

LAWS OF DELAWARE
VOLUME 85
CHAPTER 191
153rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORMERLY
HOUSE SUBSTITUTE NO. 1
FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 15

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO PLAY-BASED LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Part I, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

Chapter 48. Delaware Play to Learn Program.

§ 4801. Purpose.

Child-centered, play-based learning is the most rigorous and most developmentally appropriate way for children in the early childhood grade levels to learn literacy, science, technology, engineering, art, and math academic concepts. Therefore, it is the intent of the General Assembly to encourage local education agencies and the Department of Education to include play-based learning in all curricula domains from preschool through second grade and to provide professional development in play-based learning for all public school early childhood educators in preschool through second grade.

§ 4802. Definitions.

For purposes of this chapter:

(1) “Child-directed” means interaction in which the child is helped to direct and lead play in any way the child wishes unless there is harmful or destructive activity.

(2) “Domain” means a specified sphere of activity or knowledge.

(3) “Early childhood education” includes prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first through second grade in all public schools.

(4) “Early childhood educators” includes administrators, teachers, and other educators of children in prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first through second grade in all public schools.

(5) “Guided play” means a playful learning context in which an experience is initiated and supported by the teacher, is directed by children, and involves a purposeful learning goal.

(6) “Play” or “play-based learning” means a universal, innate, and essential human activity that children engage in for pleasure, enjoyment, and recreation. Play, solitary or social, begins during infancy and develops in increasing complexity through childhood. Play integrates and supports children’s development and learning across cognitive, physical, social, and emotional domains, and across curriculum content. Play can lead to inquiry and discovery and facilitate future learning.

(7) “Professional development” means any of a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness.

(8) “Reading for pleasure” means reading that is freely chosen or that readers freely and enthusiastically continue after it is assigned.

§ 4803. Program.

(a) Early childhood educators are encouraged to create a learning environment that facilitates play-based learning as follows:

(1) Create a learning environment that facilitates child-directed experiences based upon developmentally appropriate, evidence-based and research-based early childhood practices and purposefully planned, sustained, play opportunities, including movement, creative expression, exploration, socialization, reading for pleasure, art, music, and dramatic play.

(2) Develop physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and academic learning opportunities in all curricular domains which may include time for the discovery of each child’s individual needs, abilities, and talents.

(3) Allow the needs of students to be met by incorporating and integrating play-based learning into daily practice.

(b) Local education agencies may provide ongoing early childhood professional development in play-based learning for early childhood educators, which may include existing early childhood professional development programs developed by the Department, and which may include how to internalize units and lessons within curriculum to ensure the most interactive and engaging portions of the lessons are included as well as strategies to include a play-based approach that still maintains the rigor of the instructional materials.

Section 2. The Department of Education may promulgate regulations to implement this Act.

Section 3. This Act may be cited as the Delaware Play to Learn Act.

Approved September 2, 2025