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



January 2018 eNEWS



Infant and Toddler Interior Space Design Interventions

Earlier this year LISC released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a pilot year of our Infant and Toddler Interior Design Interventions program. This program is focused on making small, incremental changes to a space in an effort to improve the physical environment in ways that will support and bolster program quality. We received 14 strong applications from programs across the state. Choosing just two or three will be a challenge for sure. Many applicants described similar issues in their classrooms. Some of the top issues are highlighted below:

- **Noise Pollution:** One of the biggest concerns called out in the proposals was about noise, and how to reduce it in a classroom. Noise, or unwanted sound, can have a huge impact on the health and well-being of both children and staff and there are ways to mitigate it within the built environment. The Eco-Healthy Child Care

Program through the Children's Environmental Health Network created a Fact Sheet on noise pollution to help providers better understand the issue. [Read the fact sheet here](#). And don't forget to review our *Child Care Center Design* guide with its newly added section on acoustics. [Click here to view our Child Care Center Design guide](#).

- **Storage Solutions:** Having enough easily accessible storage keeps classrooms better organized and helps them function more effectively. It also ensures the ability to frequently rotate materials and to provide enough space and varying opportunities to keep children engaged. Often centers do not have enough storage space, or quickly outgrow what they have. We hope to explore creative combinations of integrating new storage solutions in classrooms while helping programs make good choices about removing unwanted or unused materials from spaces.
- **Incorporating Natural Elements:** Many centers want to have a better connection between the exterior environment and the inside space. There are so many opportunities to bring nature inside – even in very seemingly small ways!

These are just a few of the themes that are emerging from our Infant and Toddler Interior Space work. We look forward to sharing more themes, ideas, challenges, and solutions that arise throughout this pilot year!

DEADLINE EXTENDED: Outdoor Play Interventions RFP Due Thursday, February 1st by 5pm!



The RFP deadline for year two of our Outdoor Play Intervention Program has been extended to [Thursday, February 1st at 5pm!](#)

For more information on this program, please refer to our website here:

[Visit our website](#)

URI Cooperative Extension – Free Seed Program for 2018



There may be snow predicted this week, but it's still time to start planning your spring gardening projects. Each year the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension in partnership with Ocean State Job Lot offers a Free Seed program! You can order your free seeds before the deadline of February 9, 2018 using the link below.

[Read More](#)

Friendly Reminder: Clear Those Exterior Drains!



Groundhog Day is just around the corner, and while we hope it's a prediction of an early spring, we know it could also mean six more weeks of winter ahead! Before the next big winter freeze sets in, it is a good idea to make sure that all of your exterior drains are free from any leaves or debris. If items are blocking the drain, they will likely freeze over and prevent snow, slush, and freezing rain from properly draining. If this happens, you stand the risk of too much moisture building up and icing over. Alternatively, if the debris freezes in the drains, the drains could also burst. This simple task will help eliminate or reduce the risk of having to deal with a number of problems and can aid in getting your children safely outside to enjoy winter play.

Eliminating Germs – How to Properly Sanitize Your Child Care Center

Cold and flu season is upon us – which means even more careful cleaning of your center to help remove those pesky germs. But what products are safest – and which work best? Here are some steps to keeping your center's environment clean:

- Choose the right equipment and clean regularly to reduce the need for chemicals for cleaning and sanitizing.



- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter. HEPA filtration vacuum cleaners trap mold spores, dust, dust mites, pet dander, and other irritating allergens from surfaces.
- Use microfiber mops and cloths. Microfiber mops and cloths are made from a strong, lint-free synthetic fiber that is very absorbent. Dust and dirt particles are attracted to the microfiber, held tightly, and not moved from one area to another. Microfiber mop heads and cleaning cloths hold sufficient water for cleaning, yet don't drip, and so less cleaning products are needed.
- Place floor mats at building entryways. Teach children to clean their feet when entering the building. This may capture 80% of soil entering indoor areas and reduces the soil load that must be cleaned.
- Consider a policy for people to remove their shoes when they come indoors. Try having a pair of "in-door" shoes or slippers for children and staff.
- Decrease clutter to make cleaning easier.
- Repair surfaces that have cracks, pits, or chips to reduce the build-up of dirt and germs.
- Encourage frequent hand washing with a gentle soap and running water.
- Choose cleaning products that are less toxic. This includes floor-care products used to maintain floor finishes since they are some of the most toxic products used in building maintenance.
- Do more rigorous periodic cleaning for things like cleaning ducts, cleaning (or eliminating) carpets, etc.
- Getting fresh air year round is important. You can do this by opening windows and by making sure the kids are outside in all seasons.

The Environmental Protection Agency offers a toolkit for early child care and education providers on green cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting:

[Learn More](#)

Stay in Touch With Our Child Care Community at Large

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 - <https://exceed.ri.gov/>

Early Learning RI - www.earlylearningri.org

BrightStars - <http://www.brightstars.org/>

The Center for Early Learning Professionals - <http://center-elp.org/>

Kids Count- <http://www.rikidscount.org/>

Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facility Fund- <https://ricelff.org/>





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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.

LISC Rhode Island Child Care & Early Learning Facilities Fund | 146 Clifford Street
Providence, RI 02903 | riccelff@lisc.org | riccelff.org

