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



March 2018 eNEWS



Why Do Facilities Matter?

Early care and education facilities are often overlooked by public policy and left out of budgets and funding proposals. Yet, an absence of investment in the physical space hurts quality, impacts child health and safety, and holds back quality expansion potential. Facilities play a key role in shaping the availability and quality of services. Here are four reasons we need to address this critical ingredient:

1. **Supply** – We must increase the physical capacity of the quality early care and education providers. Space is expensive and few centers have the experience or personnel to handle the complexities of real estate development tasks. This can result in programs expanding into readily available space, such as church basements or elementary schools with declining enrollments- facilities that usually fall far short of standards needed to support high quality programs.
2. **Child Development and Program Quality** – Layout, size, materials, and design features can improve program quality and contribute positively to child development. For example, in centers where teachers must leave the room frequently to accompany a child to the bathroom or get materials or supplies from storage, the teacher-to-child ratio drops- one of the most important indicators of quality. A carefully designed classroom will include appropriate plumbing and storage right within the space.
3. **Workplace Environment** – Better quality facilities can help foster staff retention by using teachers' time more efficiently, creating physically and psychologically

- comfortable workplaces, and facilitating professionally rewarding interactions with children, parents, and co-workers
4. **Parent Engagement & Support** – Facility design and location affect parents' ability to enroll their children and can impact a parent's level of engagement in the program.

Read our two-pager, "[Why Early Childhood Facilities Matter: The Case for Public Action](#)" for more information.

March is Childhood Poisoning Prevention Month



The Children's Environmental Health Network has partnered with the American Association of Poison Control Centers and the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSUs) to bring you important information about childhood poisoning, steps for prevention, and where to turn for help . <http://cehn.org/ceh-movement/mar18/>

Here are a few simple steps to help prevent exposure to poisonous substances in your child care program:

- Store cleaning products and chemicals in a secure place, up, away, and out of sight of children, and in their original containers- toxic substances must be clearly labeled and secured by a child safety lock (examples of harmful substances: disinfectants/disinfecting wipes, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, insect repellents, etc.)
- Read and follow label instructions
- Be prepared for an emergency- contact poison control immediately at (800) 222-1222 if you suspect that a child or staff has been accidentally exposed to a dangerous substance
- Check plantings against a reliable list of toxic plants to exclude those that could be harmful to children

Another way to combat chronic exposures to harmful substances is adopting eco-healthy best practices, such as:

- Use non-toxic paints and coatings, adhesives, carpet systems, and composite wood products
- Isolate or eliminate storage and use of any materials that give off toxic fumes
- Make sure your program is a smoke-free environment
- Use non-toxic green cleaning products
- Adopt a pest control approach rooted primarily in non-chemical prevention strategies, such as [Integrated Pest Management](#)

You can learn more about some of these tips and other green design strategies in our [Greening Early Childhood Centers](#) resource guide.

LAST CALL!

2018 Facility Assessment Survey

and

Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course



2018 Facility Assessment Survey

We are extending the deadline of this survey to **Friday, April 6th**, because we need to hear from more of our RI Early Childhood Care & Education Leaders! Collecting this valuable data is critical as we prioritize funding resources, professional development, technical assistance, and other opportunities to partner with you in expanding access to quality child care and early education in communities throughout Rhode Island. As a thank you for taking the time to respond, we will be randomly selecting 10 programs to receive a small grant award of \$500 or free resource book (including the newest edition of *Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work*)!

Take Our Survey Here

Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course

We are partnering with the Rhode Island Recreation and Parks Association and the National Recreation and Park Association to host a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certification course and exam. This course is the most comprehensive training program on playground hazard identification and risk management methods offered nationwide. Register by March 30th !

Register for the CPSI Course Here

Child Care Roundtable Discussion



On Tuesday, March 27th, Congressman David Cicilline held a Child Care Roundtable discussion with a coalition of Rhode Island's early childhood advocates. The conversation centered around increasing access to affordable, quality child care programs for all families at the federal level, and the need for systemic change to provide adequate compensation for a strong early care and education workforce, and to ensure availability of quality facilities necessary to fill these needs.

"[Families] deserve to have a center where [they] feel completely safe having [their] infant and toddler - especially those first 1,000 days. You need to have a really rich environment for that child to hit their 3rd grade reading goal... and it's the place where we spend the least amount of money and we have some of the largest barriers in terms of staff and buildings to accomplish it."

Aimee Mitchell

Senior Vice President for Programs and Operations/Head Start Director at Children's Friend

You can click here to listen to the whole conversation: [Child Care Roundtable](#)

News from Our Partners

United Way Capacity Building Seminars



United Way of Rhode Island

Rhode Island Nonprofits are invited to two free capacity building workshops sponsored by the United Way in April:

Organizational Risk and Resilience: Preparing and Protecting Your Nonprofit from Internal and External Threats

Tuesday, April 3, 8:30-10:30am

United Way, 50 Valley Street, Providence

Join the United Way to learn important insights on preparing your organization for the unprecedented risks facing nonprofits in today's environment. Topics will include:

- Business Resilience -- Is your organization prepared for -- and can it withstand or recover from -- business interruptions?

- Cyber Security & Cyber Defense – Are you aware of the threats posed to an organization in order to better defend against today's cyber thieves?
- Fraud Awareness – Is your organization aware of the threats posed by internal and external fraud?

Presented by Citizens for Customers, a Citizens Bank's volunteer effort that provides opportunities for bank subject matter experts to share their expertise with customers, nonprofits and community development partners.

Register Here

Nonprofit Accounting Workshop: Insights Into FASB Updates and Nonprofit Accounting Challenges

Monday, April 9, 5:30-7:00pm
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick

Learn about the new FASB accounting standard updates and how they will impact your organization, as well as accounting challenges for nonprofits in Rhode Island, and the in's and out's of grant revenue recognition. Richard Cole, from FASB will be the presenter. There will be a complimentary networking hour following the workshop. Co-sponsored by Starkweather and Shepley and United Way of Rhode Island.

Register Here

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

Our entire eNEWS catalog is available on our website. Be sure to [check it out here!](#)

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



