



*The Department of Services
for Children, Youth and
Their Families*

Office of the Secretary

633-2500

August 2, 2011

Dear Child Care Provider,

As you may be aware, the Governor recently proposed and the General Assembly approved a \$22 million investment in early care and education. The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Education, and Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families are pleased to share information about this exciting initiative.

For this year, the \$22 million investment includes \$9 million to bring the purchase of care provider reimbursement rate to 65% of the 2011 local market rate, plus an additional 50 cents per child, per day. In addition to this critical boost in the purchase of care payment rates, the budget includes a \$13 million investment to enhance outcomes for Delaware's children through several quality improvement initiatives. These include providing a tiered reimbursement payment to providers who are enrolled in Delaware STARS and have achieved a 3, 4, or 5 star status. There will also be additional opportunities for professional development and to support and reward teachers in STARS programs for pursuing and obtaining higher education degrees.

In keeping with this opportunity to receive higher payments when serving Delaware's low income children in quality rated care settings, the funding will expand the state's capacity to accept more providers into the STARS program and support movement from one star level to the next.

The three departments are working on the policies and the infrastructure necessary to implement this multi-layered investment. The increased purchase of care rates will be effective for October attendance paid in November. Information regarding the timing for the other initiatives will be provided as it becomes available – as the state team reaches decisions about each initiative, each Department will post information to its website and send broadcast updates through its listserv.

We are proud that our Governor and the General Assembly recognize that quality early care is critical to a child's success and that they have made a significant investment to assure successful outcomes for children. As always, we thank you for your commitment to serving Delaware's children and look forward to working with you as we implement these funding initiatives.

Sincerely,

Vivian L. Rapposelli
Cabinet Secretary