OUR POLICY ASK FOR FISCAL YEAR 2028

Enhance Access for Families and Investments in Providers!

Delaware has made progress, including historic investments that have doubled the number of children served in high quality pre-K and made thousands more children eligible for Purchase of Care (POC). **And there are still significant needs today in Delaware:**

- **Too few families are served in public programs**: Only 20% of children under age 5 are served in publicly funded early care and education
- **Families cannot access state assistance**: Delaware families must earn below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (below $74,250 yearly for a family of 4) to be eligible for public programming.
- **Lack of child care is holding back our economy**: Parents are leaving the workforce and employers are facing staffing shortages
- **Child care providers continue to operate with limited openings** due to low reimbursement rates and staffing shortages

Make Progress Toward Delaware's Goal: 40% of Children 0-5 in Public Programming by 2028!

Department of Education: Increase access to state-funded pre-K (ECAP)

- **Expand eligibility** to fund opportunities for at least 2,200 more children and families up to at least 300% of the Federal Poverty Level
- **Build capacity by investing in capital funding** by including early care and education in bond funding and allowing public school capital funding to cover pre-K
- **Prioritize workforce supports** through funding programs at the cost of care and supporting employee benefits

Department of Health and Social Services: Increase access to child care (Purchase of Care)

- **Expand eligibility to serve families** up to at least 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (making an additional 8,000 children eligible, families of four making up to $96,000)
- **Increase per-child Purchase of Care rates** to cover 75% of the cost of care, so programs can keep up with rising costs, open more classrooms, and increase staff pay and benefits

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