

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHY

Name: Mary Neal Jones, M.S.

Title: Program and Policy Analyst

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Mary Neal Jones serves on the child care sector team as a program and policy analyst in the Center for Children's Health Innovation at Nemours Health and Prevention Services. She focuses on the healthy eating and physical activity campaign, developing and implementing strategies, training, technical assistance and tools to promote healthier child care environments, practices and policies that impact Delaware's youngest children. Mary Neal coordinates the Child Care Learning Collaborative, an intervention designed to engage large child care center teams in the ongoing and collaborative process of making healthy change. Working collaboratively with external partners, she supports quality in early childhood education as both a wise investment and a powerful support for optimal child development across all domains.

Previously, Mary Neal developed and directed a wide range of innovative programs for children from birth through age 18 in government, school and community settings. She directed the Newark Preschool for ten years, revising the curriculum to a developmentally appropriate model. Mary Neal developed and opened a child care center in partnership with Bright Horizons Family Solutions and JPMorgan Chase. As director, she recruited and engaged a team that built strong partnerships with families, led the center to NAEYC accreditation within two years of opening, and created a community-based "Bright Space" where neighborhood children, previously without access to appropriate materials and equipment, could play safely.

Mary Neal and her husband, Barry, have two (wonderful) grown children: Brant is a post-doctoral fellow in mathematics at the University of California at Davis and Evelyn teaches sixth grade in Denver. Bicycling and hiking keep them all moving!