

Delaware Early Childhood Council



Ready Families +



Ready Early Care
& Education +

Ready Communities +



Ready Schools =

Ready Children



Report to the Interagency Resource Management Committee

December 2007

Dear Friends of Delaware Children:

The excellent work done in 2006 to expand **Early Success** continues to provide a comprehensive blueprint for the Council and our many partners' early childhood initiatives. To reflect the importance of these collaborations, this annual report to the Interagency Resource Management Committee contains reports from the many state-wide organizations that are working with us to achieve **Early Success: Delaware's Plan for Early Childhood**. In addition to these reports, the Council has created an **Early Success** "score card" to document five years of progress made in fulfilling our annual recommendations.

At a time when federal funds are static at best and state dollars are limited, it is a testament to the importance of the partnerships and collaborations outlined in this report that so much has been accomplished. The **Delaware Stars** pilot and **T.E.A.C.H.** scholarship program are two examples of innovations that have required a variety of funding sources and collaborative management. As you read through this report, please take note of the many organizations and individuals who have come together in support of the Council's mission to have **Ready Families, Ready Early Care and Education, Ready Communities, Ready Schools = Ready Children**. The Early Childhood Council thanks them all.

My personal thanks also to the Children's Caucus and its leadership - Liane Sorenson, Patti Blevins, Pam Maier, and Terry Schooley – and Melanie George Marshall for HB 126 that codified the Council under its new name, *The Delaware Early Childhood Council*. Other extraordinary partners are the United Way of Delaware, Nemours Health and Prevention Services, the Family and Workplace Connection – Evelyn Keating in particular – and Vision 2015. Each organization has helped in the creation and sustainability of programs that will continue to impact the quality of children's lives for years to come. In the Department of Education's Office of Early Care and Education, Janet Carter and Verna Thompson continue to provide invaluable resources and support to me and the Council.

Five years ago when Governor Minner formed the *Delaware Early Care and Education Council*, we were a group of twelve people with a vision of creating a child care system that would provide quality child care for all of Delaware's children from birth to age five. Since that time, our vision and mission have grown as have those who recognize the importance of the first five years in preparing children for school and for life. While much has been done, much more needs to be put into place in order to have a complete, sustainable, and well funded system. This is the Council's ultimate goal.

The Early Childhood Council dedicates this report to the providers of the services and to our public and private partners with deepest appreciation for all you are doing for children throughout Delaware.

Sincerely,



Ann D. Wick, Chair

Delaware Early Childhood Council

2007 Report to the Interagency Resource Management Committee

Our Vision

Delaware's Most Valuable Resource...

Young children – eager to learn, ready to succeed

By the year 2015, Delaware will have:

- **Ready children:** children who are physically and emotionally healthy with access to high quality early learning experiences
- **Ready families:** families with the knowledge and resources needed to successfully support their child's learning
- **Ready early care and education programs:** programs that safeguard and ensure the growth, development, and learning of children; staffed by teachers who are well prepared, well compensated, and well supported
- **Ready communities:** communities that embrace their role in supporting young children and their families
- **Ready schools:** schools that value and build upon the early learning experiences of children

Our Mission

The mission of the Delaware Early Care and Education Council is:

To promote the highest quality comprehensive early learning system for Delaware's young children and their families by providing leadership and advocacy to guide the system's development

DELAWARE EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL

Executive Summary of 2007 Report to the IRMC

Ready Children

Division of Public Health: Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

1. Funding through the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant to the Delaware Academy of the American Academy of Pediatrics (DE-AAP), families and pediatricians were surveyed last year to measure the awareness of the medical home concept and determine the need for education of how families could establish a medical home for their children.
2. The DE-AAP hosted provider trainings on newborn screening, cystic fibrous screenings, linking families to community resources, and family-centered care in each of the three counties for medical personnel who provide primary care to children birth to five.
3. The Delaware Medicaid, the ECCS grant, Nemours Health & Prevention Services, the Autism Society of Delaware, and Child Development Watch are collaborating on a statewide policy development pilot related to developmental screening of young children.

Division of Public Health: Oral Health

Two sessions were conducted in December 2003- the Oral Health Summit and again in June 2004- the Head Start Oral Health Forum. As a result of these sessions the Delaware Oral Health Coalition was formed. The coalition's membership includes key community local and public leaders that include the Head Start Association and Early Childcare Comprehensive Systems who are dedicated to ensuring education, increased awareness and access to oral health for the birth to five population.

United Way of Delaware Success By 6[®]

1. The first goal of Success By 6[®] is to improve the quality of early care and education. Success By 6[®] has chosen Delaware Stars, Delaware's quality rating and improvement system, as the means to achieve this goal and is assisting with fund raising and operating as the fiscal agent for Delaware Stars.
2. Success By 6[®] is beginning to develop its work on a second goal area: to help parents nurture their children's development.

Nemours Health and Prevention Services

1. In 2007, NHPS forged a partnership with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in Delaware to identify and implement best practices in nutrition for children under age 12. In consultation with the Delaware Director of CACFP, NHPS

developed *Best Practices for Healthy Eating: A Guide to Help Children Grow Up Healthy*.

2. The SNAP (State Nutrition Action Program) group of federally-funded food subsidy programs, which includes CACFP, WIC, Food Stamps, and others, has agreed to spread the *5-2-1-Almost None* "formula for a healthy lifestyle" across all of its programs, which combined serve more than 75,000 individuals in Delaware.
3. In the fall, NHPS debuted the *Healthy Habits for Life* curriculum guide for preschool teachers developed as a result of a two-year collaboration among NHPS, KidsHealth and Sesame Workshop, the creators of Sesame Street.
4. In 2007, NHPS continued to work with the four child care pilot sites, which combined serve approximately 750 children. These four sites have become champions for policies and practices that promote healthy eating and physical activity in early care and education settings and as a result, their staff will serve as faculty at the child care collaborative in February 2008.

Ready Families

Division of Public Health and University of Delaware Cooperative Extension

With funds provided by the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant, the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension family and human development specialist developed a family-friendly website that provides a coordinated source of parenting information and community resources available to parents.

Family Support Coordinating Council (FSCC)

1. FSCC co-sponsored focus groups with the UW statewide to establish program/funding priorities in the area of Strong Families/Strong Children.
2. The group is working with the Rodel Foundation and DOE on a task force to establish a common definition of "family involvement" that can be used by schools to guide their practices.
3. FSCC sponsored the recently conducted Parent Leadership and Parent/Practitioner Forums designed to enhance the involvement of parents in program planning and evaluation efforts.

Parents As Teachers (PAT)

1. Through the Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) grant, PAT will be able to extend PAT home visitation services to an additional 60-100 high risk families and/or families who will not be receiving out of home care before Kindergarten.
2. As part of the PIRC, Rodel will be holding an additional Delaware Parent Leadership Institute (DPLI) to support families in their role as leaders and advocates for their families. Families coming from early childhood settings will be provided with information and linked with parent leadership opportunities like the DPLI as their child progresses to kindergarten.

3. The Department will be supporting cross training of family support staff from a variety of early childhood programs and Kindergarten.

Delaware Family Network

The Delaware Family Network (DFN) is a new initiative combining several family projects, including the Delaware New Scripts Family Inclusion Project and the Parent Leadership/ Partnership Initiative.

Ready Early Care and Education

Delaware Stars for *Early Success*

1. In January 2007 fifteen programs representing a variety of settings and types of programs, geographical distribution, and ages of children served were invited to participate in the first phase of Delaware Stars. Significant improvements have been made by all programs. Six have moved up a Star Level, and several are on the verge of taking that step.
2. With input from the participating programs and the technical assistants, the Delaware Stars Design Committee have refined and improved the criteria for each star level, and the Delaware Stars Management Committee has been working to refine the management structure.
3. The plan for 2008 is to bring an additional 60 programs into the system over the course of the year at three set application times. Funding for 2008 is being provided by a public/private partnership including Delaware Business Roundtable, the United Way, state government, SVPDE, JPMorgan Chase, and others.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

1. In July 2007 we completed our third year of the program.
2. At the national T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Conference in April 2007, Delaware received an award for our T.E.A.C.H./Apprenticeship Partnership.
3. In 2007 there are 99 T.E.A.C.H. Scholars; 96 in an Early Childhood AA program, 2 in a Child Development Associate Credential, and one in the Early Childhood Directors Certificate Program (CDA). Since its start four years ago there have been 183 T.E.A.C.H. Scholars with two Scholar completing an Early Childhood AA, seven Scholars receiving CDA's, and one completing the Early Childhood Director Certificate.

Early Childhood Apprenticeship

Delaware has 140 apprentices in the Early Childhood Apprenticeship program, with 48 in New Castle County, 64 in Kent County, and 28 in Sussex County.

Social Venture Partners Delaware

1. Since its inception in 2003, Social Venture Partners Delaware (SVP) has give more than \$2 million toward the improvement of early education in Delaware primarily in Wilmington's inner city. To date SVP has given over 9,000 volunteer hours in pursuit of quality.
2. SVP has had a four-year partnership with the A. I. DuPont Hospital for Children. This partnership began by having residents from the behavioral management program in our centers once a week throughout the entire school year.
3. A resource book covering over 300 topics that have been addressed in the past four years such as eating issues, sleep problems and potty training has been written and distributed in all the early care classrooms in the centers in which SVP has worked.

Delaware First

1. To support the new child care center regulations that went into effect in January 2007, Delaware First has been engaged in providing formal review of qualifications for center-based practitioners. In 2007, the qualifications of 1,763 center-based practitioners have been reviewed; 1089 have been full qualified for a center position. Three hundred and twenty-nine have been fully qualified as Early Childhood Administrators.
2. Delaware First has partnered with The Family & Workplace Connection to offer Career Advisement services to centers and practitioners. Family & Workplace staff have visited 133 centers and assisted 1675 staff in career advisement and preparation for qualifications review since January 2007.
3. Delaware First is engaged in a strategic planning and management process to integrate early care and education professional development within the Department of Education K12 professional development system. This work will involve 35 State agency and community stakeholders.

RELATE (Relationships Empowering Learning and Affirming Teaching Excellence)

1. From October 2005 through September 2007, two groups of infant toddler teachers, totaling 19 people, piloted the Building Relationships curriculum.
2. In April and May, 2006 the director's training was conducted. Thirty individuals registered for the training with 21 completing all sessions.
3. The Infant-Toddler Early Learning Foundations were printed and disseminated in English. They were also translated and printed in Spanish with support of the project.
4. The training curriculum developed by RELATE will become a routine offering by Delaware First.

Office of Child Care Licensing

1. The Office of Child Care Licensing implemented revised *Delacare Rules for Early Care and Education and School Age Centers* on January 1, 2007. This marks the first update of Center Rules since 1988.

2. In 2007 the process of revising the Family and Large Family Child Care Requirements began. The goal is to have revised Family and Large Family Child Care Rules implemented in mid two-thousand and eight (2008).

Delaware AfterSchool Alliance (DEASA)

The DEASA Management Committee members and others are working together to: Create a long-term policy voice for afterschool programs, advocate for policies that support high quality programs, support the after school workforce, increase public awareness, build bridges between the public schools and community-based organizations for school-based or school-linked afterschool programs, and support family-centered practices.

Wilmington Early Care and Education Council

1. In 2007 newly developed WECEC Brochures, distributed to all Wilmington center and family childcare centers, and publicized the work of the committee in the areas of Public Will, Family Engagement, and Professional Development.
2. The Wilmington Teacher Resource Center, funded by WECEC, was available to child care providers and students studying Early Care and Education throughout the year.
3. WECEC awarded \$20,000 in scholarships in 2007, helping City providers meet licensing professional development requirements.
4. On May 5, 2007, WECEC co-sponsored a Provider Appreciation Day and EXPO to provide an additional venue for assisting with professional development and resource development, while simultaneously thanking early childhood professionals in the City for their hard work and dedication working with young children and families.

Ready Communities

Vision 2015 Progress Report / Update

1. In late 2006, Vision 2015 announced that one of the six fundamental components of its plan to create a world-class public education system was to invest in high-quality early childhood education for those with the greatest need.
2. To build momentum for state-wide policy changes in early care services, the Delaware Business Roundtable is investing \$250,000 to support the participation of 15 early care and education programs in Delaware Stars for Early Success.

Delaware Children's Campaign

1. The Delaware Children's Campaign was born in 2007 after two years of planning by Delaware activists and citizens seeking new solutions to the challenges facing children.
2. In early March the Campaign's poll of 600 likely Delaware voters was finalized. Data gained from the poll helped the organization determine its goals: reducing the infant

mortality rate, making quality pre-K education more affordable, and providing more services to young adults leaving the foster care system.

Delaware Legislative Kids Caucus

In January the Kids Caucus began to draw up a mission statement and started work on a legislative agenda, which included:

1. Increasing Purchase of Care subsidy reimbursement rate to 75% of market rate
2. Creating a "STARS" tiered reimbursement program for agencies receiving Purchase of Care
3. Expanding the Children's Health Insurance Program, based on the Pennsylvania law
4. Codifying the Early Care and Education Council
5. Creating a Child Poverty Task Force

Early Learning Coalition

1. The Coalition distributed the results of the 2007 Market Rate Study, revealing a decrease in the rate percentage since 2005. The FY 2008 budget was the first in two years where POC rates were not increased through the Joint Finance Committee's budget process.
2. Early Care and Education Advocacy Day was a huge success, bringing to the forefront the issues surrounding funding and quality experiences.
3. Members of the Coalition presented the data to the Kids Caucus and testified at Department and Joint Finance Committee budget hearings.

DELAWARE EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL

2007 RECOMMENDATIONS

SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Engage partners to develop a strategic plan to create a comprehensive early childhood system based on *Early Success: Delaware's Plan for Early Childhood*.
2. Convene a subcommittee charged with developing a system to map the progress of *Early Success*.

READY CHILDREN

1. Support the development of a comprehensive approach in Early Childhood Mental Health services for behavior problems for families and early childhood programs involve Nemours Health and Prevention Services and Wesley College's Child Care Health Consultant program

READY FAMILIES

1. Codify the Family Support Coordinating Council (FSCC) to ensure its sustainability
2. Align the goals of the FSCC and the connection to Early Success
3. Expand efforts to ensure that families participate in Delaware Early Childhood Council

READY PROGRAMS

1. Expand Delaware Stars infrastructure and funding to allow more programs to participate
2. Support the implementation of the recommendations of the Integrated Professional Development task force currently working on connecting the early childhood and K12 professional development systems
3. Support legislation to ensure that child care reimbursement rates (Purchase of Care) are increased to reflect the bi-annual market rate study.
4. Create a subcommittee of the Early Childhood Council to study child care workforce compensation and to make recommendation, based on best practices from other states, on how to improve child care compensation and benefits.
5. Begin planning for a follow-up of the 2002 Child Care Base Line Quality Study.
6. Support the adoption of the Office of Child Care Licensing Family and Large Family Child Care rule revisions.
7. Work with the Office of Child Care Licensing to ensure that licensing rules and regulations are reviewed and revised every five years.

8. Explore using nationally recommended tool for identifying appropriate caseloads for OCCL licensors
9. Explore the development of a system to coordinate all early childhood technical assistant and trainers

READY COMMUNITIES

1. Support the legislative initiatives of the Kids Caucus.
2. Explore obtaining professional guidance to create a consistent universally understood message about the importance of the first five years in preparing children for school and for life.

READY SCHOOLS

1. Encourage the Department of Education to form a committee to develop Ready Schools strategies, the tasks should include:
 - Catalogue what districts are doing to connect to early childhood
 - Existing partnerships between school districts and community early childhood programs and families including 21st Century Learning Centers
 - Partnerships between Head Start & ECAPS to work with school districts with children
2. Target efforts to include Family Child Care in quality initiatives

The Early Childhood Council has developed partnerships with many organizations and agencies to begin implementation of Early Success. Each has committed to being part of building a high quality early childhood system for Delaware's children. In the spirit of these partnerships the Council asked each of its partners to contribute to this annual report.

The partners' work often encompasses a number of Early Success goals and objectives.

Ready Children

By the year 2015, all of Delaware's young children will have available the supports they require to ensure that they are physically, socially and emotionally healthy. Early learning opportunities will be available to every child at home and in programs that are developmentally appropriate and individualized. It is important to ensure that every child's development is progressing. Child assessment for early identification of developmental challenges or disabling conditions is essential. Early intervention is critical for remediation of developmental delays and readiness for school.

Division of Public Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

The implementation of Early Success: Delaware's Plan for Early Childhood is much like piecing together a very intricate quilt. The frame has been established and now the Council and its partners are busy at work on various sections ensuring that linkages are created along the way to complete a comprehensive cover for all of Delaware's young children and their families.

According to the National Survey of Children's Health, Delaware's children are performing on par with the national average. However, there is room for improvement. Asthma, obesity, hypertension and diabetes are becoming common ailments in pediatric care. The number of uninsured children is on the rise in all three counties for the first time in nearly a decade. The lack of pediatric services in the lower counties of Delaware poses barriers to appropriate access to care. These issues, along with the usual childhood diseases and injuries, present new challenges for families and providers.

The Council has made significant strides in laying the foundation for the Ready Children implementation of Early Success. With funding from the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant to the Delaware Academy of the American Academy of Pediatrics (DE-AAP), families and pediatricians were surveyed last year to measure their awareness of the medical home concept and to determine the need for education about how families could establish a medical home for their children. Statewide approximately 100 primary care providers and families were surveyed as to their knowledge of the medical home framework. The majority of providers reported that they serve as a medical home for young children. The majority of families reported that they wanted their health and child care providers to be primary sources of information related to child health and community resources.

Additionally, the DE-AAP hosted provider training on newborn screening, cystic fibrous screenings, linking families to community resources, and family-centered care in each of the three counties for medical personnel who provide primary care to children birth to five. The results of the training evaluations demonstrate an ongoing need for increased awareness of child health issues, emerging best practices and policy development. In the coming year, the DE-AAP with additional funding from the ECCS grant will address with community providers the importance of developmental screenings, the integration of early mental health screenings in community practices, and oral health education. These seminars are opened to pediatricians, family physicians, nurses, and child care providers in order to ensure that the widest audience possible has access to increased awareness of the health issues and the opportunity strengthen community resources to better serve families of young children.

In another unique collaboration, the Delaware Medicaid program, the ECCS grant, Nemours Health & Prevention Services, the Autism Society of Delaware, and Child Development Watch are collaborating on a statewide policy development pilot related to developmental screening of young children. Delaware was one of twenty states to receive the Assuring Better Child Health & Development Screening Academy, a technical assistance grant from the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP). This project is designed to assist states to pilot the use of a standardized developmental screening tool within well-child visits, incorporate the use of this best practice within the Medicaid policy, and replicate the use of the screening tool statewide among community physicians. The pilot project is underway and expected recommendations for policy improvements and a replication strategy is expected by December 2008.

Contributed By Norma Everett, Division of Public Health

**Division of Public Health
Oral Health**

The Delaware Division of Public Health's Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services (BOHDS) have two very specific goals that drive the mission of the program. First, is to improve access to care for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Second, is to decrease the burden of oral disease in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) populations through promotion of oral health and primary prevention. The Oral Health program is dedicated to these missions and works daily to build the infrastructure and capacity of oral health care in Delaware. Oral health is an important part of overall health and that is the message that we strive to infuse into all of Delaware's populations, especially the underserved populations.

The BOHDS is currently facilitating a myriad of statewide programs to provide access to oral health care, promote awareness and education and to integrate service delivery of oral health care services to the children and their families. Strategies were developed via two vital sessions conducted in December 2003- the Oral Health Summit and again in June 2004- the Head Start Oral Health Forum. From the work completed during these venues the Delaware Oral Health Coalition was formed. The Coalition, a newly formed entity, proposes to be the driving force in Delaware to advocate for and ensure optimal oral health for all Delawareans. The coalition's membership includes key community local and public leaders that include the Head Start Association and Early Childcare Comprehensive Systems who are dedicated to ensuring education, increased awareness and access to oral health for the birth to five population.

In the coming year, oral health education and outreach will be targeting children birth to five and their families, medical providers and early care professionals. The goal is to ensure all children establish a dental home, as well as receive routine oral health assessments at well child visits.

Contributed by Helen Arthur, Oral Health Program Coordinator

United Way of Delaware Success By 6®

The vision of Success By 6® is that every child in Delaware will enter school ready to succeed. Toward that end, Success By 6® is committed to being a collaborative partner in the building of an early childhood system that will engage and support the efforts of all early childhood stakeholders.

The first goal of Success By 6® is to improve the quality of early care and education. Success By 6® has chosen Delaware Stars, Delaware's quality rating and improvement system, as the means to achieve this goal. United Way's work on Delaware Stars includes serving as a member of the public/private management team with specific responsibilities related to leading the coordination of private resource development, serving as fiscal agent for private funds, and providing leadership on building public will in support of greater public and private investment in early childhood care and education.

Looking ahead, Success By 6® is beginning to develop its work on a second goal area: to help parents nurture their children's development. Initial explorations have identified families' (and caregivers') need for support around children's social emotional development as it relates to challenging behaviors. Also under consideration, the distribution of informational materials that help parents use everyday activities to support their child's learning and development.

Ultimately, the work of Success By 6® will also address a third goal area: maternal and child health.

"It Matters Today . . . Because It *Will* Matter Tomorrow."

Contributed by Janet Umble, United Way of Delaware

Nemours Health and Prevention Services

NHPS' work in the child care sector supports child care providers in promoting healthy behaviors through policy and standards, provider training, curricula and toolkit development, and implementation assistance. NHPS' policy goals in this sector focus on requirements that increase physical activity, decrease screen time, increase access to fruits and vegetables, and decrease access to high calorie/low nutrient foods.

Policy Changes in the Child Care Sector

In 2007, NHPS forged a partnership with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in Delaware to identify and implement best practices in nutrition for children under age 12. In consultation with the Delaware Director of CACFP, NHPS developed

Best Practices for Healthy Eating: A Guide to Help Children Grow Up Healthy. This guide on best practices in nutrition for young children was used during CACFP's training sessions in August and September to encourage the 150 CACFP sponsors to help child care providers make changes to promote healthy eating and physical activity in their programs. This new partnership has the potential to result in a change in the food offerings for the 31,000 low-income children participating in programs at organizations that receive subsidies from CACFP. In addition, all children in licensed child care will be impacted as a result of the Office of Child Care Licensing's (OCCL) mandate that all licensed providers follow the CACFP requirements.

In addition, the SNAP (State Nutrition Action Program) group of federally-funded food subsidy programs, which includes CACFP, WIC, Food Stamps, and others, has agreed to spread the *5-2-1-Almost None* "formula for a healthy lifestyle" across all of its programs, which combined serve more than 75,000 individuals in Delaware. NHPS plans to continue working with SNAP to make policy changes to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

NHPS is serving on the Office of Child Care Licensing's task force focused on revising the regulations that govern the almost 1,400 family-based child care providers in Delaware. In 2006, NHPS helped OCCL develop regulations, effective January 1, 2007, that required more physical activity and established limits on the amount of television and/or computer time available to the approximately 38,500 children in child care center based programs.

Tools and Training

In the fall, NHPS debuted the *Healthy Habits for Life* curriculum guide for preschool teachers developed as a result of a two-year collaboration involving NHPS, KidsHealth and Sesame Workshop, the creators of Sesame Street. This resource helps preschool teachers throughout Delaware promote healthy lifestyles to their students and to family members through take-home activities. On October 3rd, as part of the social marketing launch, NHPS held an event in Wilmington to announce the arrival and availability of this new tool. Following the public event, more than 40 child care program directors, representing 2,000 pre-schoolers, participated in an orientation and training workshop on the curriculum activity guides during which they learned about the importance of teaching children about healthy eating and how to use the DVD component of the kit to help motivate children to be physically active. Additional training events were held at the DAEYC Annual Conference and at the Sussex County "Enhancing A Child's World" Conference at which an additional 250 providers were trained in the use of the kit. Copies of this activity guide will continue to be disseminated through various training events in 2008. The Teacher's Guide is also available the GrowUpHealthy.org web site.

Child Care Pilot Sites

In 2007, NHPS continued to work with the four child care pilot sites (St. Michael's School, Telamon, Delaware Early Childhood Center, and Delaware Technical College' Early Childhood Center at the Owens Campus) which combined serve approximately 750 children. The four centers have become champions for policies and practices that promote healthy eating and physical activity in early care and education settings. As a result, they will serve as faculty at the child care collaborative in February 2008. These child care sites presented at the June meeting of the Early Childhood Council (formerly

the Early Care and Education Council) to share information on the policy and practice changes they have implemented to improve children's health and to teach children and their parents about *5-2-1-Almost None*. These changes include banning candy on site, prohibiting the sale of unhealthy food for fundraisers, establishing fresh fruit and vegetable markets where children can "shop" for healthy foods to take home, and conducting field days during which children demonstrate their physical skills and enjoy a healthy picnic with their families.

Contributed by Dorothy Onn, Nemours Health and Prevention Services

Birth to Three Early Intervention System Department of Health and Social Services

With funds provided by the Birth to Three Early Intervention System (DHSS) and in partnership with the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, the *Growing Together Portfolio* is distributed to parents of babies born in Delaware and surrounding hospitals, as well as through the Home Visiting Program. The *Growing Together Portfolio* provides parents with developmental information from birth through five years of age, health and safety reminders, activities to encourage language and literacy development, and a list of resources providing help to new parents. The material is also available in Spanish.

This year the Birth to Three Early Intervention System developed a *Guide to Promoting Inclusion in Early Care and Education* that is available to early care and education providers. This guide offers suggestions for activities and resources for including children with disabilities in early care and education programs. Copies are available through the Birth to Three web site at <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dms/epqc/birth3/directry.html>. This guide is a section of a more comprehensive Guide to the Growing Together Portfolio for Early Care and Education, whose purpose is to assist early care and education providers in identifying children who may have developmental delays, and offering resources and information to early care and education providers and to families.

Contributed by Rosanne Griff-Cabelli, Division of Management Services, DHSS

Ready Families

By the year 2015, families of young children in Delaware will have the support and education needed to support their children's healthy growth, development, learning and readiness for school. Families are significant partners in creating a culturally competent comprehensive and integrated early learning system. Families are the primary influence on their children. All other components of the early learning system must support the families of young children to be successful.

Division of Public Health and University of Delaware Cooperative Extension

With funds provided by the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant, the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension family and human development specialist developed a family-friendly website that provides a coordinated source of parenting information and community resources available to parents.

- In consultation with key members of the ECCS Parent Education and Family Support sub-committee, a list was developed of basic contacts that will be most useful – and not overwhelming – to parents
- The completed website is available at: <http://ag.udel.edu/extension/fam/Help.htm>
Many of the listed contacts also allow parents to link to the web pages of that organization.
 - In addition to the list of basic contacts, parents can link to research based information which is written and formatted in ways to attract low-literacy readers as well as very busy parents. The content highlights information and strategies identified by researchers as those most crucial to helping children thrive – promoting healthy growth and development, preparing children for school success, reinforcing positive parenting behaviors and affirming healthy interpersonal and family relationships. When publicly launched, the *eXtension Just in Time Parenting* website at <http://www.extension.org/parenting> will include these resources:
 - Age-paced newsletters that can be downloaded and printed
 - More than 250 Frequently Asked Parenting Questions, which have been reviewed by experts throughout the land-grant system.
 - An *Ask the Expert* component expands the options for parents
- Web site progress has been shared with members of the ECCS Steering Committee, the ECCS Parent Education and Family Support sub-committee, and the Family Support Coordinating Council.

Contributed by Pat Nelson, UD Cooperative Extension

Family Support Coordinating Council

The Family Support Coordinating Council (FSCC) is a multi-disciplinary, collaborative, public-private council that includes family members and professionals who are committed to assuring that families have the knowledge and resources they need to successfully support their children’s learning and wellbeing. The Council’s goal is to assure that evidence-based, well-planned and well-implemented programs and services are available to all Delaware’s families, in areas that include: home visiting, respite care, community based family resource centers, and parent education and training.

During the past year the Council has worked collaboratively with the following groups to accomplish the activities listed:

Early Childhood Council – The ECEC and the FSCC are working together to accomplish the goals articulated in the *Early Success: Delaware’s Early Childhood Plan* document. The FSCC provided leadership in establishing the goals and objectives for “Ready Families” and is currently working with its partners towards realizing these goals.

United Way of Delaware – The FSCC co-sponsored focus groups with the UW statewide to establish program/funding priorities in the area of Strong Families/Strong Children.

Rodel Foundation/Department of Education – The FSCC is working with Rodel and DOE on a task force to establish a common definition of “family involvement” that can be used by schools to guide their practices.

Parent Leaders – The FSCC sponsored the recently conducted Parent Leadership and Parent/Practitioner Forums designed to enhance the involvement of parents in program planning and evaluation efforts.

Contributed by Karen DeRasmo, Chair of FSCC

Parents As Teachers

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is funded by the state to provide home-based parent education services to first time, at-risk families beginning at pregnancy and through their child's third birthday. There are four components to the PAT model: personal home visits by a nationally certified parent educator, group meetings, health and development screening, and linkages to resources. In addition, PAT offers Stay and Play sites throughout the state that are open to all young children and families. These sites provide socialization, recreation, developmentally appropriate activities and child development information to families.

The Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC) recently received a Parent Information and Resource Center grant (PIRC). PAT is a partner in that grant along with the Rodel Foundation. Through the PIRC grant PAT will be able to extend PAT home visitation services to an additional 60-100 high risk families and/or families who will not be receiving out of home care before Kindergarten. The PAT parent educator will provide parent education and will actively support the child and their family's transition into their out of home placement whether it is an early care and education setting or Kindergarten.

As part of the PIRC, Rodel will be holding an additional Delaware Parent Leadership Institute (DPLI) to support families in their role as leaders and advocates for their families. Families coming from early childhood settings will be provided with information and linked with parent leadership opportunities like the DPLI as their child progresses to kindergarten.

The Department will be supporting cross training of family support staff from a variety of early childhood programs and Kindergarten, to increase their knowledge of community services and to support collaboration and communication to benefit families.

Contributed by Connie Moran, Department of Education

Delaware Family Network

The Delaware Family Network (DFN) is a new initiative combining several family projects, including the Delaware New Scripts Family Inclusion Project and the Parent Leadership/ Partnership Initiative. The Delaware Family Network recognizes the value of every family and believes that each has something vital to contribute. DFN's vision is "strengthening Delaware families—the heart of what we are about." The Delaware Family Network is a family led organization with the mission to:

- Connect Delaware families to each other; to resources and information; and to education and opportunities to foster healthy families, train professionals, and cultivate parent leaders;
- Foster and facilitate parent and family-centered services: informal family support, resource information, and education;

- Empower Delaware families to foster and build upon their unique strengths, allowing families to achieve the best possible outcomes for themselves and their communities;
- Build and celebrate the contributions of Delaware families to the systems, agencies and organizations that support children and families.

The Delaware Family Network has developed a PATH to plan for its short and long term goals. DFN has recruited more than 50 families at the Parent Leadership Forum in May, 2007 who expressed an interest in the network. These families will be invited to convene early in 2008. Parent to parent support has been identified as an interest and need of involved families. Training in this area is being designed. The Delaware Family Network plans to incorporate as a family-led non-profit organization and will be seeking funds to accomplish its lofty goals.

Contributed by Janet Cornwell, Delaware Early Childhood Center

Ready Early Care and Education

By the year 2015, all of Delaware's families will have access to early care and education programs that will offer families a safe learning environment that will ensure positive outcomes for children. Early care and education programs will be staffed professionals education and skilled in supporting the growth, development and learning of young children. Programs will be regulated to ensure basic safeguards for children, both physical and developmental.

Delaware Stars for Early Success

Delaware has joined other states across the nation in focusing on improving the **QUALITY** of early care and education – launching Delaware Stars for *Early Success*, a quality rating and improvement system. Such a system is a method used to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings.

Delaware Stars is a public-private partnership, with partners being represented on a Stars Management Team. Partners include Delaware Early Childhood Council, Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Office of Child Care Licensing, United Way Success by Six®, and Family & Workplace Connection. Delaware Stars is currently staffed by the Delaware Stars Manager.

Why did Delaware do this? Because we know that the early years are critical to children's development, particularly brain development, and that quality early learning makes a difference, playing a significant role in children's school readiness. Quality early learning also increases success in school, graduation rates, and workforce readiness. And, it reduces special education and grade repetition, crime rates, and teenage pregnancy.

So... late in 2006 Delaware developed its quality rating and improvement system, with the help of national experts, and recruited a small number of programs to participate in Phase 1 – a year to test the system. In January 2007 fifteen programs began their

journey through Delaware Stars, having been invited to participate as a result of their involvement in focus groups conducted several years earlier. Programs were selected by a committee of representatives from the Delaware Stars advisory group, with the intention of having those programs represent several categories – a variety of settings/types of programs, geographical distribution, and ages of children served. In addition, the selection process focused on including programs who serve low-income children and families. Delaware Stars Phase 1 programs include two family child care programs, one large family child care, and twelve centers, two of which are school-age only programs. All three counties in Delaware are represented. Several programs serve children with special needs.

Delaware Stars is a five-level system that builds on licensing rules, setting increasingly higher standards at each level in the following areas:

- Qualifications and Professional Development
- Learning Environment and Curriculum
- Family and Community Partnerships
- Management and Administration

Programs work, with financial help and technical assistance, to move up in that system. Delaware Stars offers four types of awards and/or grants to support a program's quality improvement effort and to reward that program as they achieve higher levels in the system. Each program was assigned a technical assistant, whose help has been a significant contribution to program success. Grants have funded, at least, thirty staff members to meet professional development qualifications.

Being part of Phase 1 required a great deal of commitment from these programs. With the help of their technical assistants, they have made significant improvements in their programs – six have moved up a Star Level, and several are on the verge of taking that step. In addition, programs and technical assistants were charged with helping the system learn what worked well and what changes need to be made as Stars moves forward. They attended quarterly meetings at which they provided feedback about the system as part of an informal, process evaluation. There has been a great deal of enthusiasm for Delaware Stars, in addition to some frustrations. Stars certainly learned that staff qualifications and required training standards present a challenge to programs. Programs also requested that Stars work to simplify and clarify the process and paperwork.

Delaware Stars is preparing to move into Phase 2, a second year of testing the system with a larger group of programs. United Way has been engaged in a fundraising campaign and state government has committed funds to support Stars. The plan for 2008 is to bring an additional 60 programs into the system over the course of the year at three set application times. In preparation for this phase Delaware Stars has made revisions to the standards and incorporated suggestions for improving the system. During 2008 Stars will also engage an evaluation expert to plan for a formal evaluation in 2009.

Delaware Stars for *Early Success* can safely say that 2007 has been a positive, productive year in which programs have made improvements in quality and the system has responded to suggestions to make Stars work even better in 2008.

Contributed by Candace DeCsipkes, Delaware Stars for Early Success

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) is an Associate Degree scholarship program for the Early Childhood workforce. It focuses on increased education, compensation and retention for individuals working in child care centers or family child care homes. T.E.A.C.H. is administered in Delaware by The Family & Workplace Connection (FWC), the licensee.

In July 2007 we completed our third year of the program. As required by Child Care Services Association (the national agency that administers the license for T.E.A.C.H.), we completed a self study project. We received a high score on our self study and renewed our license for two years. At the national T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Conference in April 2007, Delaware received an award for our T.E.A.C.H./Apprenticeship Partnership.

The number of scholarship recipients and sponsors increased significantly with the Fall 2007 semester at Delaware Technical and Community College. This is directly related to the new staff qualifications which are part of the new licensing regulations which became effective in January 2007. Career advisement has also assisted in recruiting T.E.A.C.H. recipients and sponsors. T.E.A.C.H. also provides a CDA and Early Childhood Director's Certificate scholarship.

Contributed by Debbie Taylor, Delaware T.E.A.C.H.

Early Childhood Apprenticeship

The apprentice learning at the side of the expert-watching, receiving instruction, practicing, getting feedback-is the oldest form of skill development in the world. It is the most effective.

Modern Registered Apprenticeship training combines carefully defined training under the tutelage of a skilled mentor at the work site supplemented with related technical or theoretical instruction. All Registered Apprentice programs operate under a set of rigorous standards that ensure high quality, fairness and accessibility.

Registered Apprenticeship requires a minimum of 144 clock hours per year of education that is directly related to the occupation. All required topics have been selected to follow the requirements of Child Development Associate Credentials.

Examples of topics are:

- Introduction to early Childhood
- Understanding Children's Behavior
- Child Development
- Health Issues in Child Care
- Creating an environment for Learning
- Safety Issues in Child Care

Delaware has 140 apprentices in the Early Childhood Apprenticeship program, with 48 in New Castle County, 64 in Kent County, and 28 in Sussex County.

Contributed by John Viola, Department of Labor

Social Venture Partners Delaware

Since its inception in 2003, Social Venture Partners Delaware (SVP DE) has give more than \$2 million toward the improvement of early education in Delaware and primarily in Wilmington's inner city. We have invested in programs such as East Side Charter Schools pre-kindergarten, West Center City's summer program and curriculum enrichment and the Latin American Community Center's early development program.

SVP DE is different from most philanthropic organizations because we pair our financial commitment with the expertise of our donors – in many cases adding an in-kind value of monetary investment of five times. Our donors give their time in a multitude of ways including legal expertise, strategic planning, financial advice and practical help as well as mentoring and tutoring. To date we have given over 9,000 volunteer hours in our pursuit of quality.

As well as being involved in building the capacity of our supported schools in Wilmington, SVP DE invests in strategic supporting programs such as the Delaware Early Care and Education Council, T.E.A.C.H., The Delaware Parent Leadership Program and Delaware Stars. We feel strongly that the only way ultimately improve education statewide is to support programs that will touch all early care centers in Delaware.

Lastly, but not least by any means, we have had a four-year partnership with the A. I. DuPont Hospital for Children. This partnership began by having residents from the behavioral management program in our centers once a week throughout the entire school year. The residents worked with teachers and parents on early detection of learning differences as well as behavior modification resulting in better teaching and learning environments. An outcropping of this relationship has been a resource book that is in the centers and in all of their early care classrooms. This book covers over 300 topics that have been addressed in the past four years such as eating issues, sleep problems and potty training.

We continue to partner with organizations that share our goals in providing quality early education to all children in the state of Delaware.

Contributed by Martha Bolling, President and CEO, SPV DE

Delaware First

Since January 2007, Delaware First has been engaged in providing formal review of qualifications for center-based practitioners. This effort supports the new regulations for early care and school-age centers that require all staff to meet specific criteria for pre-service education and experience. During the first nine months of 2007, Delaware First processed 1435 requests for formal review of qualifications and approved 912 applicants for the following positions:

Early Childhood Intern	38
Early Childhood Assistant Teacher	108
Early Childhood Teacher	316
Early Childhood Curriculum Coordinator	14

Early Childhood Administrator	280
School Age Intern	6
School Age Site Assistant	58
School Age Site Coordinator	27
School Age Administrator	32

In order to facilitate the process for formal review of qualifications, Delaware First has partnered with The Family & Workplace Connection to offer Career Advisement services to centers and practitioners. This service offers an opportunity for centers to have onsite technical assistance in preparing applications and informal, individual review of staff education, training and experience in preparation for the formal review. Family & Workplace staff have visited 133 centers and assisted 1675 staff in career advisement and preparation for qualifications review since January 2007.

Delaware First is engaged in a strategic planning and management process to integrate early care and education professional development within the Department of Education K12 professional development system. This work will involve 35 State agency and community stakeholders in a committee process to explore the needs and current system of professional development for early care and education and to create alignment with existing work being done in the K12 system. This work will be conducted by the committee during the early part of 2008 with a report and recommendations ready by May 2008. This project is a sub-committee of the P-20 Council.

Contributed by Kathy Wilson, Department of Education

RELATE

RELATE (Relationships Empowering Learning and Affirming Teaching Excellence) was designed as a two year project in response to a request for proposals to develop training for directors and a curriculum for teachers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers. Also, completion and printing of the Infant Toddler Early Learning Foundations was included in the funding. RELATE was in operation from October 2005 through September 2007. During that time two groups of infant toddler teachers, totaling 19 people, piloted the Building Relationships curriculum. The curriculum has been evaluation, revised, and completed, with trainers' manuals and training boxes to be kept in each county resource center. Two trainings of trainers for the course has been conducted. The goals of the course are that student will increase their understanding that:

- Infants and toddlers are unique individuals born wired to learn, bringing with them their own agendas to learning experiences.
- Infants and toddlers learn best when they are engaged in responsive, respectful reciprocal relationships with caregiving adults and peers.
- Infants and toddlers learn best in safe, healthy, accessible child care environments when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
- Infants and toddlers develop best when their families and child care programs are engaged in mutually supportive partnerships based on respect for each other's cultures, needs, and interests.

In April and May, 2006 the director's training was conducted. Thirty individuals registered for the training with 21 completing all sessions. Objectives of the training included:

- Directors, as leaders, will increase skills necessary to build and implement a vision for quality infant-toddler programs that incorporate parent, staff, and the child care community as active partners.
- Directors will increase their knowledge and skills for program evaluation, self-assessment and action planning utilizing the *Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale* (ITERS-R).
- Directors will increase their knowledge of the Delaware Infant-Toddler Early Learning Foundations as a tool for effectively supporting staff with curriculum development and relationship-based program planning.
- Directors will report increased knowledge of DE First Teacher Competencies which assist them in developing job descriptions, hiring qualified staff and evaluating job performance.

Finally, the Infant-Toddler Early Learning Foundations were printed and disseminated in English. They were also translated and printed in Spanish with support of the project.

Contributed by Janet Cornwell, Delaware Early Childhood Center

Office of Child Care Licensing

The Office of Child Care Licensing implemented revised *Delacare Rules for Early Care and Education and School Age Centers* on January 1, 2007. This marks the first update of Center Rules since 1988. Within the Rules are embedded best practices in playground safety, safe sleep, and transportation of children. Higher qualifications for Staff working in Centers, while not yet reaching the long term goal of each teacher holding an Associate's degree at a minimum, is a step in the right direction and was all that was possible to achieve at this time without a disruption of the early care and education system in Delaware. To bring the early care and education system to where it should be in meeting the quality standards identified through research more resources for training and educational opportunities and the public will that will strongly support the move to quality are needed.

To help Centers be successful in coming into compliance with the revised *Delacare Rules* the Office of Child Care Licensing provided twenty (20) three hour seminars across the State between January and June. Additional seminars are planned for November for Directors/Administrators. The focus of these is on the role of the Director's/Administrator's responsibilities for ensuring that staff become fully qualified and the importance of the professional development plan in moving the Center toward quality. Child Care Licensing Specialists continue to provide daily consultation services to Centers in interpreting the Rules and how to meet the requirements.

The Family & Workplace Connection, at the request of Delaware First, Department of Education, has been providing career advisement services to the Center Early Care and Education workforce. These on-site services provide information on resources available for training and education and technical assistance for utilizing strategies to meet staff qualifications. Family and Workplace Connection, Delaware First and the Office of Child

Care Licensing work closely together to coordinate assistance services to Centers that will support them in qualifying Staff under the new *Delacare Rules*.

In 2007 the process of revising the Family and Large Family Child Care Requirements began. Every licensed provider was surveyed to obtain input. The National Child Care Information Center conducted four (4) "Focus Groups" among providers with one in each County. A Task Force of Providers, subject experts and representatives of the Office of Child Care Licensing have been meeting since August. Proposed new Requirements will be put forth for public comment in November two-thousand and seven (2007). The goal is to have revised Family and Large Family Child Care Rules implemented in mid two-thousand and eight (2008).

New Castle County Head Start and the Office of Child Care Licensing have settled on terms for a Memorandum of Agreement. Under this Agreement Head Start would offer mentoring services to Providers identified by the Office of Child Care Licensing. Services would include consultation on policy and form development, classroom environments, working with families, and child behavioral issues. Providers would also have access to Head Start training and education sessions. This type of service has been something the Providers have been requesting and marks a first in Delaware.

Contributed by Patti Quinn, Office of Child Care Licensing

Delaware AfterSchool Alliance (DEASA)

DEASA was formally created in 2005, culminating five years of work by a core group of afterschool advocates, who had met to work on policy, quality and sustainability issues. Their work began during the summer of 2000, when a delegation from Delaware was invited to attend the first Mott Foundation AfterSchool Summit in Florida. The delegation included public agencies, schools, and private organizations. Returning to Delaware, the delegation began meeting on a regular basis. Although afterschool advocates had worked on funding and quality issues as opportunities arose, the delegation was energized by the Mott summit. In 2000, Governor Thomas Carper worked with this group to organize and host an AfterSchool Summit. Participants included school superintendents, principals, judges, clergy, parents and afterschool practitioners. Since then DEASA membership has solidified its resolve to create a Network in Delaware. The progress made by DEASA has culminated in Delaware receiving a Mott Foundation grant in October 2006.

The Delaware AfterSchool Alliance operates under the umbrella of The Family and Workplace Connection and is governed by both a steering and management committee. The Management Committee is comprised of representatives from: Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Office of Child Care Licensing, University of Delaware, 4H Cooperative Extension Service, Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware, YMCA of Delaware, United Way, and The Family and Workplace Connection. These committee members and others will work together to: Create a long-term policy voice for afterschool programs, advocate for policies that support high quality programs, support the after school workforce, increase public awareness, build bridges between the public schools and community-based organizations for school-based or school-linked afterschool programs, and support family-centered practices. The Alliance strives for the day when every community supports all of its children and their families by providing

access to quality afterschool programs designed to promote the positive well-being of the whole child.

Contributed by David Hilyard, Delaware AfterSchool Alliance

Wilmington Early Care and Education Council

The Wilmington Early Care and Education Council (WECEC) worked diligently this year to support the many child care providers in the City of Wilmington. In 2007, one of the goals was marketing the WECEC Council. The logo, “Little Kids, BIG Plans” symbolizes the Council’s dedication to advocate and increase awareness of early childhood in the City. Newly developed WECEC Brochures, distributed to all Wilmington center and family childcare centers, and publicized the work of the committee in the areas of Public Will, Family Engagement, and Professional Development. The logo was also prominently displayed on the new WECEC Website www.wecec.org.

The Wilmington Teacher Resource Center, funded by WECEC, was available to child care providers and students studying Early Care and Education throughout the year. Career Counselors at the Resource Center assisted professionals in evaluating their qualifications under the new Delaware child care licensing regulations.

WECEC awarded \$20,000 in scholarships in 2007, helping City providers meet licensing professional development requirements. On May 5, 2007, WECEC co-sponsored a Provider Appreciation Day and EXPO to provide an additional venue for assisting with professional development and resource development, while simultaneously thanking early childhood professionals in the City for their hard work and dedication working with young children and families. Other sponsors included the Division of Social Services, the Early Childhood Assistant Program, the Head Start Collaboration Project, Lessons Learned Educational Enrichment Program, Parents as Teachers, Delaware Department of Education, Early Care and Education Office, Services for Children With Disabilities, Nemours Health and Prevention, the Office of Child Care Licensing, PNC Bank, Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children, Delaware Head Start Association, Pearson Digital, and United Way Success by Six. 235 child care providers registered for the EXPO and DSS provided money to sponsor all of the participants that attended the event.

WECEC has a number of goals for next year that include identifying strategies to advocate for child care providers and families in Wilmington, strengthening the relationship with the City Council, and developing policies to increase the Council’s sustainability and influence in the City.

Contributed by the WECEC Executive Committee

Ready Communities

By the year 2015, Delaware citizenry will understand the importance of the children’s growth, development and learning during the first five years and be willing to support and invest in creating an early childhood system. The early childhood system will be a durable, normalized component of the state budget, corporate investments, and community giving. Public will, governance and finance together create a community that is willing and prepared to support the early childhood system. Communities will work

together to design and build localized solutions to support their young children and families.

Vision 2015

In October, 2006, a group of education and business leaders, public officials, and citizens released Vision 2015, Delaware's plan to create a world-class public education system. This public-private collaboration has gained momentum over the past year as the focus shifted from planning to implementation.

In order to accelerate several statewide policy changes recommended by Vision 2015, Governor Minner established the Leadership for Education Achievement in Delaware (LEAD) Committee. The Committee—representing public, private, and civic sectors—will focus on Delaware's public education funding generation, allocation, and efficiency, as well as the development of a "performance dashboard" to measure and report on progress in each school and district, and the state as a whole.

To put into practice all that's possible in Delaware schools, a Vision Network of four districts and two charter schools from across the state this fall began to implement key recommendations of Vision 2015.

One of the six fundamental components of Vision 2015 is to invest in high-quality early childhood education for those with the greatest need. To that end, the Governor included \$3.9 million in her FY 2008 budget recommendation for programs aligned with Vision 2015, which included funding for quality early childhood education. Legislation was also introduced to implement the Delaware Stars for Early Success quality rating and improvement system, as specified in Vision 2015.

The accomplishments of the last year would not have been possible without the investment of nearly \$3.3 million by members of the Delaware business community. Generous additional funding and support were provided by the Rodel Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the University of Delaware, and the Delaware Department of Education. To build momentum for state-wide policy changes in early care services, the Delaware Business Roundtable invested \$250,000 to support the participation of 15 early care centers in Delaware Stars for Early Success.

In the coming year, Vision 2015 will build on these accomplishments and promote the transformational changes necessary to ensure the success of each and every Delaware student.

Contributed by Madeleine Bayard, Rodel Foundation on behalf of the Vision 2015 Implementation Team

Delaware Children's Campaign

The Delaware Children's Campaign was born in 2007 after two years of planning by Delaware activists and citizens seeking new solutions to the challenges facing children. Mark Eichler joined the organization as its first Executive Director in late January and immediately began efforts to raise the profile of children's issues among citizens and policy makers alike. In early March the Campaign's poll of 600 likely Delaware voters was finalized. Now available online at www.dechildrenscampaign.org, the poll helped

the organization determine its goals: reducing the infant mortality rate, making quality pre-K education more affordable, and providing more services to young adults leaving the foster care system. Over the past several months Mark has crisscrossed the state sharing the poll's findings and reaching out to the community of advocates and citizens who share these concerns.

To date, much of the Delaware Children's Campaign's work has been dedicated to raising awareness of opportunities for policy change, developing coalitions and building the new organization's infrastructure. Vital to this effort has been Grace Bebee, a 20+ year veteran of Delaware's nonprofit community, who was brought on as Deputy Campaign Director in June. With the pieces now largely in place, including offices in the Community Service Building in Wilmington, the Delaware Children's Campaign looks forward to its first birthday with big plans for the future.

Contributed by Mark Eichler, Delaware Children's Campaign

Delaware Legislative Kids Caucus Yearly Report 2007

The 2007 Kids Caucus, a group formed to improve the lives of children throughout Delaware, was co-chaired this year by Senators Blevins and Sorenson, and Representatives Maier, Marshall and Schooley. Meetings of the Kids Caucus were generally held every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 12 noon to 1:15pm. The dates included January 17th, March 2nd, March 14th, April 4th, April 25th, May 16th, and June 13th, along with a press conference held on March 29th.

In January the Kids Caucus began to draw up a mission statement and started work on a legislative agenda, which included:

- Increasing Purchase of Care subsidy reimbursement rate to 75% of market rate
- Creating a "STARS" tiered reimbursement program for agencies receiving Purchase of Care
- Expanding the Children's Health Insurance Program, based on the Pennsylvania law
- Codifying the Early Care and Education Council
- Creating a Child Poverty Task Force

The Caucus also decided that having speakers come in to address the members would be a way to learn about specific issues and would provide a forum for questions and discussions.

On Friday, March 2, 2007, the Kids Caucus held a retreat at the Delaware Technical and Community College – Stanton Campus, in order to organize ideas, develop a plan of action, and to develop a suggested list of guest speakers. During the meeting, Representative Schooley provided some information that would soon be issued in the Kids Count Fact Book including an increase in the number of children in Delaware living in poverty, an increase in the number of children living without health insurance, and a rise in teenage crime.

On March 29, 2007, the Kids Caucus held a press conference to unveil its legislative agenda. Coverage was extensive, including CBS 3 in Philadelphia, the News Journal, the Delaware State News and several radio stations.

At the April 4, 2007 Kids Caucus meeting, Ann Wick, Chair of the Delaware Early Care and Education Council and Evelyn Keating, Provider Services Director for the Family & Workplace Connection, presented information on Delaware Stars for Early Success, a quality rating and improvement system. They expressed the importance of setting program standards, competencies for the workforce, and early learning guidelines for curriculum standards. They shared information on the early care and education workforce: average age, education level, hourly wage and the participation rate of this workforce in Medicaid. They also spoke about the positive societal impacts that can be gained by investing in children's education before they reach Kindergarten and, therefore, the importance of funding child care subsidy reimbursement rates at a fair level so that programs which serve low income children and their families can achieve quality.

On April 25, 2007 representatives from the Child Protection Accountability Commission were the guest speakers. In attendance were Mike Cochran, chair of the Commission, Tania Culley, the Child Advocate and Angela Fowler. The speakers gave an overview of two legislative initiatives that they had drafted. The bills proposed to reduce the caseloads for the State's DFS workers, and proposed additional services to children who are about to age out of foster care. The members of the Kids Caucus agreed to add these bills to their legislative agenda.

On May 16, 2007, the Kids Caucus guest speakers were Debbie Chang, George Meldrum and John Hollis of Nemours Health and Prevention Services. They gave an overview of their program, which helps children to lead healthier lives by concentrating efforts on childhood obesity and child mental health.

The Kids Caucus met on June 13, 2007 for the final time before the end of session. During this meeting the group was addressed by Mark Eichler and Al Snyder from the Delaware Children's Campaign (DCC). Mr. Eichler gave some background on the mission of the DCC, which is to promote children's issues through a grassroots-style campaign. Their focus is to help mothers have healthy babies, to broaden opportunities for early care and learning, and to prepare foster children for the transition to adulthood.

Members of the caucus decided that a meeting over the summer, as well as a fall retreat, should be held to plan out next session's agenda and to continue work on any bills that remain in committee. The summer meeting has been scheduled for August 16, 2007, while the fall retreat date is still to be determined. The following is a list of recent bills that were sponsored and /or endorsed by the Kids Caucus, along with the current status of each bill as of the close of session on June 30th, 2007:

- Implementing Health Care Coverage for All Delaware Children (HB 128) – The bill was voted out of the House Health & Human Development Committee and awaits action in the House. The bill has a fiscal note.
- Establishing a Task Force to Reduce Child Poverty (HCR 16) – The resolution was voted out of the House Health & Human Development Committee and awaits action in the House.

- Obtaining Dental Care for All Pregnant Women Receiving Medicaid (HB 123) – The bill is in the House Appropriations Committee.
- Establishing Minimum Reimbursement Rates for Purchase of Care (SB 66) – The bill is in the Senate Finance Committee.
- Implementing a Tiered Reimbursement System to Promote Child Care Quality (SB 65) – the Bill is in the Senate Children, Youth & Families Committee.
- Formalizing the Current Delaware Early Care and Education Council (HB 126) – Signed by the Governor.
- Formalizing the Family Support Coordinating Council (HB 129) – The bill is in the Senate Children, Youth & Families Committee.
- Reducing the Caseload Standards of DFS Caseworkers (SB 113) – The bill has passed both the House and the Senate and is awaiting the Governor's signature
- Creating a Procedure for Extended Jurisdiction for Youth in Foster Case Turning 18 (SB 103) – The bill is in the Senate Finance Committee.

In its first full year of work, the Kids Caucus has endorsed and passed several important pieces of legislation, raised awareness on many of the important issues affecting children, and brought policymakers together to discuss topics of great importance to Delaware's children and families. The Kids Caucus ended the 2007 Legislative Year with a renewed sense of purpose to stand up for those who most need a voice in the State Legislature.

Contributed by Senators Blevins and Sorenson and Representatives Maier, Marshall and Schooley

Early Learning Coalition

2007 was a very busy year for the Coalition. We began by organizing a diverse group of early and school-age care and education providers, board members and advocates to testify at the Joint Finance Hearings regarding Purchase of Care (POC) reimbursement rates. There were four new members of the Joint Finance Committee, requiring Coalition members to spend much of the year educating the Committee on the issues surrounding POC. The Coalition distributed the results of the 2007 Market Rate Study, revealing a decrease in the rate percentage since 2005. The FY 2008 budget was the first in two years where POC rates were not increased through the Joint Finance Committee's budget process.

Early Care and Education Advocacy Day was a huge success, bringing to the forefront the issues surrounding funding and quality experiences. In addition to the General Assembly recognizing early care and education professionals, Ann Wick was presented with a Tribute from the General Assembly in recognition of her years of leadership and dedication to young children. Members of the Coalition presented the data to the Kids Caucus on the quality, economic impact, POC and workforce data. Coalition members attended the Kids Caucus press conference, unveiling their policy agenda and eight bills related to young children's health and education. Members of the Coalition have tracked and supported this legislation in committee meetings and were present when Governor Minner signed the bill to codify the Early Childhood Council.

Contributed by Evelyn Keating, Family & Workplace Connection

Delaware Early Childhood Council Score Card

Our First Five Years.....

Over the past five years, the Council has provided oversight and recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, and Interagency Resource Management Committee on the implementation of Early Success. At this juncture, the Council has reviewed the progress on their recommendations. The arrows represent the progress made on each recommendation.

Key:

- ↑ *Progress has been made*
- ↔ *Progress has not been made or no action was taken on the recommendation*
- ↓ *Progress has been inconsistent or negligible*
-  *Completed*

Ready Children

↑	ABCD Grant: a program to include developmental screenings at well-child visits
↑	Develop early learning standards
↔	Adapt the early learning standards for use by families
↑	Support children's social and emotional development by supporting Partners in Excellence (PIE)

Ready Families

↑	Reduce child abuse and neglect through the Strengthening Families in Early Care and Education program
↑	Support family and child care partnerships through the Delaware Stars standards
↔	Ensure all families with young children receive home visiting services
↑	Provide web-based information for families regarding early childhood programs
↔	Formally create the Family Support Coordination Council

Ready Early Care and Education Programs

↑	Implement a quality rating and improvement system, Delaware Stars for Early Success
	Conduct cost analysis of the proposed child care center rules
	Adopt revised child care center rules
↑	Revise family and large family child care rules
↓	Increase child care subsidy reimbursement, Purchase of Care
	Create child care subsidy task force

↻	Establish a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship program in Delaware
↻	Move Delaware First to the Department of Education
↔	Establish a ECE professional development board
↓	Improve personal care and hygiene in child care programs
↻	Continue Early Childhood Apprenticeship program beyond the federal grant period
↔	Establish benefit program for early childhood workforce

Ready Communities

↻	Early Care and Education Situation Analysis written
↑	Increase the public awareness of and commitment to early childhood issues: Social Venture Partners Delaware, United Way Success By 6®, Vision 2015, and the Children's Campaign
↑	Step Up to Early Childhood Advocacy Days at Legislative Hall
↔	Conduct cost benefit analysis of early care and education to State of Delaware
↑	Legislative commitment to early childhood issues established by the creation of the Kids' Caucus
↻	Establish a Delaware Early Childhood Council website
↑	Establish Councils in each county and City of Wilmington; established in Wilmington and Sussex
↑	Establish an collaboration committed to school-age programs; Delaware AfterSchool Alliance

Ready Schools

↔	Early childhood and schools share professional development experiences
↔	Establish transition programs between early childhood programs and schools
↔	Ensure school entry screening are aligned with the Early Learning Foundations
↔	Support schools to reach out to the families and early childhood programs in their communities

Delaware Early Childhood Council 2007

Members

Ann Wick, Chair

Dayna Moore
Lessons Learned Education Enrichment Center

Barbara Sheppard
Delaware Technical and Community College

Linda Walls
Little Angels Center

Sandra Cohee
Appoquinimink Early Childhood Center

Mindy Clifton
Women and the Law Section
Delaware State Bar Association

David W. Arthurs
Parent Advocate

Beth Inter
Delaware Head Start Association

Sue McColgan
St. Johns Lutheran Early Learning Center

Carol Owens, MD
Division of Public Health

William Douglas Tynan, Ph.D., ABPP
Nemours Health and Prevention Services

Advisors

Sally Coonin
Governor's Office

Rep. Melanie Marshall
Delaware House of Representatives

Janet Cornwell, Ph.D
Delaware Early Childhood Center

Evelyn Keating
The Family & Workplace Connection

Dorothy Onn
Nemours Health and Prevention Services

Debbie Amsden
University Of Delaware

Karen DeRasmo
Prevent Child Abuse Delaware

Sherlynn Aurelio
Christiana School District

Martha Bolling
Social Venture Partners Delaware

Candace DeCsipkes
Delaware Stars for Early Success

Janet Umble
United Way of Delaware

Madeleine Bayard
Rodel Foundation

Terri Murphy
Parent and Community Representative

Carlina Hall
Little House Child Care

Ex-Officio Members

Patricia Quinn
Children's Department

Kathy Wilson
Delaware Department of Education

Eulinda DiPietro
Division of Social Services

Norma Everett
Division of Public Health

Rosanne Griff-Cabelli
Division of Management Services

Staff Support

Janet Carter
Verna Thompson
Abby L. Betts
Early Care and Education Office
Department of Education

For information about the Interagency Resource Management Committee or the Delaware Early Care and Education Council please contact:

Janet Carter (jcarter@doe.k12.de.us) or

Verna Thompson (vthompson@doe.k12.de.us)

Delaware Early Care and Education Office
Delaware Department of Education
Townsend Building
401 Federal Street, Suite #2
Dover, DE 19901
302-735-4210

The Delaware Early Care and Education Office is an interagency office funded by the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Health and Social Services and Education.

Photos by Karen Kaler

The State of Delaware is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and/or age.