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Delaware Budget Reset Fails to Increase Funding for Early Care and Education

WILMINGTON, DE – The Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children (deaeyc) is expressing serious concern following Governor Matt Meyer's FY26 budget reset, which includes **no funding increase** for early care and education, state-funded pre-K, or the Purchase of Care program.

This marks a stark departure from the Carney administration, where annual investment for these essential programs increased from between \$10- \$20 million, nearly doubling state investment by the end of their second term. It is worth noting that the increases from the previous budgets were an attempt to make up for a lack of funding over the last three decades. The elimination of additional investment in the current budget comes at a time when the early childhood sector faces mounting financial pressures and growing uncertainty around potential federal cuts to Head Start and the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

Deaeyc calls on Governor Meyer and legislators to prioritize early childhood education in the final FY26 budget with at least an 8% increase to continue to provide equitable and accessible early care and education to Delaware families and balance the operational liabilities that have been legislated over the last several years.

“Governor Meyer expressed a desire to prioritize early care and education with the goal of universal Pre-K within his first term. The lack of investment in early education is disappointing as it will limit accessibility and resources for our most vulnerable learners and future goals. Data and research show that early intervention and readiness is the key to academic success, yet we continue to play catch up in later years due to a lack of proactive investment in early years.” said Kim Bryda, President, Board of Directors of deaeyc.

“Childcare providers already face an uphill battle as current funding doesn't meet the cost of care. Without adequate funding, we risk program closures, staff losses, and fewer available child care slots for working families. The Delaware economy depends on attracting young working families, and without a commitment to education at all levels, Delaware is unable to compete with neighboring states, says Bryda.

Legislation continues to impact small businesses in the state of Delaware. Since January of 2025 Early care and education providers have faced: minimum wage increases, new family medical leave taxes, and new base unemployment tax rates. Early care and education continues to be one of the most heavily regulated industries. These small business owners continue to balance regulatory burdens with increased operational liabilities, all while striving for continuous quality care.

“As an educator himself, and understanding this critical window in child development, we urge Governor Meyer to continue the commitment to early education funding with the goal of building a sustainable, equitable system for Delaware’s children and families,” said Kim Bryda.

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