

Policy Domain Framework

Domain I: Quality ECE Settings

**A Product of the Policy Matters Project
National Center for Children and Families
Teachers College, Columbia University**

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***POLICY FEATURES AND LEVELS FOR DOMAIN I:
QUALITY ECE SETTINGS***

SUB-DOMAIN I.A: REGULATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level
I.A.1 Group Size: Regulated, center-based early childhood education programs must meet maximum group size standards	1. State requires group size to be at or below the NAEYC recommendation ¹ for all children birth to age 5 2. State requires group size to be at or below the NAEYC recommendation for some age groups, but not for all 3. State does not require group size to be at or below the NAEYC recommendation for any age group	Delaware OCCL Center Regulations Effective January 1, 2011 A licensee shall follow the following minimum staff/child ratios and maximum group sizes for each age group listed during normal daily activities at the Center as indicated in the table below: Age of Child Minimum Staff/Child Ratio Maximum Group Size Infant Under 1 Year 1:4 8 Young Toddler 1 to 2 Years 1:6 12 Older Toddler 2 to 3 Years 1:8 16 Young Preschool Child 3 to 4 Years 1:10 20 Older Preschool Child 4 to 5 Years or older 1:12 24 (Or not yet in K* or first grade which ever comes first) School-Age Child 5 Years or older 1:15 30 (Or at least in K* or first grade which ever comes first) * K - Kindergarten A. A Center licensed before the effective date <i>* For mixed age groups the staff/child ratio and group size are for the age of the youngest child present.</i>	http://delcode.delaware.gov/title31/c003/sc03/index.shtml http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_new_rules.shtml	# 2	Stay at 2 It would be a financial burden for programs to adjust to decreased staff child ratios, especially for programs now struggling to meet teacher staff qualifications. Licensing regulations have just been changed for the first time since 1987.
			Notes: 2 age groups meet NAEYC standards: Infants and Young Toddlers NOTES ON POLICY LEVEL: There are age differences for the Age Groups descriptors for Delaware OCCL center regulations and NAEYC.		
I.A.2 Ratios: Regulated, center-based early childhood	1) State requires child-to-teacher ratio to be at or below the NAEYC	NAEYC TEACHER / CHILD RATIOS <i>Infants</i> Group Size 6 8	http://delcode.delaware.gov/title31/c003/sc03/index.shtml http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_new_rules.shtml	# 3 Notes:	Stay at 3

<p>education programs must meet minimum teacher-to-child ratio standards</p>	<p>recommendation² for all children birth to age 5</p> <p>2) State requires child-to-teacher ratio to be at or below the NAEYC recommendation for some age groups, but not for all</p> <p>3) State does not require child-to-teacher ratio to be at or below the NAEYC recommendation for any age group</p>	<p>Birth to 15 months 1:3 1:4</p> <p>Toddler / Twos(12-36)</p> <p>Group Size 6 8 10 12</p> <p>12 to 28 months 1:3 1:4 1:4 1:4</p> <p>21 to 36 months 1:4 1:5 1:6</p> <p>Preschool</p> <p>Group Size 12 14 16 18</p> <p>(30-48 months 1:6 1:7 1:8 1:9</p> <p>Group size 16 18 20</p> <p>4-year olds 1:8 1:9 1:10</p> <p>5-year-olds 1:8 1:9 1:10</p> <p>Kindergarten 1:10 1:11 1:12</p>	<p>Notes: Delaware not meeting NAEYC standards for any age group.</p> <p>NOTES ON POLICY LEVELS: Staff child ratios were close, but affected by different age groups.</p>		<p>Programs would have to reduce number of classrooms</p> <p>Programs might have to raise rates.</p> <p>OR raise POC rates</p>
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NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level

I.A.3 Family Child	1. Regulation is	Family Child Care Regulations Page 7	#	# 1	Stay at 1
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<p>Care Providers: Regulation is required for family child care providers</p>	<p>required for the care of 2 or more children in a private home (except for those in the care of an immediate family member such as a parent, guardian, step-parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, or sister)</p> <p>2. Regulation is required when 3 or more children are cared for in a private home by anyone other than the parents or guardians on a regular basis</p> <p>3. Regulation is required when 4 or more children are cared for in a private home by anyone other than the parents or guardians on a regular basis</p> <p>4. Regulation is required when 5 or more children are cared for in a private home by anyone other than the parents or guardians on a regular basis</p> <p>5. Regulation is not required for homes caring for 5</p>	<p>3. Family Child Care is a licensed child care service provided for part of a twenty-four (24) hour day, offered by a person who advertises or holds himself or herself out as conducting such a service on a regular basis, unattended by parent or guardian, and receives compensation for the service. This person has in custody or control one (1) to a maximum of six (6) children preschool-age or younger who live at and/or are present at the Family Child Care Home. In addition to the children preschool-age or younger, this person may also have custody or control of one (1) to a maximum of three (3) school-age children who do not live at the Family Child Care Home but are present only for before and after school, and/or during school holidays, and/or school vacation during the summer. All of these children are provided care, education, protection, supervision or guidance in the person's private home. This does not include a child care service provided exclusively to relatives as defined by these Rules.</p> <p>Exclusions: #5 Relative care and Nannies.</p> <p>http://delcode.delaware.gov/title31/c003/sc03/index.shtml</p> <p>http://http://kids.delaware.gov/docs/occl_FC_C_January2009_v3.doc/kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_new_rules.shtml</p>	<p>Notes Nanny care needs further investigation.</p>	<p>Notes:</p>	<p>We support further study on – Relative Care</p>
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NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level
I.A.4 Exemptions: State does not allow exemptions from child care center regulations ³	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) State requires all center-based programs providing care on a regular basis to meet all regulation requirements 2) State permits exemptions from some elements of 	<p>The following facilities that operate for less than twenty-four (24) hours per day shall be exempt from licensure under these rules:</p> <p>A. Camps permitted or exempted by the Division of Public Health;</p> <p>B. Summer schools or classes for religious instruction conducted by religious institutions during summer months for periods not to exceed four (4) weeks;</p>	<p>http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_new_rules.shtml#</p> <p>#5 Page 9</p> <p>http://delcode.delaware.gov/title31/c003/sc03/index.shtml</p> <p>Delaware Code Title 31, Part 1, Chapter 3, Subchapter III, Subsection 344 (d).</p>	# 3 Notes:	<p>#2</p> <p>All programs operating would need to follow basic health and safety regulations.</p> <p>All programs would be</p>

<p>PRIORITY AREA</p>	<p>licensing for centers, however, no exemptions are made for basic health and safety regulations for any types of programs (e.g. religious programs, part-day programs, school-based programs)</p> <p>3) State allows exemptions from all elements of licensing</p>	<p>C. Programs established in connection with a religious institution, a business, or recreation center, in which children are provided care for brief periods of time, while parents/guardians are on the premises, are readily accessible at all times on an on-call basis and are able to resume control of the child immediately;</p> <p>D. Programs that offer activities for children over the age of six (6) who attend at their own discretion on an "open door" basis, where there is no compensation, and where there is no agreement, written or implied, between the program and the parent(s)/guardian(s) for the program to assume responsibility for the care of the child;</p> <p>E. Programs that offer care on an ad hoc, sporadic and isolated basis in order to meet an emergency or special need, or</p> <p>F. Any public or private school that provides regular and thorough instruction through at least the sixth (6th) grade in the subjects prescribed for the schools of the State, in a manner suitable to children of the same age and stage of advancement, and that reports to the State Board of Education pursuant to Delaware Code, Title 14, Chapter 27, Subchapter I, Subsection 2704. This exclusion shall include all programs operated by such schools and shall also include preschool education programs for handicapped persons as defined by Delaware Code, Title 14, Chapter 31, Subchapter I, Subsection 3101 (4).</p> <p>http://delcode.delaware.gov/title31/c003/s c03/index.shtml</p> <p>(d) This section shall not apply to any institution, agency, association or organization under state ownership and control, nor shall it apply to any maternity ward of a general hospital. (Code 1915, § 1004A; 30 Del. Laws, c. 64; 38 Del. Laws, c. 63, § 3; Code 1935, § 1119; 31 Del. C. 1953, §</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Programs run by public and private schools that include children to grade three and have preschool programs are exempt from licensing regulations IF they provide services in a "manner suitable to children of the age"...</p>		<p>required to be licensed except programs operating for short time such as religious bible camps that run for one week</p> <p>To change this policy: Would need to amend DE Child Care Act</p> <p>Presently, there is no provision for OCCL to act on noncompliance to licensing regulations.</p> <p>Expanding # of programs be licensed For basic health and safety 150/1.</p> <p>There would be a Fiscal note attached: there would need to hire more OCCL licensing specialists.</p>
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<p>I.A.5 Enforcement: State requires appropriate enforcement of regulations for</p>	<p>1.State mandates and provides adequate funding for regulation enforcement visits to each child care center and family child care</p>	<p>Visits are mandated on a yearly basis. Caseload standards are set by Del. Code at 150/1 and funded at that level. TITLE 31 Welfare</p>	<p>#http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_new_rules.shtml #http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_resources.shtml</p>	<p># 2 Notes:</p>	<p># 1 Fiscal note would have to be attached. OCCL would need more staff for increased visits.</p>
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<p>ECE providers⁴</p> <p>PRIORITY AREA</p>	<p>home at least two times per year</p> <p>2. State mandates and provides adequate funding for visits to all child care centers and family child care homes at least once a year</p> <p>3. State mandates, but does not provide adequate funding, for visits to all child care centers and family child care homes at least two times per year</p> <p>4.State mandates, but does not provide adequate funding, for visits to all child care centers and family child care homes at least once a year.</p> <p>5. State does not mandate visits to all child care centers and family child care homes at least once a year</p>	<p>In General CHAPTER 3. CHILD WELFARE</p> <p>Subchapter III. The Delaware Child Care Act</p> <p>§ 341. Short title.</p> <p>The Office of Child Care Licensing has the responsibility to ensure that applicants seeking to provide child care services have met the requirements of The Delaware Child Care Act and DELACARE Rules prior to the issuance of a license. Monitoring of each Licensed Provider continues throughout the entire period of licensure and findings are documented in the Provider record. Monitoring includes: site visits to conduct a review of compliance with DELACARE Rules, investigations of complaints made against a Provider or to follow-up on tips from the public or reports from other agencies or organizations of possible violations of DELACARE Rules. These reports may come from a variety of sources such as law enforcement, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Probation.</p>	<p>Notes:</p>		
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NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level
I.A.6 Consistent Regulation Requirements: State regulations transcend program	1. State has a consistent set of regulations that apply to all programs,	Notes Preschools, Head Starts and ECAPS and child care centers all meet the same requirements except those that are operated by public schools	http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl_new_rules.shtml#Delaware Code Title 31, Part 1, Chapter 3, Subchapter III, Subsection 344 (d).	# 2 Notes:	Keep at 2

funding	<p>irrespective of program funding source.</p> <p>2. State has a consistent set of regulations for at least two programs OR has process to grant waivers for conflicting regulations</p> <p>3. State does not have a consistent set of regulations for different programs AND does not allow for waivers</p>	<p>Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers provide care, education, protection, supervision or guidance for thirteen (13) or more children, including children who are related to the operator. Service is provided on a regular basis for periods of less than twenty-four (24) hours per day, unattended by parent or guardian, and for compensation. This definition shall include but is not limited to full and part time - day care, child care, early care, early care and education, early childhood education, preschool, nursery school, extended care, extended day care, extended child care, independently operated kindergartens, before and/or after school care, school-age center, school-age care, out of school care, school's out care, school vacation/holiday care and summer child care.</p> <p>This does not apply to any institution, agency, association or organization under state ownership or control....</p> <p>Regulations only for programs required to be licensed - not for exempted programs.</p> <p>Not a process for granting variances - regulations is dependent on setting not funding source</p> <p>We do have exemptions</p> <p>Regulations only for programs required to be licensed - not for exempted programs.</p> <p>Not a process for granting waivers - regulations is dependent on setting not funding source</p>			<p>Needs clarification ????</p> <p>Funding source is not the issue in DE</p>
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SUB-DOMAIN I.B: INCENTIVES FOR QUALITY IN ECE PROGRAMS

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level
<p>I.B.1 Encourages Accreditation: State encourages program accreditation for all ECE providers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State requires accreditation for programs that are at least 50% publicly funded AND provides an incentive for program that are accredited 2. State requires accreditation for programs that are at least 50% publicly funded OR provides an incentive for accreditation 3. State encourages accreditation for 	<p>Stars is codified and has financial rewards for programs that are accredited and meet Star 5 - Accredited programs participate in the Alternative Pathway to Stars and have two years to attain Star 5. Stars is available to all programs.</p> <p>Stars is funded by state and private funds</p> <p>http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c030/index.shtml</p> <p>TITLE 14 Education Free Public Schools CHAPTER 30. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS</p> <p>http://www.familyandworkplace.org/DEStars/DEStarsmain.asp</p> <p>http://www.familyandworkplace.org/DEStars/DEStarsinfomain.asp#manuals</p>	#	# 2 Notes:	<p># 1</p> <p>Fiscal note required</p> <p>Research shows the importance of quality</p> <p>State needs to accept responsibility for funding DE Stars</p> <p>Stars needs to be linked to POC</p> <p>Stars rather than Accreditation</p>

	<p>programs AND provides an incentive for accreditation</p> <p>4. State encourages accreditation for programs OR provides an incentive for accreditation</p>	<p>Currently, a program can achieve Star Level 5 by meeting the Standards or through accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) or National AfterSchool Alliance (NAA)</p> <p>Stars gives monetary awards to programs who are NAEYC accredited and meet Star 5</p> <p>Stars Quality Improvement Grants Large ChildCare Center</p> <p>Moving to Star 2 Moving to Star 3 Moving to Star 4 Moving to Star 5</p> <p> \$3,500 \$10,000</p> <p>\$6,500 \$8,500</p> <p>Programs must be licensed to participate.</p>	<p>Notes:</p>		
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NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level
I.B.2 Quality Rating System: State uses a quality rating system to encourage quality enhancement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State has system of quality rating that includes at least 5 levels and is available to all providers in the state 2. State has system of quality rating that includes at least 5 levels and is only available to some providers 3. State has system of quality rating that includes at 	<p>Delaware has a Quality Rating System with state/private funding that is available to all child care centers and family child care providers.</p> <p>Open to all programs</p> <p>TITLE 14 Education Free Public Schools CHAPTER 30. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS § 3001. State Early Childhood Education Program.</p> <p>(d) The Department of Education shall establish Delaware Stars for Early Success, a quality rating and improvement system. Such rating system shall measure the level of quality of service provided by an early care and education program to safeguard and</p>	<p>#</p> <p>http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c030/index.shtml</p> <p>http://www.familyandworkplace.org/DEStars/DEStarsmain.asp</p>	<p># 1 Or 2 Notes:</p>	<p>Should be a True 1</p> <p>Fiscal note attached</p> <p>Fiscal constraints in place – need people to provide TA, quality improvement grants</p> <p>Need more state funds</p> <p>Too many private dollars</p>

	<p>least 3 levels and is available to all providers in the state</p> <p>4. State has system of quality rating that includes at least 3 levels and is only available to some providers in the state</p> <p>5. State has system of quality rating with fewer than 3 levels that is available to all providers in the state</p> <p>6. State has system of quality rating with fewer than 3 levels that is only available to some providers in the state</p> <p>7. State does not have a system of quality rating</p>	<p>ensure the growth, development, and learning of the children. The rating and improvement system shall:</p> <p>(1) Establish quality standards that build upon the child care licensing regulations and include quality standards in the categories of learning environment and curriculum, qualifications and professional development, family and community partnerships, and management and administration.</p> <p>(2) Ensure that the standards are based on research on best practice related to early care and education and that support children in being physically and emotionally healthy and eager to learn.</p> <p>(3) Inform families and other purchasers of early care and education about the level of quality in a simple and easy-to-understand manner.</p> <p>(4) Develop a quality improvement plan that informs participating early care and education programs of their strengths, weaknesses and strategies to improve the quality of their programs.</p> <p>(5) Target resources to support and recognize programs as they work on implementing improvement plans and increasing the quality of services to children and families.</p> <p>(6) Provide professional development and technical assistance to assist programs in accomplishing targeted improvements.</p> <p>(7) Establish public-private partnerships to implement and sustain the quality rating and improvement system including state agencies, higher education, adult education programs, early childhood organizations and community based agencies.</p> <p>(8) Evaluate Delaware Stars for Early Success to ensure continuous improvement of the system.</p> <p>Family and Workplace Connection Reaching for Quality Early Care and Education Delaware Stars is designed as a voluntary</p>	<p>Notes: Stars combines state and significant % of private funds.</p>		
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<p>I.B.3 Differential Reimbursement to Programs: Higher-quality care receives greater funding</p> <p>PRIORITY AREA</p>	<p>1. State financially rewards providers that are accredited or rated at the top of the quality rating system with an on-going increase in reimbursement payments of at least 25%</p> <p>2. State financially rewards providers that are accredited or rated at the top of the</p>	<p>Stars QRIS is codified but nothing in regulation about Purchase of Care not linked to quality - no increase in POC reimbursement for quality programs.</p> <p>TITLE 14 Education Free Public Schools CHAPTER 30. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS § 3001. State Early Childhood Education Program.</p> <p>(5) Target resources to support and recognize programs as they work on implementing improvement plans and increasing the quality</p>	<p>#</p> <p>http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c030/index.shtml</p>	<p>#5</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p># 1</p> <p>We need all children to have quality opportunities in the early years</p> <p>Incentive to accept more POC children and participate in Stars</p>
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	<p>quality rating system with an on-going increase in reimbursement payments that are between 15 and 24%</p> <p>3. State financially rewards providers that are accredited or rated at the top of the quality rating system with an on-going increase in reimbursement payments of less than 15%</p> <p>4. State financially rewards providers that are accredited or rated at the top of the quality rating system with a one-time payment</p> <p>5. State does not financially reward providers that are accredited or rated at the top of the quality rating system</p>	<p>of services to children and families. Rewards for accredited programs - now Alternative Pathway for accredited programs - have two years to meet Star level 5 then get quality award for Star 5</p>	<p>Notes:</p>		
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NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level

<p>I.B.4 Quality Improvement Supports: State provides technical assistance for providers to improve</p>	<p>1. State funds quality improvement supports (such as: mentoring, quality enhancement)</p>	<p>The State sets aside funds for quality improvement such as mini grants and Stars</p> <p>1. Child Care Licensing Specialists have</p>	<p># CCDF</p>	<p># 1 Notes:</p>	<p># 1</p>
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<p>quality</p>	<p>plans, mini-grants to improve quality) to support providers in improving quality, achieving accreditation, or moving up a rating system. These supports are available to all providers</p> <p>2. State funds quality improvement supports (such as: mentoring, quality enhancement plans, mini-grants to improve quality) to support providers in improving quality, achieving accreditation, or moving up a rating system, but the supports are limited to some providers (e.g., PK teachers, family child care, specific communities or regions of the state)</p> <p>3. State provides information on quality, accreditation, and/or a rating system, but not supports, to assist providers in improving quality</p> <p>4. State provides</p>	<p>responsibility to provide TA (only applies to licensed providers</p> <p>2. Stars (codified) provides some state funds to provide technical assistance to participating licensed providers</p> <p>3. Office of Child Care Licensing Licensing Specialists -responsible for TA codified in state job description</p> <p>4. Capacity Grant provides TAs but not codified</p> <p>ALL THESE PROGRAMS ONLY FOR LICENSED PROGRAMS - THERE ARE EXEMPTIONS</p>	<p>5. Notes:</p> <p>http://delcode.delaware.gov/title14/c030/index.shtml</p> <p>http://www.jobaps.com/de/specs/classspecdisplay.asp?ClassNumber=MDDX01 &LinkSpec=</p> <p>http://www.jobaps.com/de/specs/classspecdisplay.asp?ClassNumber=MDDX01%20&LinkSpec=</p> <p>=</p>		
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Discussion:

SUB-DOMAIN I.C: ECE FACILITIES AND CAPITAL

NATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		STATE POLICY PLANNING			
Policy Feature	Policy Levels	Evidence	Sources of Policy	Current Policy Level	Desired Policy Level
<p>I.C.1 Validity of Plan: State capital plan is accessible and methodologically valid</p> <p>What are the models in other states? – Lynn Kagan</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State capital plan is (1) based on a recent needs assessment, (2) updated regularly, and (3) a public document 2. State capital plan only has two of the above characteristics 3. State capital plan has only one of the above characteristics 4. State capital plan has none of the above characteristics or state does not have a capital plan 	<p>Delaware does not have state capital plan</p>	<p>#</p> <p>No sources</p>	<p># 4</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p># 1</p> <p>DE needs a state capital plan that includes early childhood</p> <p>More clarification needed</p> <p>What does it look like?</p> <p>To identify loans available for capital improvements bricks and mortar - with specific rules – may be tax exemptions instead</p>
			<p>Notes:</p>		

<p>I.C.2 Investment in Supply: Financing programs (grants, loans, bonds) are in place to increase supply and quality of ECE facilities</p> <p>PRIORITY AREA</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The state funds a program of grants and loans for both improving existing child care settings and constructing new settings 2. Financing programs are only available for one of these goals 3. State does not provide a program for either goal 	<p>The state provides funds for quality improvements to new or existing programs, but not for capital improvements.</p> <p>CCDF Funds - (1)Capacity Grant and (2) Delaware Stars QRIS and (3)POC funds for 200% poverty, but use of funds not codified. DHSS receives federal money and uses it to increase supply and for quality but use of funds not codified.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>Child Care Capacity-Building Program</p> <p>Since 1997, we have managed the Delaware Child Care Capacity-Building Grant through a contract with Delaware Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services.</p> <p>The program provides funds to increase the supply and quality of child care for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infants/toddlers ○ Children with disabilities ○ School-age children 	<p>http://www.familyandworkplace.org/providers/provider.capacity.asp</p> <p>http://158.71.31.30/programs/ccb/data/expenditures/07acf696/exp_detail.htm</p>	<p># 2</p> <p>Notes:</p>	<p># 1</p> <p>Need increased state funding for early childhood.</p> <p>Small business loans should be available for child care programs for Bricks and Mortar</p> <p>DE needs to look at non-traditional funding streams.</p> <p>DOE Capital Plan – for school districts</p> <p>Department of Labor?</p> <p>A committee Needs to review Capacity Grant?? Fiscal Mapping???</p>
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- Mildly ill children
- Care during non-traditional hours

Grant proposals are accepted three times a year through a [Request for Proposal](#) process. The 2009-10 RFP deadlines are **October 12, 2009; January 25, 2010; and April 5, 2010.**

You may apply to create new programs, expand existing programs, or enhance the quality of existing programs. Grants do not fund bricks and mortar, fencing, pools, food, rugs or carpets, office supplies and equipment, walkers/exersaucers, TV/VCRs, DVDs/videos, video gaming systems, or video/computer games.

In order to be eligible to apply, you must:

- Serve low-income families and accept Purchase of Care
- Be open Monday through Friday until 5:30 p.m. (at a minimum)

Delaware Stars is designed as a voluntary system that expects programs to work on improving quality by moving up the Star Levels. Delaware Stars provides technical assistance and limited financial support to programs involved in Stars as they engage in quality improvement efforts.

Delaware Stars *for Early Success* is a five level system. Star Level 1, the lowest level, requires an early childhood program to meet Child Care Licensing Regulations. With each higher Star Level a program is required to meet increasingly higher quality standards in the following categories

<p>I.C.3 Addressing Greatest Needs: State provides incentives focused on increasing the number of ECE facilities to improve access in underserved communities or for underserved families</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The capital plan commits funds based on needs (e.g., low-income communities, % of children with special needs) by providing specific funding for grants or loans focused on underserved communities and families 2. Capital plan does not commit funds in relationship to need 3. The state has no capital plan 	<p>No The state has no capital fund</p>	<p>#</p> <hr/> <p>Notes:</p>	<p># 3 Notes:</p>	<p># 1</p>
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