

Governor's Weekly Message Transcript: Ensuring Every Child has the Best Opportunity to Succeed

<http://governor.delaware.gov/podcasts/video/WeeklyMessage151023.mp4>

We have no more effective way to give our children the opportunities they deserve than by investing in their development from the day they're born. It's why I'm proud that our state has prioritized early childhood education – from infant care through pre-school. Our efforts are rooted in growing scientific evidence that shows early experiences literally shape the brain, setting the foundation for a child's lifelong health and success. We are making great progress for Delaware's kids.

This past week, we celebrated the Christina Early Education Center for becoming the state's 100th 5-star program. That's the highest rating in our state. Better still, more than 58 percent of the state's most vulnerable children are enrolled in highly rated Stars programs, up from just 5 percent in 2011. That's thousands more low-income kids getting a great start. This progress is not by chance. It's happened because, even as we have faced significant budget challenges, our state has rallied around this issue, including an additional \$22 million investment beginning in 2011.

As significant as that dollar figure was, it also represented something more – a powerful message that no family should be denied the chance to give their kid the vital early supports that make a difference for a lifetime. An impressive community of public officials, early childhood providers, and private sector and not-for-profit leaders have rallied around this

issue to drive great results. We've provided direct support to teachers, assisted with child development screenings and mental health consultations, and increased reimbursements for high quality programs that accept low-income students. We have a lot to be proud of. But our mission is not complete until every Delaware child has the best opportunity to succeed. By recommitting to sustaining and building on our early childhood initiatives, we'll keep Delaware moving forward.