



Application Criteria: **2019 Outdoor Play Interventions**



Background

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is the nation's leading community development organization and specializes in building partnerships among the corporate, philanthropic, and public sectors to support grassroots community revitalization. Created in 1980, LISC has offices in 30 cities and numerous rural locations nationwide. The Rhode Island office opened in 1991. LISC's national child care program, the Community Investment Collaborative for Kids (CICK), was created in 1995 to improve the quality and expand the supply of child care in low-income communities through new investments in physical facilities.

Recognizing that child care providers need additional support to address facilities issues, LISC in collaboration with a coalition of public and private funding partners, formed the Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund (RICCELFF) in 2001. RICCELFF makes low-cost loans, awards grants, and delivers training and technical expertise. The technical assistance includes site analysis for new facilities, project planning, and design and implementation advice for rehabilitation or construction designed to improve health, safety, accessibility, energy efficiency, and quality conditions in child care facilities. LISC also provides technical assistance on the financing of these facility improvements and can help to structure fundraising campaigns, debt financing, and equity investments to implement design plans. Since inception in 2001, the RICCELFF has invested more than \$21 million in child care facilities across Rhode Island. Technical support has been offered to more than 200 organizations and hundreds of early childhood professionals have participated in RICCELFF training programs.

Adding More Value to Outdoor Play

The benefits of a well-designed outdoor play space are endless. For children participating in child care programs the time spent outdoors while at those programs may constitute the majority of their outdoor time each week. Thus, child care facilities play a critical role in offering play environments that support children's learning, promote active play, and provide exposure to an array of natural elements.

Research has shown that even small interventions that add natural elements, sensory variety, and open ended play to children's environments can have an important impact on child development. At this time

the RICCELFF is seeking interested child care and early learning centers from across Rhode Island to participate in the third year of the Outdoor Play Intervention Program (OPIP) to help develop, design, and implement small scale play components that increase the value of outdoor play. These components – or “interventions” – could include the addition of unique sand and water play, art elements, loose parts play, natural elements, or simple cosmetic changes to the space. The program will also focus on strategic space planning to promote increased and enhanced interaction between children, children and their teachers, and children and their physical environment. As a participant in this program you will receive, at no cost to your center, a conceptual design plan and up to \$5,000 to implement these small scale strategies on your play space. As part of this project you will receive:

- A site visit and brainstorming meeting with the center director and other key staff for input on needs and concerns for outdoor space.
- Photographic documentation, rough field measurements, and a sketch of the play space’s existing conditions.
- A conceptual plan of the play space to include the proposed design “interventions” by one of the RICCELFF’s consulting designers.
- A private grant in the range of \$1,000 to \$5,000 to help build out proposed “interventions”.
- On-going on-site technical assistance to develop a plan and process for completing interventions, and assistance in coordinating volunteer “days of service.”
- Assistance in developing a fundraising plan for any financial needs that exceed the grant award.
- Public recognition of your participation in the project to other funders and state leaders.

This Project could be for you if:	This Project is <u>NOT</u> for you if:
You don't mind if your kids get dirty when they play outside	You do not want your kids getting dirty when they play outside
You have teachers willing to take risks and try new things	You are risk averse
You are willing to let visitors tour your center to observe the “interventions”	You do not want people visiting your center
You are interested in the quality of play your children are engaged in, and if it helps to increase your BrightStars rating then that's just icing on the cake	You only want to take on a project right now if it is going to increase your BrightStars rating for sure
Your outdoor play space is currently safe (and you have documentation indicating so)	You have major health and safety issues you are working to address in your outdoor play space
You have staff and/or parents who would be able and willing to help build and create things, help fundraise and would get excited about a new adventure	You have limited ability to engage center volunteers
You are willing to reach out to your community to fundraise and solicit volunteers and donations	You have limited ability to engage the community
You are excited at the idea of trying something “outside the box”	Your goal is a very conventional play space with new equipment and lots of poured in place type surfacing
You are open to rethinking the way you utilize your space (especially if you have a blank slate to start with)	Your space is overly crowded and you are not interested in removing or replacing any of your play components or rethinking the way your space is arranged

The plans and interventions developed as part of this project will be featured in training sessions as well as publications. Centers selected will be highlighted throughout a variety of media.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to licensed Rhode Island center-based child care and early learning programs serving children from birth to school age or Local Education Agencies (LEAs) serving preschool age children.

Applicants may be either non-profit or for-profit corporations serving at least 30% DHS subsidized children, with greater priority given to programs serving even higher percentages of DHS subsidized children. Applicants must provide a copy of their 501c3 certification (if applicable), or proof that they are registered to do business in the State of Rhode Island. As part of this application please describe how the business is owned (include the form of business entity -i.e., non-profit/for-profit corporation or partnership). A copy of a Good Standing Certificate from the RI Secretary of State will be required.

If you do not serve at least 30% DHS subsidized children, please provide alternate proof of a charitable purpose.

REQUIREMENTS OF GRANTEES

Grantees receiving funds under this project will be asked to agree to the following:

- Provide copies of any existing site plans (if available) and/or photographs of the existing space
- Provide images of the proposed space for intervention
- Provide documentation indicating your playground is free of major hazards (for example a Certified Playground Safety Inspection report)
- Make key staff available to meet with RICCELFF project consultants for input into site design
- Provide a tour of the space post-“intervention”
- Comply with any relevant project and financial reporting requirements
- Provide articles of Incorporation or other applicable organization documentation

SELECTION PRIORITIES

Priority will be given to proposals that address the following goals:

- The program can articulate their “*outdoor play philosophy*” as part of their overall programming and curriculum, including commitment to spending time outdoors with children each day.
- The organization can demonstrate that it has a history of particularly *innovative practices and ideas*.
- The organization can cite compelling ways that they have previously adopted practices that are demonstrated to improve child health and well-being, including how they have communicated with and *involved staff and parents* in those practices.
- The organization has a *key staff person who can be the lead on the project*, and can describe how this person’s qualifications make them a unique fit for this project.
- The center can demonstrate a *strong commitment to quality* (for example through NAEYC Accreditation, RIDE Certification and/or by actively participating in the BrightStars quality rating system.)
- The organization can cite an example of *completing a facility-related project* from start to finish.
- The organization can articulate their previous success with *engaging volunteers* and/or *fundraising* for building and site improvements.

- The program can show a commitment to *servicing high-needs children*, such as children participating in CCAP and other special populations. Include a breakdown of children currently served (use the following chart as a guide):

	# of DHS subsidized children	# of private pay children	# of other children (Head Start/Early Head Start, IEPs.)	Total # of children
INFANT				
TODDLER				
PRESCHOOL				
SCHOOL-AGE				

If the total percentage of DHS subsidized children is less than 30%, please provide an explanation of why you believe your center is serving a high-needs population.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Provide a written narrative briefly addressing the competition priorities listed above. In particular, please provide responses to the following questions:

1. What is the name of your center?
2. What is the address of your center?
3. Are you a for-profit or non-profit program? If for-profit please describe how you are incorporated.
4. Please provide the number of children served and number of classrooms.
5. What percent of children enrolled are state subsidized (CCAP/DHS)?
6. Please provide a description of the organization (such as mission, strength of the staff, capacity to achieve goals, etc.)
7. Provide a detailed description of your current facility and outdoor space and describe your goals for improvement (include pertinent photos and playground safety inspection information).
8. Using the criteria outlined above, describe why you believe your program is a good fit for this initiative.
9. Provide at least one example of a facility project that you successfully implemented from start to finish.
10. Provide your BrightStars rating, and if the rating is less than a 4 describe the concrete steps you are currently taking to improve your rating.

Unlike previous years, this application does not have a specific due date and will be open throughout the year. To be most competitive, it is recommended applications be received in early spring. Awards are limited and will be provided to centers meeting all criteria.

Applications should be submitted to:
Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund @ Local Initiatives Support Corporation
c/o Erin Cox, AIA
146 Clifford Street
Providence, RI 02903
-or-
ecox@lisc.org

Electronic or hard copy submissions will be accepted. Questions should be directed to Erin Cox at 401.519.5684 or ecox@lisc.org. We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions or need further clarification on the initiative.