

Early Childhood Advocacy Coalition Huddle

Monday, May 11th, 1:00-2:00 pm ET on Zoom

- **Advocacy Day Recap**
 - video created by Alexis Harris (new)
- **Legislative Updates**
 - Bills we are monitoring (new)
 - Recentering on our ask
 - Budget questions and decisions
- **Call to Action**
 - Final push before end of session
- **Upcoming Events**



Please introduce yourself in the chat

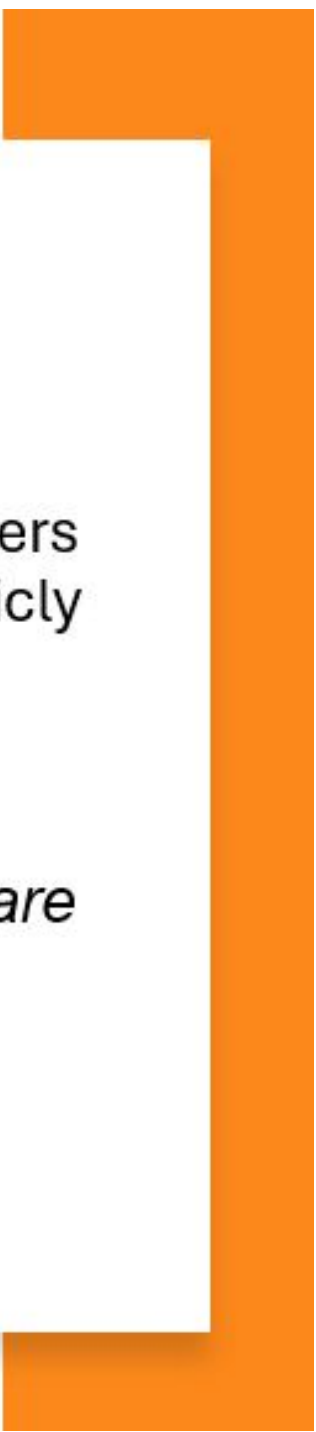


Who we are

First Pre-K

First State Pre-K is a coalition of partners focused on expanding access to publicly funded high quality early care and education in Delaware.

"Pre-K" in Delaware refers to child care programs for ages 0-5.





Advocacy Day: Part 1

Morning Remarks, Panel, & Storytelling Workshop

- Centered lived experience, storytelling, and collective action as drivers of early childhood advocacy
- Prepared advocates to engage legislators through relationship-building, clear asks, and personal narrative



Advocacy Day: Part 2



Afternoon Rally, Fun on the Green, Governor's Office

- Brought together families, educators, students, advocates, and community partners for a visible and engaging public celebration
- Reinforced shared advocacy priorities around access, affordability, and investment in ECE
- Created a family-friendly advocacy space through model classroom & hands-on children's activities





Trying New Things in Delaware



THANK YOU to all who participated and contributed!!!

**Take Our Feedback
Survey**



**Add Your Photos &
Videos to Our Google
Drive**



A man with short dreadlocks, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt, stands behind a wooden podium. He is holding a microphone and appears to be speaking. The background features a white door with a brass handle and a small rectangular object mounted on the wall above it. To the left, a portion of a colorful mural is visible. A purple banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image.

Legislative Updates

Bills We Are Monitoring Part 1

Stay tuned to FPSK where we will add bills as they are introduced

<u>HS1-HB 204</u>	Creates a dedicated team within the state's child care licensing office to handle complaints about licensed child care providers.
<u>HS1 for HB 274</u>	Increases Delaware's child and dependent care tax credit from 50% to 100% of the federal credit for all eligible taxpayers, applicable to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2027.
<u>HS2 for HB 284</u>	Doubles the child and dependent care tax credit for residents earning under \$60,000 and makes it refundable; credit is unchanged for those earning \$60,000 or more.
<u>HB 259 w/ HA 1</u>	Requires lead screening for children ages 12 months and older before enrollment or continued attendance in child care facilities and schools.
<u>SS1 for SB 278</u>	Requires DHSS Purchase of Care (POC) program to authorize summer child care providers starting January 1 so families can enroll kids in camps before they fill. Also requires copayments be based on full/half day of care and household size/income.
<u>HCR 122</u>	Establishes the Early Childhood Education Solutions Task Force to study and make findings and recommendations regarding a model of mixed-delivery, non-compulsory public pre-K that covers all 3- and 4-year-olds in this State by 2035.

Bills We Are Monitoring Part 2

Stay tuned to FPSK where we will add bills as they are introduced

[HJR 10](#)

Indicates that **POC reimbursement rates** for providers serving children ages 0–5 should be **increased by 10%** for FY2027 across all settings. Aims to promote fair compensation for providers serving subsidized families.

[HB 312](#)

Amends the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act to **update the definition of confirmatory blood lead testing.**

[HB 387](#)

Gradually **raises the income eligibility threshold for Delaware's Purchase of Care** (POC) childcare program from 200% to 275% of the Federal Poverty Level over five years, with a sunset clause expiring 30, 2032.

to be heard in House Health and Human Development Committee Wednesday 11:30 am

[SB 293](#)

Deems ACA-accredited **youth camps** as meeting equivalent OCCL health and safety requirements, **enabling them to qualify as Purchase of Care providers** and expanding subsidized summer care options.

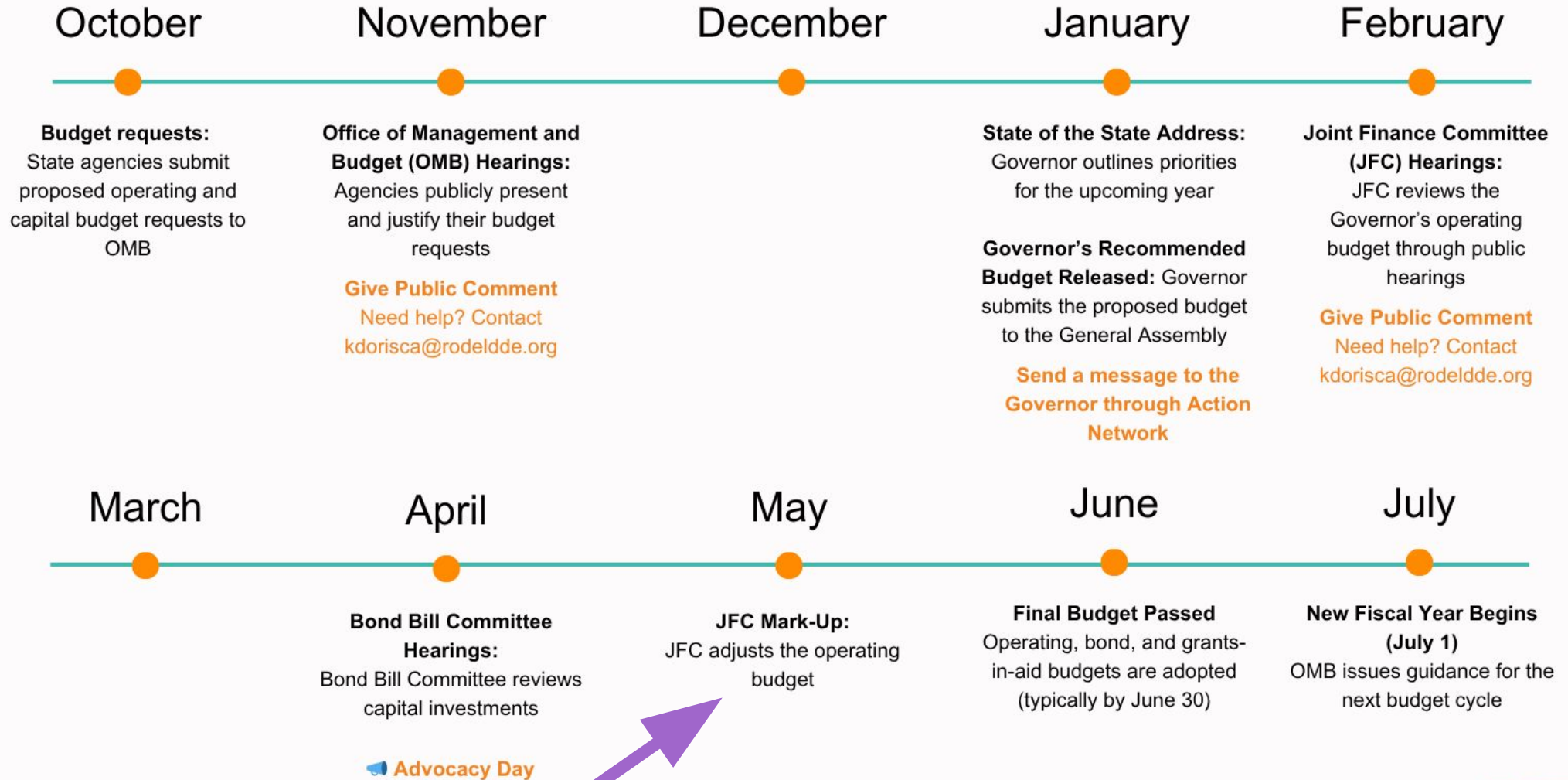
[SB 294](#)

Makes **full-time students** pursuing associate or bachelor's degrees **eligible for Purchase of Care** child care assistance, and excludes student financial aid from income calculations for eligibility purposes.

[HS 1 for HB 47 w/ HA 1](#)

Removes the option for private schools and youth camps to use name-based background checks or opt out of background checks entirely.

State Budget Timeline



JFC Recommended Budget for FY 27 (July 2026- June 2027)

Agency	Recommended Budget Increase	Our Positioning: Support the Governor's Budget	AND
DOE	\$8M for ECAP seats and shared services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Expands access for more families to high-quality programs ✓ Fairly compensates providers, by paying at cost of care, based on enrollment (some clarity needed here) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → increase funding to serve more children and expand eligibility beyond 200% FPL → create an infrastructure fund to build capacity and grow supply
DHSS	\$25M for Purchase of Care	<i>Determining how best to leverage the funding (originally identified for paying based on enrollment, pivot signaled)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → increase eligibility beyond 200% FPL → raise rates to at least the federal benchmark (75th percentile) → implement commitment to incentivize non-traditional hours care → address affordability of family copayment scale → make copayments more affordable, including making part time rates half of the full time rate

DOE Strategic Plan and FY27 Proposed Budget for DOE



Priority

- Expand Early Education

Metric

- By September 2028, increase the percentage of children birth through age five who are enrolled in funded early care and education programs and services from 25% to 40%, through expanded access, as measured by state-led enrollment.

Strategies

- Support children being developmentally prepared to enter kindergarten by aligning health, early learning, family support, and community partnerships to promote whole-child development.
- Increase the availability of early learning opportunities by opening more licensed child care programs statewide and expanding access to state-funded care and family support programs.
- Strengthen the quality of early learning programs and services across settings by implementing program standards and monitoring progress.
- Increase the percentage of children served in high-quality early learning environments statewide.
- Increase access to high-quality professional learning and advancement in credentialing pathways to recruit, retain, and elevate early childhood educators, ensuring that early learning programs and services are staffed by skilled, well-prepared professionals.

\$8M for ECAP and shared service hubs/infrastructure

Questions to ask at DECC Thursday:

1. How many new children will this serve? starting when?
2. How and when can providers who have not accessed state funded ECE/ECAP apply?
3. When will we know more about the shared service hubs and how can we make sure they meet the needs of providers?

FY27 Proposed Budget for DHSS/POC

Communication from DHSS (4/29)

At this time, the federal final rule that was expected to provide additional direction and flexibility to states regarding enrollment-based payment requirements has not yet been issued.

*The Governor's Recommended Budget proposes that **if the federal government decides that states are not required to transition to enrollment-based payments, then DSS will keep in place the current attendance-based system of payment while also expanding eligibility.***

If Delaware is required to proceed with enrollment-based payments, then at this point, we anticipate full statewide implementation will occur no later than October 1, 2026.

[We anticipate the feds will not require enrollment and notification will be out in coming months]

Questions to ask at DECC Thursday:

1. When will we know which policies will be implemented (how much notice will providers get)?
2. Is DHSS considering raising rates and lowering copayments to increase access, regardless of eligibility?
3. What is the status of the special needs rate increase?
4. Will all new policies take effect October 1?



Call to Action



Act NOW before session ends

- Invite legislators to graduations at your center
- Host a site visit
- Send thank-you notes to champions
- Share personal stories via email or social media
- Make a phone call this week

We are here to help! Contact Keda at kdorisca@rodelde.org

Upcoming Events

1. **Delaware Early Childhood Council:** Thursday, May 14, 1-2:30 pm
2. **Kids Caucus:** Join Co-Chairs, Rep. Debra Heffernan and Sen. Daniel Cruce, on May 21st, 11:30-1:30 – *first portion will **focus on early care and education** with Lt. Governor, Senator Lockman, Rep Kam Smith and Associate Secretary Caitlin Gleason; second portion led by Kids' Dept*
3. **Legislator Coffees:** Check our socials for opportunities to engage with your legislators leading up to Advocacy Day

Constituent Coffee

HOSTED BY
Senator Laura Sturgeon



meet with me to discuss updates from District 4,
Legislative Hall, and beyond



Sunday, May 17
2 p.m. - 3 p.m.



Brew HaHa - Avenue North
1000 Renaissance Way,
Wilmington, DE 19803



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Rich Collins
MONTHLY CONSTITUENT
COFFEE MEETING



THURSDAY, MAY 14
STARTING AT 9AM

PLANTATION LAKES
NORTHERN COMMUNITY CENTER
(35020 Wright Way, Millsboro)

The coffee, donuts, and conversation are free.
All are welcome.

PLEASE JOIN US!

LEGISLATORS' COFFEE MEETING

Join Rep. Ron Gray and Senator Gerald Hocker for a morning coffee meeting!
Bring your questions and concerns about district or legislative matters.



WEDNESDAY
MAY 13TH

8:30 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.
MILLVILLE TOWN HALL
2nd Floor
36404 Club House Road
Millville, DE 19967

The coffee & donuts will be the legislators' treat!



Let's start our day with
coffee & conversation!

Join
State Rep.
Kevin Hensley

for a Coffee Meeting!
TUESDAY, MAY 12TH
8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Odessa Fire Company
304 Main Street, Odessa, DE 19730



On Tuesday, May 12th, Kevin will welcome a representative from Middletown Police Support Services to provide information on how to better protect ourselves against frauds and scams in the area.

Kevin will provide the coffee.

COFFEE &
CONVERSATION
WITH MIKE!



Join State Rep. Mike Smith
for coffee & conversation

TUESDAY, MAY 12TH

8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

SPECIAL MEETING LOCATION:

Hockessin Colored School #107
4266 Millcreek Road, Hockessin, DE 19707

The coffee is always Mike's treat!

Constituent COFFEE

SEN. BRIAN PETTYJOHN
REP. VALERIE JONES GILTNER

GEORGETOWN TOWN HALL
39 THE CIRCLE
GEORGETOWN, DE 19947

SATURDAY, MAY 16
9:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M.



WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Questions and Discussion

Thank You!

