

HELP DELAWARE FAMILIES ACCESS CHILD CARE!

Significant Need for Additional State Investments

We thank the governor and General Assembly for recent investments in pre-k and child care, and there are still significant child care needs today in Delaware:

- **Limited access to early care and education:** Only 1 in 5 children under age 5 are served in publicly funded child care
- **Many vulnerable families cannot afford care:** Delaware serves families below 135-200% of the Federal Poverty Level (below \$60,000 for a family of 4); our neighboring states and most other states serve families up to 250% of FPL and beyond
- **Lack of access and cost to families are holding back our economy:** In a recent survey of Delaware parents, nearly all (97%) said they would increase their hours at work, take a job, start a business, or go back to school if they could find affordable child care
- **Child care providers continue to operate with limited openings** due to low rates of reimbursement, which contribute to staffing shortages. These already-low rates are **30% lower in Kent and Sussex counties** despite the same costs.

Policymakers: Invest Today

1. **Increase eligibility** so more families can access care: Expand pre-k (ECAP) and Purchase of Care eligibility to serve families up to **at least 250% of the Federal Poverty Level** (making about 5,000 children more eligible)
2. **Increase Purchase of Care rates**
 - a. **Support programs by covering costs** so they can open more classrooms and increase staff pay and benefits
 - b. **Pay a statewide rate** for child care so all counties are paid at the New Castle County rate
 - c. **Increase special education rates** to cover costs of supporting children's needs
3. **Pay providers based on enrollment** to stabilize their finances when children are sick or families are away, helping to cover fixed costs like staff

Tell lawmakers today: bit.ly/FY25ChildCareAsk

Contact your legislator: legis.delaware.gov/FindMyLegislator

Join Advocacy Day in Dover, May 16: deaeyc.org/advocacy



/FirstStatePreK



#InvestEarlyDE

Learn more at: www.firststateprek.com

TELL YOUR LEGISLATOR TO SUPPORT THESE BILLS!

- **SB 294 will build the capacity of the Office of Child Care Licensing by providing equitable compensation of licensing specialists, on par with other Delaware Department of Education employees.**
 - SB 295 will:
 - Reduce turnover and the current litany of open positions—and improve recruitment
 - Provide more capacity to investigate complaints made against child care centers. Today, the process can take weeks, putting children at risk while complaints are being considered.
- **SJR 7 directs the Office of Child Care Licensing to modernize the child care licensing system, including an electronic system for providers. The system needs to be implemented within the next two years.**
 - This bill will:
 - Allow licensing specialists to respond more quickly to complaints
 - Provide better data for making decisions
 - Make recordkeeping easier for providers and licensing specialists
- **SB 295 will strengthen the process for child care programs to obtain job applicants' child care employment history, increasing hiring safeguards.**
 - The bill mandates updates to the reporting process between providers and the Department of Labor, requiring:
 - Information about engagement in prohibited acts
 - Concerns the previous employers would have about the employee providing care to children