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## CHILD CARE FACILITIES FUND

### July eNews

Happy Summer!

This year has been, well, challenging to say the least. But with that said, we are pleased to announce we have TWO very different grant opportunities for child care providers that will become available soon:

- City of Providence Early Learning Facilities Grant Opportunity
- Child Care Provider Relief Fund

Keep reading for more information!

## City of Providence Early Learning Facilities Grant Opportunity



Recognizing the need for increased access to high-quality early learning programming and the [key role facilities play in shaping the availability and quality of services](#), City of [Providence Mayor Jorge O. Elorza has partnered with LISC](#) to offer facility improvement grants to child care providers for the planning and renovation of physical space. **The online application for this grant opportunity will open on our website ([www.riccelff.org](http://www.riccelff.org)) on July 15th with award notification in September.**

### Grants will be available in the following categories:

- [Facilities Planning](#) - Planning grants are intended to provide child care and early learning facilities with resources to develop a comprehensive indoor and/or outdoor

- facility plan.
- Facilities Renovation and/or Construction - Capital grants can be used for renovations to address issues related to licensing compliance, health and safety, physical space barriers to quality improvement, and/or expansion of quality programming (Davis Bacon prevailing wage rates for contractors hired will apply).

Once the application is open, we will share to the community via our website, email, and social media. To learn more about eligibility, grant funding priorities, uses of grant funds, and documentation needed for applying, please read the grant guidance and instruction document below.

## GRANT GUIDANCE & INSTRUCTIONS (ENGLISH)

## GRANT GUIDANCE & INSTRUCTIONS (SPANISH)

Please join us for a virtual information session to learn more about this grant opportunity for Providence-based child care providers on **July 20th at 2:00pm** (registration button below). If you are unable to attend, this session along with a Spanish version will be recorded and available for viewing on the [www.riccelff.org](http://www.riccelff.org) website after July 20th.

## REGISTER HERE FOR THE GRANT INFO SESSION

Do you have a project in mind, but aren't sure where to begin? Our technical assistance is available! [Please click here to submit a request for technical assistance](#) or contact Erin Cox, AIA, at 401-519-5684 or [ecox@lisc.org](mailto:ecox@lisc.org).

# Child Care Provider Relief Fund - Grant Guidance Now Available

Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo recently announced the establishment of a \$5,000,000 Child Care Provider Relief Fund to provide critical resources necessary to help sustain the State's essential child care provider infrastructure. These resources are being made available as a result of Congress passing the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Through the

[Coronavirus Relief Fund \(CRF\)](#), the CARES Act provides for payments to State, Local, and Tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.



LISC, in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS), will be administering these funds as emergency relief grants to the Rhode Island child care and early learning provider community through a competitive application process. Grant funds will be available for small capital improvements needed to reopen under new DHS and CDC guidelines, as well as to cover up to three months of occupancy costs incurred during the shutdown.

We have created a document that highlights grant eligibility, priorities, selection process, uses, and application information. It can be found by clicking on the button below. Please note, this document is for **reference only** and **does not** replace the need to submit an online application, which has not yet opened. We will send an eNews announcement out as soon as the application is live.

In the meantime, please use our guidance document to gather your information and ask questions!

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS GRANT HERE

## Center Spotlight - Over the Rainbow *Interior Design Intervention*

Space has the ability to provide a sense of community, well-being, and belonging to all the people – large and small – who enter it. Very young children are particularly influenced, either positively or negatively, by the environment around them – and even small improvements to a space can have a huge, positive impact.

One such program to take on this type of small enhancement was Over the Rainbow, located in Johnston, RI. On the first floor of the child care center two toddler rooms that did not maximize group size were divided by a wall, blocking a lot of natural light and unintentionally creating cramped classrooms.

In an effort to open up the space and maximize access to natural light the wall was removed and once gone, had an immediately positive impact on the space.

The focus on making this small, incremental change not only brightens the space, changes the proportion, and increases the amount of square footage per child, it also supports and bolsters program quality.



## The Silver Lining of Reduced Groups Sizes

At a time during a pandemic it can be disheartening, concerning, and scary to have to close down your center and, once reopened, cut down your group sizes to safely accommodate a limited number of children in stable groups. Thank you all for keeping our

state's kiddos safe. It's not lost on us how much work you have done over these last few months to ensure a safe return while maintaining the sustainability of your business.

We here at the Child Care Facilities Fund are striving to see the positive in this unconventional time. So with that, we wanted to share some of the upsides – or silver linings – to having smaller group sizes. For a long time we have talked about the benefits of increased square footage per child and the social/emotional benefits it can have for children. We're sure we have shared "[The Great 35 Square Foot Myth](#)" more times than we count, and with the enhanced regulations around reduced group sizes you are able to automatically increase your square footage per child. With more space there is an immediate reduction in the stress levels of children, places for children to self-soothe, and an ability to more freely move and play. Another upside to the space? Less noise and better acoustics (which we know has huge mental health benefits).

Reduced group sizes also helps your overall program quality. Quality lies in what can be achieved because the size of the group is small. Some of indicators of group size and quality include:

- Each child has more individual attention
- Consistent, stable groups of children support improved social skills
- Positive staff-child interactions result in stronger relationships
- Staff can better observe learning
- Preventative measures can be implemented before behavior management issues develop
- Increased morale for staff

And lastly, we know that health is a top priority. One of the best things centers can do is provide ample time outside with lots of opportunities for fresh air, reduced stress levels, and unstructured free play.

## TIPS FOR TEACHING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

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.



*Building Solutions for Rhode Island's Children*