the Early Care & Learning Council, and seven recruitment agencies across the state collaborated to recruit a minimum of 300 early care and education programs across the state. The [evaluation report](#) highlights the effectiveness of the recruitment strategies conducted, as well as recruitment successes, challenges, and lessons learned. This valuable information was gathered from surveys and interviews with recruitment agencies, selected and non-selected

applicants, and Quality Improvement Specialists around the state.

Homelessness: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) recently published a [set of resources](#) to help strengthen the ability of early care and education providers to serve young children experiencing homelessness. More than 1.6 million children in the United States live on the streets or in homeless shelters and 42% of these children are under the age of six.

Summary of Teen Parents Served within Head Start: This [brief](#) from the Office of Head Start includes relevant data on early childhood education and care services for the children of teen parents, including suggested activities and resources for parent outreach with this population.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS:

Best Practices for English Language Learners: Two new briefs, one from the Foundation of Child Development (FCD) and the other from Mathematica and First Five L.A., look at best practices for teaching ELLs. FCD's The [Promise of PreK-3rd: Promoting Academic Excellence for Dual Language Learners in Red Bank Public Schools](#) offers a case study of how Red Bank Public Schools in New Jersey offer a pre-kindergarten through third grade whole-child approach to educating Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in their community. Mathematica and First Five L.A. released which looks at instructional practices that support ELLs in the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) program.

Child Development Videos Now Available in Spanish and Portuguese: The Harvard University Center on the Developing Child has released several of its videos translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Videos include the Center's inBrief series translated into Spanish and its three-part video series, Core Concepts in Early Development, translated into Portuguese. View the videos [here](#).

EARLY LITERACY:

Pioneering Literacy in the Digital Wild West: Empowering Parents and Educators: The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, the New America Foundation, and the Joan Ganz Cooney Center have published a report that looks at a variety of technology-based products and technology-assisted programs designed to improve the early literacy skills of children from birth through age 8. The report provides information about what is currently available to parents, educators and children, as well as what may be missing in current uses of technology by children. Download the December 2012 [report](#), Pioneering Literacy in the Digital Wild West: Empowering Parents and Educators. To view a recording of a webinar of the findings from this report, go to [here](#). You will need to register to view the webinar.

CHILD HEALTH:

Promoting Good Health in Children: Learn more from ZERO TO THREE about policies and programs that support [good health](#): Physical Health, Social and Emotional Health, and Developmental Screening.

Building Blocks Offers Tips to Promote Health and Social-Emotional Well-Being Through Healthy Routines: One of the ways parents can promote social and emotional well-being in young children is by encouraging good habits such as healthy sleeping, eating, and physical activity. [Setting the stage](#) with these habits early can have long-term positive effects on a growing child's body and on children's capacity to learn. This series also includes [Helping children stay healthy in mind and body](#) and [Healthy Routines in the Classroom](#).

BIRTH TO THIRD GRADE LINKAGES:

The [School-Ready Child infographic](#), from ZERO TO THREE, illustrates the story about social and emotional readiness as a vital part of the school readiness conversation and helps make the case to policymakers that the path to school readiness, which begins at birth, relies on the development of social and emotional skills.

Research



Supporting Growth and Development of Babies in Child Care:

What Does the Research Say: Explores the research on the healthy growth and development of babies in child care, and the state child care licensing, subsidy policies, and quality initiatives that can increase the odds that babies and toddlers have positive early learning experiences. This research brief is part of Charting Progress for Babies in Child Care, a joint project of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and ZERO TO THREE. Click [here](#).

Early Math and The Achievement Gap: A child's ability to understand and manipulate sets of numbers in 1st grade predicts how well he or she will succeed in the math required both in secondary school and for day-to-day living, according to a study published in the current online edition of the journal PLOS One. Yet math tests in the early grades focus instead on how well and how quickly students can solve basic arithmetic problems, often using counting, a skill less connected to students' later math achievement, the study found. Read more [here](#).

Early Language and the Achievement Gap: Children who enter kindergarten with a small vocabulary don't get taught enough words—particularly, sophisticated academic words to close the achievement gap, according to the latest in a series of studies by Michigan early-learning experts. The findings suggest many districts could be at a disadvantage in meeting the increased requirements for vocabulary learning from the Common Core State Standards, said study co-author Susan B. Neuman, a professor in educational studies specializing in early-literacy development at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Read the [full article](#)

Educare Chicago Follow Up Study. In this issue of [Early Education and Development](#) read about the Ounce of Prevention Fund's Educare Chicago Follow Up Study, which tracks children from their time in early childhood through seventh grade. Results from the study demonstrate that Educare students outperform their classmates on standardized tests at 3rd grade.

Home Visiting Research from Healthy Families New York: Children whose families took part in a home-visiting program in their earliest years showed some positive benefits once they enrolled in school, compared with their peers who did not receive home visits, according to a recently-released study from Healthy Families New York, a home visitation program that enrolls about 5,600 families each year. Among the results: Children in the home-visited group were half as likely to repeat a grade as children who did not receive home visits. Read more [here](#).

Fidelity Measurement in Home Visiting: A [new report](#) from Chapin Hall, Mathematica, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services describes the fidelity measurement framework adopted by the cross-site evaluation team and early fidelity outcomes for 44 agencies implementing home visiting services. The report summarizes the extent to which implementing agencies achieved fidelity with respect to their chosen home visiting models in three key areas: home visitor and supervisory caseloads, service duration, and service dosage.

Part C Early Intervention Eligibility and Enrollment: An [article](#) recently published in Pediatrics compares estimates of the percentage of children younger than age 3 who are likely to be eligible for Part C early intervention services in each state and Washington, DC. Results show that states' eligibility criteria vary widely and many children who would qualify for services are not receiving them.

Response to Intervention Policy Paper: Three national organizations (the Division for Early Childhood/DEC, the National Association for the Education of Young Children/NAEYC, and the National Head Start Association/NHSA) have created a [joint paper](#) to promote a broader understanding and provide guidance on the relationship of Response to Intervention (RTI) frameworks to the unique contexts of early childhood programs.

What Works Clearinghouse on Social Skills and Children with Special Needs: Social skills training in early childhood can boost the social and emotional development of special needs children, according to a newly released [research review](#) by the federal What Works Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse found three high-quality studies (out of 46 reviewed) involving more than 100 children with disabilities in early-education programs that included social skills training. Students

who participated in social skills training improved in both their classroom behavior and assessments of their social and emotional development.

Missed Meals in Childhood and Adult Depression: A new study from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln shows that missed meals in childhood can be linked to experiencing pain and depression in adulthood. Read more [here](#).

Asthma Connections: A Columbia University research team released a new [study](#) reporting that children with higher levels of BPA (Plastics Chemical Bisphenol) at ages 3, 5 and 7 had increased odds of developing asthma between ages 5 and 12.

Workforce: Job satisfaction among public school principals and teachers has decreased in the past five years, with teacher satisfaction reaching its lowest levels in 25 years, according to the 29th annual MetLife Survey of the American Teacher. The findings come at a time when nearly every state around the country has adopted some sort of significant education reform in the past two years. Read more [here](#).

Housing and Child Health: A new [Policy Action Brief](#) from Children's HealthWatch examines the impact of housing on children's health. Analyzing survey results from 6,000 young children and their caregivers in Minneapolis, MN, the brief found that 67% of families were housing insecure.

Practice Tips

Did you know that even the youngest children are learning language skills? Babies respond to the sounds and the tone of our words. In fact, the special way in which we



talk with infants is known as parentese. This sing-song style we reserve for young children, or what we may think of as baby talk, with exaggerated sounds, shortened words and pauses in between words, helps babies be more attentive to the sounds we are making while learning the rules of grammar. So, even those "goo-goo, ga-ga" sounds we make are good for babies to hear!

Infants and toddlers learn vocabulary, a critical pre-reading skill, from the words they hear others say. By age two, they are acquiring about 8-10 words a day when they are exposed to them through reading and conversations. Jim Trelease has said, "If the child has never heard the word, the child will never say the word, and if you have neither heard it, nor said it, it's pretty tough to read it and to write it."

Investigate the impressive research by Hart and Risley that explains that it is the amount of talking that we do with children makes a difference in their school readiness and their success. Their work shows the difference in children's success from households with varying degrees of conversation. The results are staggering! Hart and Risley tell us, "The most important aspect of parent talk is its amount. Parents who just talk as they go about their daily activities expose their children to 1000-2000 words every hour. What children need is time, not tricks. The data show that the first 3 years of experience put in place a trajectory of vocabulary growth and the foundations of analytic and symbolic competencies that will make a lasting difference to how children perform in later years" (1999, pp. 192-193).

How does this relate to the Delaware Early Learning Foundations?

Check out:

Infant-Toddler: Receptive Language, LL 1-4

Expressive Language, LL 5-9

Preschool:

Receptive Communication, LL 1-36

Expressive Communication, LL 36-48

