



July 2014 | An educational eNewsletter for Rhode Island-based licensed child care providers and non-profit organizations

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Rhode Island Early Learning Facility Needs Assessment

The preliminary results of the Rhode Island Early Learning Facility Needs Assessment are in, and here at the LISC RI Child Care Facilities Fund, we are eager to share them with you! RICCF Director, Cindy Larson, recently reported on the study data to the state core team and



presented the initial outcomes to the Rhode Island Early Learning Council. Please click [here](#) to view the Early Learning Council presentation.

On July 16th from 6pm - 8pm we will be holding a [Community Meeting](#) in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Education to share and discuss the study in greater depth and for an overview of the state's next steps. Additional information is available on the RI LISC website. We hope to see you there!

The assessment, conducted over the last four months, depended heavily upon the time, participation, and honest and detailed feedback from many people. We would like to thank everyone who contributed so generously to this effort. Our respondents included:

- 82% of Rhode Island's early childhood centers who answered our 50-question online survey
- 58 randomly selected centers who opened their doors to the RICCF team for onsite assessments ranging from 2 - 5 hours in length and covering

PLASTIC TOYS



A growing body of research linkstwo toxic chemicals, phthalates and Bisphenol A (BPA), commonly used in everyday products including children's items such as baby bottles, sippy cups, teething rings, and toys, with the disruption of normal development and growth in children. These toxins mimic or suppress hormones like estrogen and testosterone, which can have big implications for small bodies whose still-developing systems and organs are especially vulnerable to even minor exposure. To learn more about some of the harmful chemicals found in plastics, and for helpful tips on

avoiding them, be sure to check out "[Plastics and Plastic Toys.](#)"

NOISE POLLUTION



Be it from radios, road traffic, construction, or any of the other numerous sources of unwanted sounds we are exposed to in our day-to-day life, noise pollution in our environment can be more than just an unpleasant annoyance, especially for our children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that this growing public health concern can be detrimental to health in a variety of ways including hearing loss, stress, high blood pressure, interference with sleep and rest, interference with speech and language, and headaches. Read more about noise pollution and ways to reduce its harmful impact in your child care setting in "[Noise Pollution.](#)"

BUILT ENVIRONMENT



As the population grows and urban areas develop, so does the built environment - the human-created spaces around us such as sidewalks, parking lots, play structures, and streets. With this growth comes the challenge of finding ways to give our children the physical, mental, and social activities and natural learning opportunities that would be provided through regular access to green and open spaces. The negative

255 data points

- Numerous interviews conducted with key stakeholders including DCYF child care licensing personnel, BrightStars quality rating and improvement staff, public preschool administrators, RI Head Start Directors' Association, RI Child Care Directors' Association, and selected training and technical assistance providers

The data gained from those who participated will help to ensure the allocation of critical state financial and technical resources to help centers across RI address the barriers they are facing.

LISC Annual Report - It takes all of us!

Check out our 2013 online [annual report](#) to learn more about what LISC is accomplishing around the country. This year, we celebrate the partnerships and collaborations that make our work possible.



Rhode Island's Farm to Preschool Program - learn more!

Farm Fresh RI's Farm to Preschool program is eager to assist RI Early Learning Centers in sourcing and celebrating RI Grown produce! They can guide your caterer or food service provider as they seek appropriate and affordable RI Grown fresh fruits and vegetables and can also provide chef technical assistance to those just learning to prepare and serve whole, fresh produce to preschoolers.

Farm to Preschool educators are available to visit schools or centers to present fun and interactive education programs to students. Their education programs introduce students to fresh fruits and vegetables, allowing them to see, touch, smell and taste a variety of produce. They help students understand the impact of their choices on their bodies and the community they live in. Education programs are about 40 minutes long and always include a story book, a physical activity component and an opportunity to taste something new.

The RI Farm to Preschool program is generously funded by the RI Department of Environmental Management, and the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. This service is available at no charge to early learning centers. Education programs are available to centers open for child care during the summer as well. Please contact Kim Clark at Farm Fresh RI with questions or to schedule a program. kimclark@farmfreshri.org or 646 541-0952 (cell phone)

consequences of the built environment, and ideas to counteract them are explored in the informative article, "[Built Environment](#)."

RICCF

The Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund (RICCF) is an innovative public-private partnership dedicated to expanding access to quality child care and early education in low-income communities throughout Rhode Island. Launched in 2001, the RICCF provides the capital and technical expertise that child care centers need to improve the quality and capacity of their physical space. The Fund can provide a combination of training, technical assistance and flexible, affordable financing for a wide range of projects including minor renovations or construction of a new, state-of-the-art child care facility. **Click the logo below to learn more about what the RICCF can offer your program.**



Your Questions Answered

A center writes...

I am installing sinks for children in the classrooms. I don't see anything in the regulations or in local building codes that indicates what height sinks should be. Do you have any recommendations?

Answer: Sink height depends on the age group. In general, you should use the following guidelines for installation of child sinks:

16-18" to the rim for toddlers

20-22" to the rim for preschool

24-28" for kindergarten/ younger school age

Also, if space allows you may want to consider a trough-type sink which only requires one plumbing pipe, but allows more than one child to wash their hands at a time. Some of these sinks even allow for multiple uses as a water play feature as well!



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