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



January eNEWS

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Facility Grants are Complete!

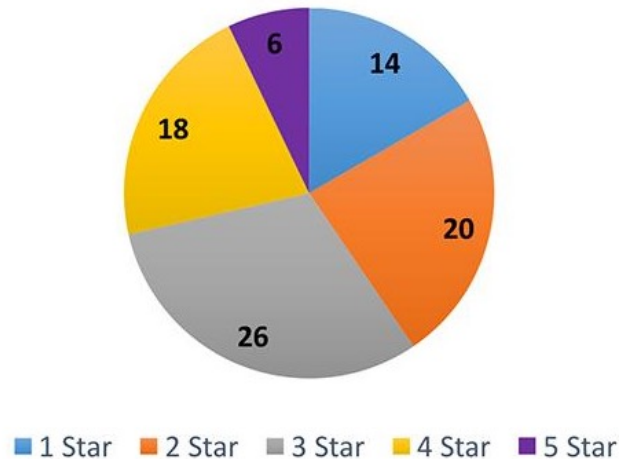


With funds made available through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant, we were able to award a total of \$2,325,324 in small grants to 84 early learning centers operated by 59 non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses and public schools all across Rhode Island. Some highlights from these projects include:

- Funding coupled with RICCELFF technical assistance enabled 20 centers to correct DCYF licensing variance issues.
- A total of 114 individual projects were funded, these included indoor and outdoor space projects, focused on both planning and minor construction such as; adding natural light to spaces, improving building security and egress, reconfiguring group sizes and addressing health and safety issues, particularly in outdoor spaces.
- 71 centers received funding and support to have playground safety inspections conducted by certified inspectors, helping to identify and correct potential hazards to children. The funding also supported the development of comprehensive designs that not only addressed safety concerns but also resulted in concrete plans for developing appropriate and engaging outdoor spaces.

- Improvements made to facilities through the RTTT-ELC Facility Grant program benefitted over 7,200 children (63% high needs) in 28 cities and towns across Rhode Island.
- The facility grants benefitted centers at all different quality levels.
- There were 17 centers that increased their BrightStars rating by 1 star and 3 centers that increased by 2 stars during this time frame.

Grantee BrightStars Ratings



In addition to all of the great outcomes for early learning centers, we were excited to see the dollars spent through the facility grants going back into Rhode Island's economy. There were 58 different licensed contractors and 22 professional design firms hired for grant-funded jobs through this program, some of whom gained new skills and experience working within the requirements of federally funded projects.

We are so excited to have been a part of so many facility improvements throughout the state! Stay tuned as we highlight some of these projects over the next few months.

News from the RICCELFF Team: Anne Connery has Retired!

Many of you know and have worked with Anne Connery over her more than 40 years of dedication to Rhode Island's early learning community. We are so glad that Anne chose to spend her final years here with us at LISC and the Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund! Anne provided technical assistance to centers working to make improvements to their space, helped us organize and implement training programs, and represented us on many state-wide committees. She will be missed but we wish her well on this next chapter of her life! The rest of the RICCELFF team, Cindy, Erin, Megan and Nati are all still here and ready to help with your facility projects in 2017! Give us a call.



What's New in Health and Safety – Winter Care for your Outdoor Play Space

1. Pay extra attention to things like scarves, long ties on jackets or other loose string-type things on children's clothing. These items can become stuck on equipment and cause a choking hazard!
2. Be sure to check equipment for ice and snow build-up.
3. Remember that when playground safety surfacing becomes frozen it is no longer effective and may not provide protection if a child were to fall.
4. Avoid using a metal-edged shovel to clear snow from safety surfacing such as poured-in-place or rubber matting. A shovel with a Teflon-bladed edge can help reduce damage and dislodgment of the material.



Children should absolutely continue to go outside to play during the winter months, but there may be times when playground equipment cannot be safely used and should be closed off from play. You can still get outside – just be ready with alternate activities for children!

Learn More

Infant/Toddler Corner

We know there are numerous benefits of outdoor play and exploration, but often figuring out the best way for infants and toddlers to get the most of it can be tricky. Check out this resource from the Early Head Start National Resource Center, [***Supporting Outdoor Play and Exploration for Infants and Toddlers.***](#)

Building a Better Business



Being a successful leader includes staying in touch with news and happenings from your field. Be sure you've subscribed to receive news from these important Rhode Island resources:

- **EXCEED**
[Visit their Website](#)
- **BrightStars**
[Visit their Website](#)
- **The Center for Early Learning Professionals**
[Visit their Website](#)
- **Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facility Fund**
[Visit their Website](#)
- **Kids Count**
[Visit their Website](#)

Also be sure to follow us on Twitter and Facebook to hear first about funding and other opportunities! [Follow us here](#), and feel free to tweet at us [@LISC_ChildCare](#). We also regularly share educational information, as well as research and advocacy tools.

News from National LISC: The Best Way to Score a

Touchdown in Communities? Show Up for the Game.

LISC CEO, Maurice Jones, lays out last year's record investments and impact in the hundreds of neighborhoods where we work. And in this season of football playoffs and New Year's resolutions, he reaffirms LISC's ongoing commitment to bringing its A-game to revitalizing communities.

Pictured: Maurice Jones, second from the left, tours a Houston, TX community during the #LISCLeads 2016 Conference.



Read More

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

***Our entire eNEWS catalog is available on our website.
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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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