



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

In This Issue

[Rhode Island Early Learning Facility Needs Assessment](#)

[Clatter in the Classroom](#)

[Pesticides and the Developing Child](#)

[Could your playground be exposing children to arsenic?](#)



Rhode Island Early Learning Facility Needs Assessment

By now you have heard all about the [Early Learning Facility Needs Assessment](#) we are conducting. The Rhode Island Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Human Services, contracted with the LISC Child Care Facilities Fund to conduct this Early Learning Facility Needs Assessment as part of its Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge efforts. One of the important components of this assessment is the on-line survey we are asking all early childhood centers to complete. Thank you to the 225 centers and schools who have already taken the time to provide their input through this survey tool. If you have not yet completed the survey please take a few minutes to do so today. You can access the survey through the button below. Centers completing the survey will have an opportunity to be selected for a \$500.00 grant award. Awards will be made to a total of ten centers. The selection of these ten centers will occur on April 14, 2014 so be sure to get your survey filled out before that date!

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Is your playground safe?

Did you know that playgrounds located at child care centers are considered "public playgrounds" and as such should meet the safety guidelines established for public playgrounds? You can learn more about these guidelines and access many helpful resources at the [U.S. Consumer Protection Council's Public Playground Safety website](#).

Some of the key things you need to pay attention to include the depth of "loose fill" surfacing under structures, the distance of play equipment from other structures or activity zones, and safety concerns such as entrapment and trip hazards. There are also guidelines on the type and size of equipment that is appropriate for any given age group.



Click here to take the Rhode Island Early Learning Facility Survey

Clatter in the Classroom, by Sandra Duncan, Community Playthings

Early childhood classrooms are busy, active, and energetic places filled with a cacophony of sounds including children's laughter, conversations, and an occasional loud skirmish over a favorite toy. There are the sounds of blocks tumbling, music playing, cars and trucks racing up ramps, and dishes, pots, and pans rattling and clattering in the dramatic play corner. While this type of auditory clatter positively impacts children's engagement with the

Learning more about these important guidelines will help you to create a safer environment for the children in your care!

The newly opened Center for Early Learning Professionals provides technical assistance and quality grant opportunities

The Rhode Island Center for Early Learning Professionals provides professional development, technical assistance and quality improvement grant services to early learning programs and providers. Through the Center for Early Learning Professionals, the State of Rhode Island is offering [Quality Improvement \(QI\) Grants](#) to help early childhood programs and providers achieve their improvement goals, achieve a higher star rating and advance teaching practices that support positive learning and developmental outcomes for children. Visit the Center's [website](#) for more information.

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**

environment and interactions with others, some classrooms are also filled with negative classroom clutter-especially in the physical arrangement of the space.

Unlike the pleasant, clattery noise of children's laughter and play, a cluttered physical environment is disruptive to children. Cluttered environments are mentally noisy causing children's thought patterns to be interrupted, and resulting in children being unable to optimally function in the classroom. Examples of environmental clutter (or negative noise to children's brains) include over or underutilized spaces, poor traffic patterns, excessive furniture, and ineffective placement and positioning of equipment. Continue reading [here](#).



Pesticides and the Developing Child

Even low levels of exposure to some pesticides can be a threat to young developing bodies. Many pesticides can take a very long time to break down. They persist indoors for weeks on furniture, toys and other surfaces and can persist for years in dust. Research indicates that pesticide levels in indoor air are often higher than those found in outdoor air.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

is an effective and environmentally sensitive way to control pests and weeds. IPM does not prohibit pesticide use but uses the strategy of 'least toxic methods first.' IPM uses techniques that pose the least hazards to people, property, and the environment. It is also cost-effective. The [Eco-Healthy Child Care Factsheet on Pesticides and Pest Prevention](#) provides great information on implementing an Integrated Pest Management plan.



Could your playground be exposing children to arsenic?



The wood in pre-2005 playground sets, picnic tables, benches and decks can contain potentially hazardous levels of arsenic due to the use of Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA) as a wood preservative and insecticide. Due to health concerns, CCA was phased out for residential uses in 2004. Children who regularly spend time on treated wood structures built prior to 2005 could potentially be exposed to arsenic (e.g., by putting their hands in

**what the RICCF can offer
your program.**



their mouths after playing on treated structures). The risk of exposure can be avoided or at least reduced by applying two coats of a waterproof stain or sealant at least once per year. Learn more about arsenic and how to prevent it in your center by reading the [Eco-Healthy Child Care Factsheet on Arsenic](#).

LISC, 146 Clifford Street , Providence, RI 02903

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