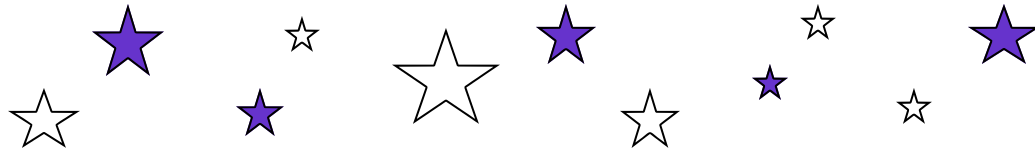




# KIDS COUNT in Delaware Issue Brief



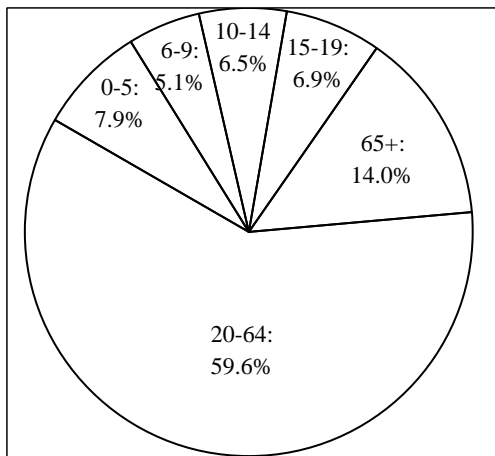
## Indicators for Early Success

Summer 2008

Preparing a child for success in both school and in life is complex, encompassing growth in the full range of physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills that children need to thrive. The challenge for families, communities and organizations who interact with young children is to provide experiences that will meet the needs of the child in a comprehensive way. Central to ensuring that young children enter school ready to learn are issues of access to appropriate health care, nurturing early relationships, family economic security, quality early learning experiences, and the creation of a set of meaningful indicators which track public commitments to young children over time. In Delaware, work toward this goal is being led by the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative and the Delaware Early Care and Education Council who have developed *Early Success: Delaware's Early Childhood Plan*.

## Counting the Kids: Delaware Demographics

**2007 Population Estimate and Age Distribution, Delaware**



Delaware Total	863,904
Total Children 0-19	228,097
Children 0-5	68,287
Children 6-9	43,698
Children 10-14	55,973
Children 15-19	60,139

Source: Delaware Population Consortium, Population Projection Series, Version 2007.0

**Population of Young Children Age 0-5 by Sex and Race, Delaware, July 1, 2007**

Gender/Age	All Races	White	Black	Other
<b>Male</b>				
0	5,778	4,096	1,514	168
1	5,708	4,050	1,482	176
2	5,690	4,039	1,471	180
3	5,739	4,076	1,475	188
4	5,529	3,950	1,401	178
5	5,642	4,022	1,432	188
<b>Female</b>				
0	5,791	4,102	1,521	168
1	5,731	4,061	1,495	175
2	5,712	4,049	1,483	180
3	5,759	4,086	1,486	187
4	5,545	3,958	1,411	176
5	5,663	4,034	1,433	186
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,287</b>	<b>48,523</b>	<b>17,614</b>	<b>2,150</b>

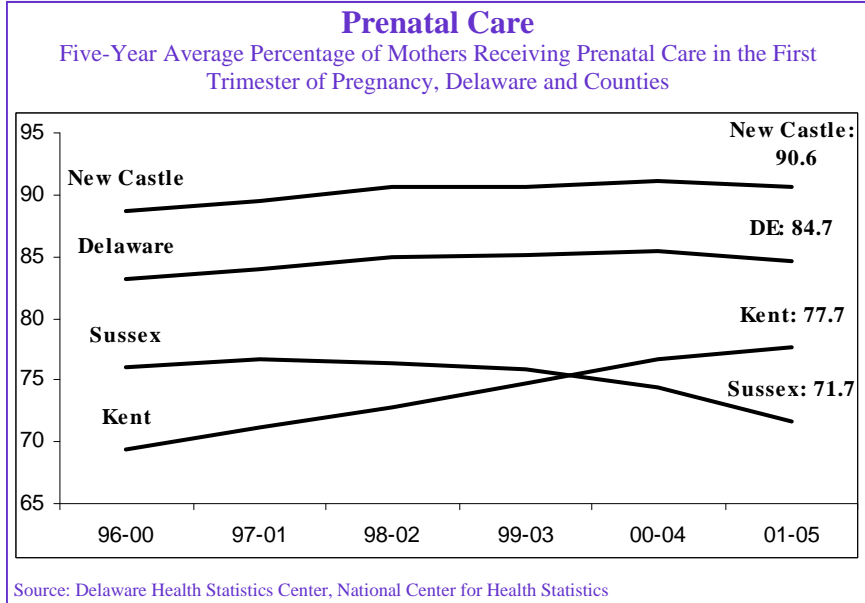
Source: Delaware Population Consortium, Population Projection Series, Version 2007.0

Demographically speaking, we are much less of a child centered society now than we were 100 years ago. In the United States, children accounted for 40 percent of the population in 1900, but only 26 percent in 2000. Similar trends are evident in Delaware.



## A Healthy Start for Delaware Children

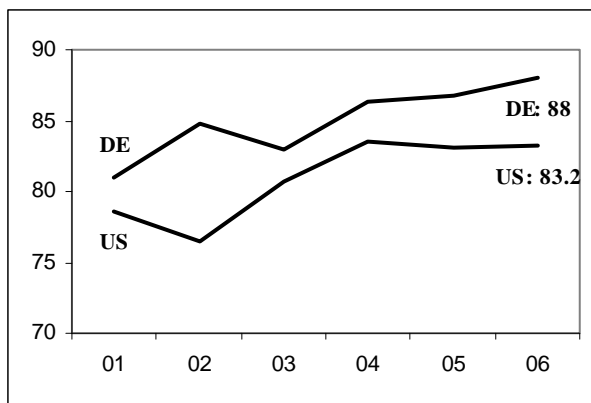
Early prenatal care maximizes infant and maternal health by identifying and treating health problems and influencing mothers' health behaviors. Expectant mothers who maintain regular prenatal health care visits have better nutrition, more regular physical activity and tend to avoid exposing their babies to unhealthy substances such as alcohol, drugs, tobacco or lead.



According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, hearing loss is one of the most frequently occurring birth defects. If hearing loss is not detected and treated early, it can impede speech, language and cognitive development. Over time, such a delay can lead to significant educational costs and learning difficulties. In 2005, the Delaware Legislature mandated Universal Hearing Screenings for all newborns and infants in the state. House Bill 355, signed into law by the Governor on June 18, 2008 requires individual and group health insurance contracts to provide coverage for hearing aids of up to \$1,000 per year, every three years, for covered dependents eighteen years of age or less.

### Child Immunizations

Percentage of Children Age 19-35 months who are fully Immunized, Delaware Compared to US



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services

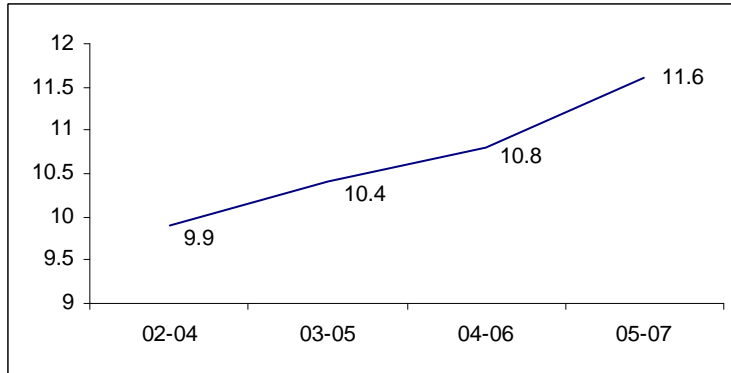
Diseases that once spread quickly and killed thousands of children and adults are now largely controlled by vaccines, one of the most cost-effective preventive health measures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccinating children against most vaccine-preventable diseases by the time they are two years old. Today, children in the United States routinely get 9 vaccinations that protect them from 13 diseases. Protecting children against severe illnesses also results in positive outcomes other than improved physical health. Children are able to attend school or child care more regularly and parents are kept home caring for sick children allowing increased parental productivity in the workplace.



## Access to Adequate Health Services

### Young Children without Health Insurance

Three-year Average Percentage of Young Children (0-5) without Health Insurance, Delaware



Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware

Children with health insurance, whether public or private, are more likely than children without insurance to have a regular and accessible source of health care. Having health insurance makes it more likely for a child to have a medical home. Improved access to effective health care means improvements in the child's health status over time, which can positively affect the child's life.

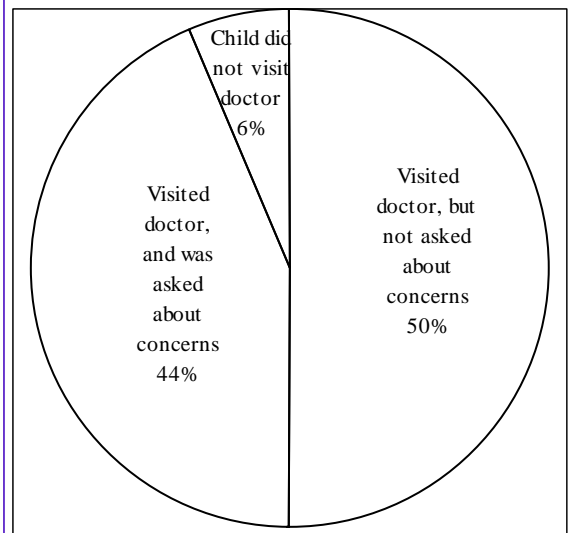
Signed into law by the Governor on June 18, 2008, House Bill 286 allows school districts and state agencies to share data for the purposes targeting children likely to be eligible to enroll in free or reduced price health insurance programs.

The American Academy of Pediatrics highlights medical home principles including:

- ★ Family-centered partnership ★
- ★ Community-based system ★
- ★ Transitions ★
- ★ Value ★

Ideally, care will be provided through a trusting, collaborative, working partnership with families, respecting their diversity and recognizing that they are the constant in a child's life. A family centered, coordinated network designed to promote the healthy development and well being of children and their families is core for the high-quality, developmentally appropriate health care services that continue uninterrupted as the individual moves along and within systems of services and from adolescence to adulthood. Finally, a high-performance health care system requires appropriate financing to support and sustain medical homes that promote system-wide quality care with optimal health outcomes, family satisfaction and cost efficiency.

### Percentage Delaware Children (0-5) Whose Doctors Asked About Parents' Concerns Regarding Learning, Development or Behavior in a Sample Year, 2003



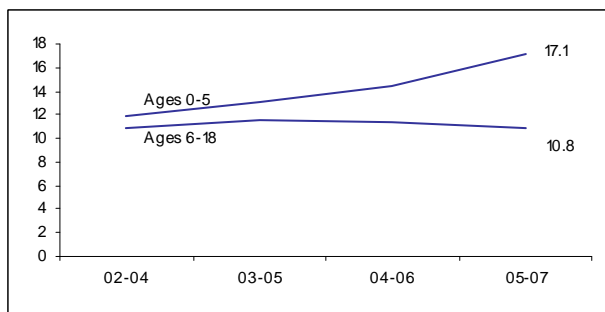
Source: 2003 National Survey of Children's Health



## An Economic Profile of Delaware's Youngest Children

### Children in Poverty

Three-year Average Percentage of Children (ages 0-5 and ages 6-18) in Poverty, Delaware

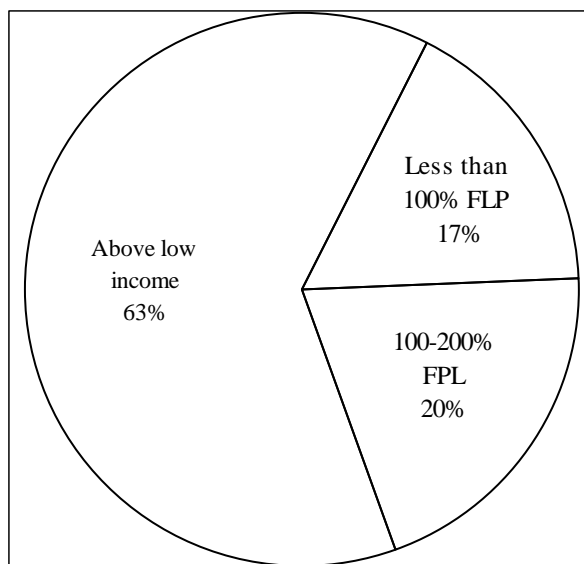


Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware

Very young children living in poverty are much less likely than are non-poor children to be able to recognize the letters of the alphabet, count to 20 or higher, write their name, read or pretend to read.

— *Child Trends Data Bank*

### Young Children (0-5) by Income, Delaware, 2006



Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health

Ensuring family economic security may be the single most important thing we can do to have a positive influence on our children's future, which directly relates to the future well-being of our communities, our state and our nation. According to the 2007 federal poverty guidelines, a family of three must make less than \$16,705 annually to be considered in poverty. The concept of a "living wage" provides a better understanding of what it takes for a family to meet minimum monthly costs. A living wage factors in costs for things like housing, food and transportation but does not factor in costs for things like entertainment or gifts. According to research conducted by the Economic Policy Institute, the estimated cost of living for an employed single mother with two children in Delaware is \$38,844 per year (or approx \$18 an hour). Minimum wage in Delaware has recently increased to \$7.15. Throughout Delaware, there is a shortage of employment opportunities offering wages that can adequately support families with children. Additionally, many jobs available are part-time or temporary and are less likely to pay benefits.



### The Delaware Child Poverty Task Force

In August of 2007, Governor Minner signed an Executive Order creating the Delaware Child Poverty Task Force. This task force has been charged with creating a plan for reducing child poverty in Delaware by 50% within ten years. For more information about the Task Force, please go online to:

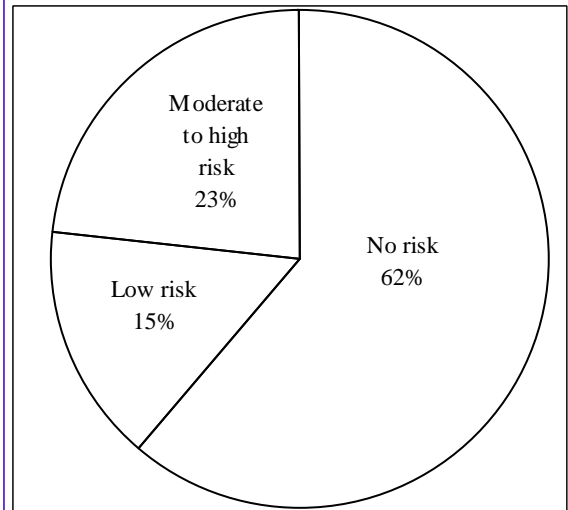
<http://kids.delaware.gov/cptf>



## Supporting Families of Young Children

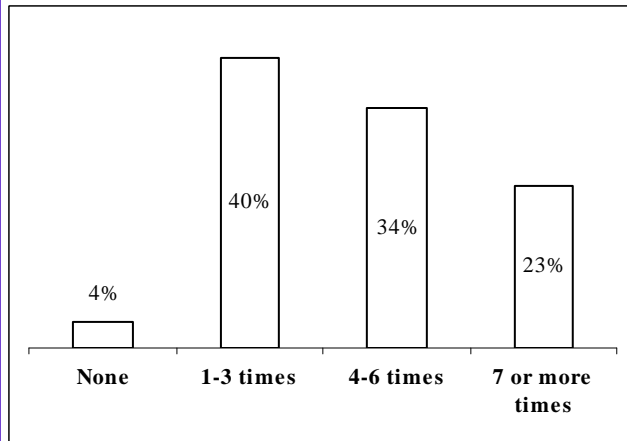
The circumstances and conditions into which a baby is born have lifelong implications because a child's family unit is the primary source of inputs into that child's development throughout the years before kindergarten. Stable families provide children the opportunity to learn and grow by exploring their surroundings with guidance and encouragement. In order to be successful at parenting, families need varying levels of access to information, services and community resources. This ranges from a level of engagement in social networks like churches, schools or recreational activities, to whether or not basic services (grocery stores, doctors, child care) are available in the local community. Societal issues of whether families are likely to have stability relate to economic opportunity- i.e., availability of local jobs, wages offered and cost of living.

**Percentage Delaware Children (0-5) at Risk for Developmental, Behavioral or Social Delay, 2003**



Source: 2003 National Survey of Children's Health

**Number of Times Children (0-5) Went on Outings with Family Members in a Sample Week, Delaware, 2003**



Source: 2003 National Survey of Children's Health,

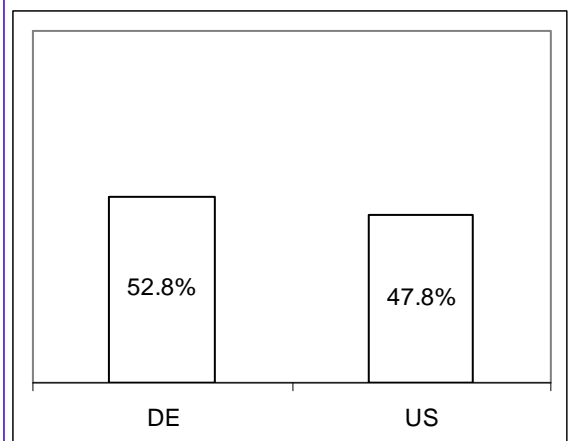
Most mothers and fathers report that they hug their children and tell their children that they love them every day, with daily hugs as high as 90 percent or more for the youngest children.

— *Child Trends Data Bank*

“Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive communities.”

— *Annie E. Casey Foundation*

**Percentage Children (0-5) Read Aloud to by Family Members Every Day in a Sample Week, Delaware versus US, 2003**



Source: 2003 National Survey of Children's Health



## Public Investments in Early Learning

All 50 states in the U.S. invest in child care subsidy systems to enable low-income parents to access child care while they work and to support child development. In Delaware, this subsidization is termed Purchase of Care or POC. Access to licensed child care ensures children's safety and well-being and, when the child care is high-quality, also promotes early learning.

### Available Child Care Number of Licensed Child Care Slots Delaware, 2006

Large Family Child Care Homes	891
Family Child Care Homes	10,308
Child Care Centers	41,101
<b>Total Available Child Care</b>	<b>52,300</b>

## Child Care Fees & POC Rates

Weekly Fee in Dollars to Families for Child Care and Weekly POC Reimbursement Rate paid by DSS to Provider by Child's Age, Delaware and Counties, 2007

	0-12 months	12-24 months	2 years	3 years	4 years	Kindergarten	School age
<b>Delaware</b>							
Minimum fee	82	70	65	63	60	48	33
Average fee	102	131	125	122	117	106	89
High fee	260	251	249	297	297	274	274
POC rate– family care	90	86	86	75	75	76	76
POC rate– center care	114	100	100	86	86	86	86
<b>New Castle County</b>							
Minimum fee	98	77	72	71	68	42	35
Average fee	158	146	139	136	134	94	77
High fee	251	238	249	297	297	274	136
POC rate– family care	112	107	107	87	87	87	87
POC rate– center care	147	124	124	110	110	110	110
<b>Kent County</b>							
Minimum fee	87	80	77	73	73	57	35
Average fee	122	111	108	105	104	95	77
High fee	186	184	183	160	160	137	136
POC rate– family care	82	75	75	69	69	71	71
POC rate– center care	97	87	87	74	74	74	74
<b>Sussex County</b>							
Minimum fee	82	72	65	65	63	50	35
Average fee	112	104	98	95	93	84	77
High fee	155	162	162	162	162	138	136
POC rate– family care	75	75	75	69	69	71	71
POC rate– center care	97	87	87	72	72	74	74

Source: The Family and Workplace Connection

### ★ DID YOU KNOW? ★

Requirements for operation of a Child Care Center in Delaware have been revised and became effective January 1, 2007. The title of the Requirements has now been changed to Delaware: Rules for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers. Information is available at:

[http://kids.delaware.gov/occl\\_new\\_rules.shtml](http://kids.delaware.gov/occl_new_rules.shtml)



## Quality Child Care and Early Learning in Delaware

Odds that children will succeed in school and in life improve with high-quality early learning opportunities. Participating in a quality program can enhance a child's academic performance and aid the child's ability to interact with his peers. Specifically, children attending high-quality programs are less likely to repeat grades, drop out of school or need special education than children who have not had high-quality educational experiences. Common elements of quality programs include:

- ★ Highly skilled teachers
- ★ Small class sizes and high staff-to-child ratios
- ★ Age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting
- ★ A language-rich environment
- ★ Warm, responsive interactions between staff and children

### Did You Know?

In 2005, the University of Delaware's Center for Disability Studies conducted a Delaware Early Care and Education Baseline Quality Study. Research showed that, with a few exceptions, the quality of early care and education programming in Delaware is mediocre to poor. Of significant concern is the quality of infant-toddler care throughout the state. The full report is available at:

<http://www.udel.edu/cds/downloads/BaselineQualityStudy2005.pdf>



### Delaware Stars for Early Success Delaware's Quality Rating and Improvement System for Child Care and Early Learning Programs

Program quality rating and improvement systems have been developed in most states as a uniform method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings. Rating systems build on licensing regulations and help policymakers and funders better understand the quality of programming available in the community and the quality improvement resources needed. These systems also help programs make important, incremental changes to achieve higher-quality benchmarks and help parents make informed decisions when selecting a program for their child.

Delaware Stars for Early Success, a voluntary quality rating and improvement system, was developed as a statewide collaborative effort by members of the early childhood community. At the request of the Delaware Early Care and Education Council, the Family and Workplace Connection facilitated this process which resulted in the draft plan of the Delaware Stars. Programs participating in Delaware Stars for Early Success receive a rating based on a five star scale that ranges from solely meeting Child Care Licensing regulations (Star Level 1) to meeting increasingly higher quality standards in each of the following categories:

- ★ Qualifications and Professional Development ★
- ★ Learning Environment and Curriculum ★
- ★ Family and Community Partnerships ★
- ★ Management and Administration ★

For more information about Delaware Stars for Early Success, please contact the Family and Workplace Connection at (302) 479-1579 or online at [www.familyandworkplace.org/DEStars/DEStarsmain.asp](http://www.familyandworkplace.org/DEStars/DEStarsmain.asp)





Significant scientific evidence supports the correlation between early experience, brain development and long-term developmental outcomes. Based on this evidence, it is imperative that children enter school healthy and ready to learn. In Delaware, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Initiative supports the state and its communities in building a coordinated system of service for improved early childhood health— one that will address access to comprehensive health services and medical homes, social-emotional development and mental health of young children, early care and education, parenting education and family support. This *Indicators for Early Success* Issue Brief marks the commencement of a statewide collaborative effort to identify accessible, reliable indicators that can track progress toward desired results in building early childhood systems and coordinating policy and services in Delaware.

*One of fifty-one similar projects throughout the United States funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, **KIDS COUNT in Delaware** is housed in the Center for Community Research and Service at the University of Delaware and led by a board of committed and concerned child and family advocates from the public and private sectors. **KIDS COUNT in Delaware** is especially indebted to the support of the University of Delaware and the State of Delaware.*



*This issue brief was made possible by a grant from the Delaware Division of Public Health’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Initiative.*



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