

Delaware 2026 Preschool Development Grant B-5 Systems Building Grant Five PDG Project Team Summaries

1. Statewide Needs Assessment & Data Dashboards

Building Delaware's data foundation for early childhood system improvement

Overview

The Needs Assessment and Analytical Dashboards project is a foundational component of Delaware's Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Systems-Building Grant. This needs assessment is designed to collect both qualitative and quantitative baseline data on the state's early care and education (ECE) system, including user experiences and service gaps for families and professionals. The data gathered will be used to update previous needs assessments and provide a robust baseline for analyzing gaps in access, program quality, and outcomes across the state.

This initiative will generate a comprehensive, statewide baseline of early care and education (ECE) data and deliver modern analytical dashboards that enable real-time monitoring, accountability, and continuous improvement. Together, these efforts will strengthen data-informed decision-making across agencies, improve transparency, and support long-term system sustainability.

Key Objectives

- **Collect statewide needs assessment** (qualitative and quantitative data) on access, quality, workforce, and family experience.
- **Identify service gaps** affecting children, families, and early childhood professionals.
- **Develop real-time analytical dashboards** to track outputs, outcomes, and therefore system performance.
- **Integrate data across agencies and platforms** to support coordinated planning and accountability.
- **Support ongoing evaluation of Delaware Early Childhood Council (DECC) strategic goals** through continuous data monitoring.

Why This Matters

Reliable, timely data is essential for improving early childhood systems. This project provides Delaware with the tools needed to track progress, identify gaps, and target investments effectively—ensuring resources drive meaningful outcomes for children, families, and providers statewide.

Deliverables by December 30, 2026

- A comprehensive statewide ECE needs assessment
- Integrated analytical dashboards that:

- Measure children and families served
- Track workforce recruitment and retention
- Monitor expansion of high-quality program seats
- Assess family engagement and satisfaction
- A modernized ASSIST portal to support data access and reporting
- API integrations to enable seamless cross-system data sharing

Longer-Term Outcomes

- Real-time performance monitoring to support continuous improvement
- Stronger accountability across agencies and programs
- More targeted investments aligned to system gaps and priorities
- Sustainable data infrastructure supporting long-term ECE reform

Project Timeline: January 1, 2026 – December 30, 2026

2. Strategic Plan Implementation Roadmaps

Turning Delaware’s early childhood strategy into coordinated action

Overview

The Strategic Plan Implementation Roadmaps project is a core component of Delaware’s Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Systems-Building Grant. This initiative will progress the Delaware Early Childhood Council’s (DECC) five-year Early Childhood Strategic Plan (2026–2030) into detailed implementation roadmaps to guide coordinated, statewide action. This effort will be aligned and coordinated with the efforts led by the Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC).

A Strategic Plan Implementation Roadmap will set out how state agencies and their partner organization act towards a unified vision for Delaware’s early care and education system, ensuring that all children and families have access to integrated, high-quality programs and services from birth through age eight. It will assign actions to statewide priorities that advance program quality, access, family support, professional development, and system integration.

Key Objectives

- **Develop actionable implementation roadmaps** that translate strategy into specific, measurable outputs and outcomes.

- **Align statewide priorities across agencies and organizations** to drive coordinated system improvement, guiding immediate and long-term actions by state agencies and partners.
- **Establish continuous improvement cycles** through annual reviews informed by data and stakeholder feedback.

Why This Matters

A strong strategic plan is only effective when paired with clear implementation pathways. This project ensures Delaware’s early childhood vision is translated into measurable actions, accountability structures, and coordinated progress—strengthening program quality, expanding access, and improving outcomes for children and families statewide.

Deliverables by October 30, 2026

- Implementation Roadmaps 2026–2030 Delaware Early Childhood Strategic Plan outlining:
 - Clear outputs, outcomes, timelines, and responsibilities
 - Agency and partner alignment across statewide priorities
- Annual review and continuous improvement framework

Longer-Term Outcomes

- Unified interagency action toward shared early childhood priorities
- Stronger alignment across programs, funding streams, and initiatives
- Improved accountability, transparency, and performance monitoring
- Sustained progress toward more access to high-quality services

Project Timeline: April 1, 2026 – October 30, 2026

3. Unified Governance & Sustainable Financing

Building a unified, sustainable early care and education system for Delaware

Overview

The ECE Shared Governance and Financing Plan is a central initiative under Delaware’s Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Systems-Building Grant. The project is designed to strengthen how Delaware governs, funds, and coordinates its early care and education (ECE) system, which is currently spread across multiple agencies, policies, and funding streams.

This work will create a clear blueprint for transitioning to a unified governance structure and a sustainable financing model that expands access, improves coordination, and ensures long-term stability for families and providers.

Key Objectives

- **Explore the best plan for unified ECE governance**, organizational roles, responsibilities, and oversight.
- **Conduct a thorough fiscal and policy review** to inform government transparency, coordination, and accountability.
- **Consider a statewide financing model** that blends public, private, local, and philanthropic investments for long-term sustainability and expanded access.
- **Build a unified funding framework and budget tools** to streamline ECE funding for children before kindergarten.
- **Connect governance and financing reforms** with accessible regional entry points for families, professionals, and community partners.

Why This Matters

This project addresses longstanding challenges in coordination, data sharing, and funding fragmentation. By aligning governance and financing, Delaware will build a scalable, investable ECE system—supporting workforce stability, expanding access for families, and improving outcomes for young children statewide.

Deliverables by December 30, 2026

- Governance and cost-share plans with tools for implementation for statewide agency use
- Data and reporting framework for a cost-share seat model
- Statewide provider engagement summary, informed by input from at least 250 providers
- Legislative preparation materials for identified policy needs
- Public-facing communications toolkit to support awareness and understanding
- Enabling technology systems to support eligibility verification, payments, and data collection

Longer-Term Outcomes (through December 30, 2028)

- Stronger interagency governance aligned with Delaware Early Childhood Council (DECC) priorities
- Greater sustainability for providers across Delaware's mixed-delivery system
- Increased capacity to treat ECE as a long-term public investment

Project Timeline: February 1, 2026 – December 30, 2026

4. Family Early Resource & Referral Network (FERRN)

Creating a seamless, statewide system of access for families with young children

Overview

The Family Early Resource & Referral (FER&R) Network is a multi-pronged initiative within Delaware's Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Systems-Building Grant. The network will connect existing programs, modernize technology, and align governance and funding structures—creating a clear, family-centered pathway to resources and supports across Delaware.

This project will conceptualize a unified, statewide model that simplifies how families access early childhood programs, supports, and services for children from birth through age five. Components of this initiative will fill in current gaps and expand what is working towards the outcome of a unified network.

Key Objectives

- **Centralize family access** through a statewide blueprint that integrates online and in-person referral and support touchpoints.
- **Engage families and community partners** in the design and rollout to ensure accessible and relevant supports.
- **Consolidate services and governance** by aligning existing initiatives, including Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC), under a shared structure.
- **Modernize technology systems** with a family-facing Help Me Grow (HMG) data dashboard and an upgraded Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) portal that connects screenings directly to resources.

Why This Matters

Families often face fragmented systems, inconsistent referrals, and unclear pathways to services. This project will streamline access, reduce complexity, and strengthen coordination—ensuring targeted outreach to reach all families, including those not currently connected to child care or early learning programs.

Deliverables by December 30, 2026

- Enhanced data and reporting tools to better target family supports
- A statewide framework for integrating family services into a unified FER&R model
- A coordinated dissemination and communications plan for families and partners
- Consolidated governance and funding structure for programs such as IECMHC
- Increased access to Help Me Grow, ASQ, and related family supports

Longer-Term Outcomes (through December 30, 2028)

- Stronger interagency coordination aligned with Delaware Early Childhood Council (DECC)

goals

- Improved access to high-quality information, referrals, and family supports
- Increased sustainability of family-serving programs statewide

Project Timeline: February 1, 2026 – December 30, 2026

5. Child Care Hub Architecture Project

Building regional infrastructure to strengthen child care quality, access, and workforce

stability Overview

The Child Care (CC) Hub Architecture Project is a major initiative within Delaware’s Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Systems-Building Grant. The project will design a cohesive, regional system of shared services and workforce pathway supports to strengthen the early care and education (ECE) ecosystem statewide.

Building on successful Delaware pilots and national best practices, this initiative will create a scalable blueprint for Child Care Hubs that reduces administrative burden on child care programs, strengthens program sustainability, and expands access to high-quality care and education for families. Components of this initiative will fill in current gaps and expand what is working to implement regional CC Hubs.

Key Objectives

- **Plan to centralize operational supports** within a regional Child Care Hub to reduce administrative burden and strengthen business sustainability.
- **Recruit and retain the early childhood workforce** through streamlined credentialing, professional development, and renewable individual licensure pathways.
- **Integrate modern technology solutions**, including a Child Care Business Toolkit and a workforce professional portal.
- **Expand high-quality, locally driven programming** through regional Family Child Care (FCC) Networks.

Why This Matters

Child care professionals face significant operational, regulatory, and workforce challenges that limit their ability to expand and sustain services. The CC Hub model will unify fragmented state agency supports, streamline business services, and create a regional access point for professional development, technical assistance, and operational guidance—freeing educators to focus more time on children and families.

Deliverables by December 30, 2026

- A statewide Child Care Hub blueprint, implementation timeline, and sustainability plan
- Public-facing communications toolkit to build awareness and understanding
- Statewide map identifying service gaps and business priorities
- Core components of a CC Hub digital resource portal, including workforce recruitment and onboarding tools
- Integrated data and communication systems to support seamless coordination

Longer-Term Outcomes (through December 30, 2028)

- A sustainable regional support system that strengthens program operations, reduces costs, and improves program quality
- A centralized professional portal capturing credentials, qualifications, and professional learning
- Greater educator capacity to focus on effective instruction and child development outcomes
- Expanded access to affordable, high-quality child care through cost savings and strengthened program capacity and sustainability

Project Timeline: February 1, 2026 – December 30, 2026