

Strengthening Delaware's Quality Early Childhood System

Quality Early Learning is Important

- We know that **90% of brain development occurs by age five**
- Over 25,000 Delaware children, birth to five years old, **are from low-income families** – that's **40% of our children** at risk to the achievement gap appearing as early as nine months old
- High quality early learning yields *substantial benefits* for low-income children
 - Improving early literacy, language and math skills to **close the achievement gap**
 - **Increasing high school graduation** by 30%
 - **Increasing college attendance** by 50%
- Dr. James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics, estimates a **10% rate of return on investments** in high quality early education – in reduced health care, special education, incarceration costs, and increased productivity and tax revenues

We Are Reaching Delaware's At-Risk Children as Early as Possible

- **Reaching children with high needs:** 49% (7,355) of children with high needs in Delaware are enrolled in highly rated Stars programs
- **Improving quality of learning:** Over 74% (455) of Delaware early learning programs are voluntarily participating in Delaware Stars and receiving tiered reimbursement for increased quality standards
- **Identifying needs early:** More than 28,000 Delaware children have received screenings to identify developmental challenges and thousands more families have been linked to appropriate supports and services
- **Supporting the workforce:** Over 1,600 early childhood professionals have taken advantage of individual financial awards totaling more than \$4.6 million for their increased education and professional development—a significant support given that they typically make about half as much as Kindergarten teachers and do not have benefits

More is Needed – Delaware is applying proven strategies to improve quality for early learners, and the path forward is clear. **But there's much more to do.** Over the next two years, we must:

- Increase state funding to **sustain and accelerate the improvements already made**
- **Further strengthen quality standards** for early childhood services, and provide supports and incentives for providers to meet those standards
- Align the early childhood governance structure for **higher quality, more efficient delivery of services**

What You Can Do for Quality Early Learning in Delaware

Be Aware

Review Delaware's **Early Childhood Strategic Plan**

<http://www.greatstartsdelaware.com/resources/EarlyChildhoodStratPlan.pdf>

Know Delaware's Early Childhood Strategic **Plan Goals and Progress**

http://www.greatstartsdelaware.com/resources/OEL_Progress_Report.pdf

Participate in Delaware's **Early Childhood Council**

www.decc.delaware.gov

Discover Stars-rated programs in your community – and share with parents of young children

www.delawarestars.udel.edu

Sign up for **Early Learning E-news**

www.greatstartsdelaware.com

Engage with Young Children

Find fun activities to **support children's mental and physical development** by age

www.QT30DE.com

Access **early reading resources** and ideas for activities

<http://www.nemours.org/service/health/brightstart/parent.html>

Get Involved

Join a Readiness Team to support Kindergarten readiness in your community

<http://www.greatstartsdelaware.com/readiness.html>

Attend a meeting of the Delaware Early Childhood Council

www.decc.delaware.gov/meetings

Volunteer to read with young children or support a program of your choice

www.volunteerdelaware.org

www.volunteermatch.com www.donorschoose.org

Raise Your Voice

Join a focus group on the future of early learning in Delaware March 30-April 2, 2015

Find out more at www.greatstartsdelaware.com

Contact your elected leaders and let them know that you support quality early childhood development; tell them how early learning has helped your family or community

http://legis.delaware.gov/legislature.nsf/Lookup/Know_Your_Legislators