



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RUTH ANN MINNER
GOVERNOR

May 2, 2008

Re: Tenth Annual Governor's Awards for Excellence in Early Care and Education

Dear Friends:

Early care providers do far more than provide a safe place for children while their parents work. They have the opportunity to shape the lives of the children in their care and provide them with a firm educational foundation that will benefit them for a lifetime.

For that reason, I am pleased to announce the Tenth Annual Governor's Awards for Excellence in Early Care and Education. I'm asking for your help in identifying early care providers, teachers and centers deserving of this award. Please complete and return the attached nomination form with your narrative by Monday, June 16, 2008. **To help spread the word, we also ask that you make copies of this letter and the nomination form and distribute them to parents, organized parent groups, and community organizations. You may also access the form at www.familyandworkplace.org and distribute it via e-mail.**

The awards presentation event will be held in the evening, in the early fall. Winners will be those early care providers and centers that best exemplify commitment and excellence in education and caring for Delaware's children. More information about the awards program will follow.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the nomination form. You are helping to recognize the efforts of those who make a difference in the lives of our children.

Sincerely,

Ruth Ann Minner
Governor

Attachment

TENTH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

The Governor's Awards for Excellence in Early Care and Education recognizes excellence among Delaware's child care providers, teachers and centers. Early childhood educators will be honored, with awards in the following categories: family child care provider, teacher from a child care center or preschool, and child care center or preschool.

Why is this award important?

Families benefit and the economy flourishes when children receive high quality out-of-home care. Brain research emphasizes "windows of opportunity" for early learning. Excellent early care and education has long-term academic and social benefits, building the foundations for later success.

What will award recipients receive?

Those receiving the Governor's Awards will receive a certificate signed by Governor Minner, a cash award, and a complementary dinner at the ceremony held in the fall.

Who should be nominated?

Outstanding early care and education providers (individuals) and programs should be nominated. Eligible individuals should work directly with young children in child care centers, Head Start, ECAP, preschools, or family child care programs. Directors are not eligible for this award unless they teach in the classroom on a regular basis. The nominated individuals should care for children in a group setting, ranging in age from birth through kindergarten. The criteria for the award are described below and, in more detail, on the nomination form.

AWARD CRITERIA

Selection of award recipients will be based on five criteria, adapted from professional guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Together, these represent a portrait of excellence in early care and education.

1. Excellence in applying knowledge of how children develop and learn;
2. Excellence in developing and implementing curriculum;
3. Excellence in assessing children's development and learning, and using this information to improve curriculum and programs;
4. Excellence in building relationships with families;
5. Excellence in professional development and professional behavior.

Winners will be chosen by an independent selection committee. The committee recognizes and values that "excellence" will be shown in different ways by educators who work with children of different ages and in different settings.

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Nomination forms and narratives should be completed and returned on or before Monday, June 16, 2008. Forms can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed. Please return to:

Michelle Richards
The Family & Workplace Connection,
a division of Children & Families First
100 Wilson Building
3511 Silverside Road
Wilmington, Delaware 19810

(302) 479-1586 – Phone
(302) 479-1693 – Fax
govaward@familyandworkplace.org

We encourage you to share this nomination packet with families and friends. If you would prefer the nomination form goes directly from The Family & Workplace Connection, a division of Children & Families First to parents, please e-mail a list of parent e-mail addresses to govaward@familyandworkplace.org. and the form will be forwarded. The form can also be found at <http://www.familyandworkplace.org/providers/governors.award.asp>, on the State Office of Child Care Licensing website at <http://kids.delaware.gov/occl/occl.shtml>, or on the Office of Early Care & Education website at <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/programs/earlychildhood/earlycare.shtml>.

Please note: Once submitted, all nomination forms become the property of the Office of the Governor and Governor's Awards Committee members. Please be advised that the information you submit may be used in the Governor's Awards event-related materials, such as event programs, news releases, etc.

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Richards (see contact information above).

Thank you for taking the time to complete this nomination form and for your interest in recognizing your nominee.

Tenth Annual Governor's Awards for Excellence in Early Care and Education

NOMINATION FORM

(Please type or print clearly and submit one form per nominee)

PART 1

Check one category:

_____ Family Child Care Provider _____ Teacher from Child Care Center or Preschool

_____ Child Care Center or Preschool

Nominee Name: _____

If you are nominating a child care center or preschool teacher, please provide the name of the center in which the nominee works:

Nominee's Work Address:

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

County (Circle one) New Castle/ Kent/ Sussex

Nominee's Work Phone Number: _____

Your Name: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Address: _____

Relationship to Nominee (i.e. parent of child in program, co-worker, supervisor):

If your nominee is a finalist for an award, a member of the committee may call you for further information. The committee will also obtain information on the nominee from the Office of Child Care Licensing.

PART 2

You are required to provide a narrative. Please use a separate sheet of paper to give specific examples of your nominee's excellence in all of the following five areas: Knowledge, Curriculum, Assessment, Relationships, and Professionalism. Questions on the back of this form are provided to give examples. Feel free to ask your nominee for examples if you are unsure of specifics for some categories. **All five areas must be addressed in order for your nominee to be considered.**

1. Please describe how the nominee demonstrates excellence in applying knowledge of how children develop and learn. Please give specific examples of how your nominee:

- Keeps your child healthy and safe
- Understands how children learn and behave at different ages
- Appreciates your child as an individual that grows and develops at their own rate
- Respects cultural and language differences

2. Please describe how the nominee demonstrates excellence in developing and implementing curriculum. [Note: “Curriculum” includes a variety of learning opportunities such as daily schedule, activities, games, toys, arts and crafts, indoor and outdoor supplies, and equipment.] **Please give specific examples of how your nominee:**

- Plans activities to meet the needs of individual children, including children with disabilities
- Creates interesting, meaningful, and challenging learning experiences for young children
- Uses play, problem solving, projects, or other ways to help children become curious learners
- Guides children toward responsible, cooperative behavior and healthy self-esteem

3. Please describe how the nominee demonstrates excellence in assessing children’s development and how they use this information to improve programs. [Note: Assessment in early care and education does not emphasize formal testing, but uses observations and examples of children’s work.] **Please give specific examples of how your nominee:**

- Observes children to learn about their strengths, needs, and progress
- Gathers information about each child’s progress
- Uses this information to plan activities and experiences that will help all children learn and succeed (including children with disabilities and children who are learning English as a second language)

4. Please describe how the nominee demonstrates excellence in building relationships with families. Please give specific examples of how your nominee:

- Shows respect for a family’s choices and goals for their children
- Shows sensitivity to differences in family structures and cultures
- Communicates with families about children’s progress and about the program

5. Please describe how the nominee demonstrates excellence in professional development and professional behavior. Please give specific examples of how your nominee:

- Grows professionally by attending classes, trainings, or workshops and by reading materials
- Works together with co-workers as a member of a professional team
- Shows that he or she is constantly thinking about ways to improve in the field of early care and education

Please complete and return the nomination form with your narrative on or before Monday, June 16, 2008. Completed forms should be faxed to Michelle Richards at 302-479-1693, e-mailed to govaward@familyandworkplace.org or mailed to the following address:

**Michelle Richards
The Family & Workplace Connection, a division of Children & Families First
100 Wilson Bldg.
3511 Silverside Road
Wilmington, DE 19810**