



Photo courtesy of East Bay Community Action Program in Newport, R.I.



## Save The Date

**June 1:** Last day for families to submit lottery application for [2015-2016 Pre-K Program](#)

**July 6:** Application deadline for CCRI [Early Childhood Education & Training Program](#) for fall 2015

## Update regarding immunizations for child care workers!

Vaccines for employees working in programs licensed by DCYF at the clinics in [this link](#) will be now be provided at no-cost! Any child care workers that attended the clinic held on April 25 will be reimbursed.

Also, information on presumed immunity for MMR for those who were born before 1957 and presumed immunity for Varicella (chickenpox) for those born before 1980 will be available soon.

## Update from the Early Learning Data Team

The Early Learning Program Search is now available on the Exceed [website](#). Thank you to all the providers, administrators, and state staff who participated in testing! The search will be publicly promoted in conjunction with the Quality Matters public awareness campaign for families, led by BrightStars. The Quality Matters campaign sends a strong message to families about the importance of high-quality

experiences in the first five years of life. The campaign will link to the [Exceed webpage](#), provide the ability to search for early learning programs in Rhode Island that meet the needs of families and will include information to assist parents in finding high-quality early learning programs.

Work on the Workforce Registry, Universal Program Application, account management, and user interface design is all underway concurrently. The release of these pieces will be integrated and sequenced to provide the most value to our users and the best possible user experience.

For early learning professionals, the Workforce Registry will reduce their paperwork burden and allow them to centralize and track their employment and education history, their professional development participation, and professional credentials. It is designed to provide useful information at a policy-level to make informed decisions about how to best support the early care and education workforce.

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## The Center for Early Learning Professionals reaches grant goal

Among its many services to Rhode Island's early childhood community, the Center for Early Learning Professionals was charged with awarding nearly \$6 million in Quality Improvement Grants (QIGs) to support early childhood programs and providers in moving up the state's quality continuum. The QIGs were funded by the state's Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge grant. Because of the overwhelming, positive response by the early childhood community to these grant opportunities, the Center has successfully reached their goal and distributed all of the grant funds. The Center will not be offering a wave eight funding period.

The Center offered a total of seven waves of funding. In waves one through six, \$4.6 million in grants were awarded to 287 early childhood providers across the state, including centers, family child care home providers, and public schools. A large concentration of grants have gone to programs serving low-income children and families.

Grant recipients have used their funds to pay for such things as staff professional development, materials to enhance the learning environment, and tuition for early childhood college courses. One program noted that the grant funds allowed them to purchase classroom materials that raised their ECERS scores. They stated: "This grant provided one of our teachers the opportunity to take an early childhood college course which increased our BrightStars rating within our Teacher Qualifications standard!"

In wave seven, the Center received 69 applications requesting a total of \$1.4 million in grant funds. Wave seven funding decisions were finalized around May 15. At that point, the Center reached their goal of distributing a total of \$6 million to the state's early childhood community.

We thank everyone who received QIG funding for the strong applications you submitted over the past year. The Center has already witnessed the positive impact the QIG funds are making in advancing early childhood programs along the quality continuum.

Exceed will be releasing additional grants to help programs reach program improvement goals later this year. Continue to read the Exceed E-News and check our [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) to receive announcements about future opportunities.

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## Update from R.I.'s State-Funded Pre-K Program!

Families interested enrolling their student in one of the Rhode Island's pre-kindergarten classes can submit their lottery application through Monday, June 1, 2015. Families can apply [online here](#) or family members may pick up an application at any pre-kindergarten [program location](#) or download the application by [clicking here](#). Completed hard copy applications should be returned to the program of choice. Families may apply at more than one site if multiple sites exist in the community of resident, but only one application per site will be accepted.

Exceed is excited to report that Rhode Island is among the best in the country for the quality of early learning programs. A report that the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) released this month, "[The State of Preschool 2014](#)," finds that Rhode Island is one of only five states to meet all ten standards, or benchmarks, for the youngest learners. The standards include having comprehensive early learning standards, significant degree and training requirements for prekindergarten teachers and assistants, strong requirements for class sizes and staff-to-child ratios, and strong requirements for screenings and referrals, meals, and monitoring. This marks the 5th consecutive year that Rhode Island has met all 10 standards.

### Fun Family Activity Spotlight



This month, Exceed is thrilled to share Cameron Kadek's story. Cameron, a mother of two young boys, recently completed the RIELDS Fun Family Activities parent training program, taught by Amy Griffin. Cameron enrolled in this class while her older son was in a program designed to prepare students for preschool. The course educates families about how they can support and encourage the development of their children through fun and engaging activities. Cameron shared that prior

to taking this course, mathematics activities were not a big part of her children's lives, but she now ensures that all areas are emphasized equally after learning the importance of doing so, though the family's favorite activities are those which are creative and involve arts and crafts. Cameron also shared that she has seen remarkable development in her boys, especially her three-year-old, Damien, pictured below. She continued, providing a brief anecdote that highlights the cognitive strides he's made. She shared that together, they made silly putty, and she explained to him that a chemical reaction was occurring when the ingredients mixed, causing the new product. Later, when helping her bake muffins, Damien remarked that in cooking, chemical reactions play a crucial role in creating the new food. From the experience of completing the RIELDS Fun Family Activities parent training program, Cameron has learned the importance of thinking about the interactions she shares with her children, and how just slight tweaks in daily routines can be exponentially beneficial to their development.

*The preceding article was written by Amanda Siegel, Intern, R.I. Department of Elementary & Secondary Education*



Interested in learning more about the work of the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant from April 2015? A copy of the April report to the Early Learning Council is [available here](#).