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News from the Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund



February 2018 eNEWS



2018 Facility Needs Assessment

The Child Care Facilities Fund is asking you, our RI Early Childhood Care and Education Leaders, to respond to a Facility Survey in order to help us better understand your programs, facilities, program practices, and the obstacles you are facing with regards to indoor and outdoor learning environments.

As a thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules, every center that completes an on-line survey will be entered to win either:

- A **\$500.00 grant**- Five centers will be randomly selected for a \$500 grant to purchase indoor and outdoor materials of your choice to enhance the overall learning environment.
- A copy of one of our favorite **child care and early learning environment resource books**- Five centers will be randomly selected to receive a complimentary resource book.

We plan to use your feedback as we prioritize funding resources, professional development, technical assistance, and other opportunities to partner with you in expanding access to quality child care and early education in communities throughout Rhode Island. Recipients will be selected on *March 9, 2018*.

[Click Here to take the Survey](#)

Outdoor Play Interventions Program



The Request for Proposals (RFP) for a second year of our Outdoor Play Interventions Program (OPIP) has closed and we are excited to review all of the applications! This program will continue focusing on small-scale, low-cost solutions that enhance the quality of outdoor play spaces.

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 nature, sensory variety, and open ended play to children's environments can have an important impact on child development and can promote more active movement throughout play spaces. [Learn more about OPIP here](#) .

This year's program is being funded in part by a 2018 BlueAngel Community Grant from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island. Blue Cross recognizes that spending time outdoors in safe, well designed play spaces can help improve health outcomes for children. We are grateful for their support, and for the partnership of all of our funders past and present (<https://riccelff.org/about-us/our-partners/>).

We look forward to sharing project ideas, challenges, and solutions that arise this year and hope they inspire you to make changes to your own space!



Safe Places for Early Care & Education

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has created the *Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education* program to provide information on the negative health effects ECE centers may face when located in places exposed to environmental

contaminants. The program offers guidance for choosing safe locations including strategies for getting additional information related to the following four critical considerations:



Choose Safe Places
for Early Care and Education
Planning. Guidance. Protection.

1. Former use of the site
2. Nearby sites and nearby activities
3. Naturally occurring contamination
4. Safe drinking water

You can learn more by visiting their resource-rich website here: [Choose Safe Places for Early Care and Education](#).

One crucial point made by the ATSDR is that choosing a safe place for early care and education must be a collaborative process. If you are thinking of opening a new child care center or relocating, the RICCF is here to help in finding an appropriate and safe location. Our free technical assistance services include:

- Navigating physical space challenges related to licensing and quality improvement;
- Creating financing and fundraising plans to turn project dreams into realities;
- Assessing the feasibility of proposed construction and renovation projects; and
- Obtaining playground audits and priority improvement plans.

Apply for Technical Assistance

The RICCF also offers a *Child Care Center Facilities Development & Financing* resource guide. Section 3 of this guide focuses specifically on identifying and securing an appropriate site. [Click here to view the Child Care Center Facilities Development & Financing guide.](#)

Playground Safety - Danger vs. Risk



The outdoor play space offers endless opportunity for children to be physically and psychologically engaged, where they can creatively express themselves, build self-confidence, challenge themselves, and develop life-long healthy habits, but it *is also the place where most preventable injury occurs in child care centers.*

It is important to offer children the opportunity to take risks to discover and develop new skills; to build their ability to assess and negotiate obstacles as they grow. However, danger (or safety hazard) is not the same as risk. This topic is highlighted in the recently published Playground Professionals article, "Danger or Risk? Do you Know the Difference?" [Read the article here.](#)

Knowing what to look for can feel overwhelming, and an important first step if you feel uncertain about whether there are dangerous conditions (or safety hazards) on your play space, is to seek out help from a professional. A [Certified Playground Safety Inspector \(CPSI\)](#) will provide a safety audit of your space. A safety audit includes a detailed report on your playground equipment along with a prioritized listing of any non-compliant components with recommendations for addressing them. This can then be the starting point for more informal, ongoing safety inspections which can be done by in-house staff on a regular basis to ensure safety is maintained and well-documented.

The RICCF's newest self-paced online course, *Child Care Center Playground Safety*, provides information regarding the differences between risk and hazards, introduces playground safety standards and guidelines, identifies common hazards that may be found in spaces, and provides information on safety documentation and management. You can register for online courses and explore this newest offering by clicking the button below.

Access Online Learning Modules

News from Our Partners

2018-2019 State Pre-K Request for Proposals



The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is requesting proposals to expand the Rhode Island State Pre-K Program. Due to changes in grantees, this Request for Proposals (RFP) prioritizes funding awards for new classrooms in order to maintain 60 classrooms for the 2018-2019 school year. Applications will be reviewed for classrooms in all 11 State Pre-K communities with prioritization of classrooms in Providence and Cranston.

For those programs with existing 3 year contracts, RIDE will be doing contract extensions so there is no need to re-apply for funding this year. This RFP is for those who would like to propose to operate additional or new State Pre-K classrooms above and beyond those which have already been awarded.

Applications from interested programs are due on or before March 30, 2018. Click the button below to learn more.

Request for Proposals

Have you missed any of our previous eNEWS editions? Do you want to reference something you saw in an article from the past?

Our entire eNEWS catalog is available on our website. Be sure to [check it out here!](#)

About RICCELFF

The Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund (RICCELFF) is an innovative public-private partnership dedicated to expanding access to quality child care and early education opportunities throughout Rhode Island. The RICCELFF provides the capital and technical expertise that child care and early learning centers need to improve the quality and capacity of their physical space. The RICCELFF provides a combination of training, technical assistance, grant funding and flexible, affordable financing for a wide range of indoor and outdoor projects including minor renovations or construction of new, state-of-the-art facilities and playground spaces. [Click here](#) to learn more about what the RICCELFF can offer your program.

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