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News from Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund



May eNEWS

Construction Continues for Our Waves 4 and 5 Grantees!



With the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Facility Grants coming to a close in June, construction is in full force at our funded centers. Many of the projects have ranged from adding secure fencing, providing vehicular barriers, developing safe building egress and replacing unsafe equipment, to adding natural elements for outdoor play, incorporating new science and discovery, and developing art, music and dramatic play zones. We look forward to showcasing some of these projects throughout the summer and seeing the children begin to use their new spaces!

Rhode Island Vegetable Planting Calendar

Are you looking to incorporate a vegetable garden but aren't sure where to begin? Refer to this great guide put together by the University at Rhode Island (URI) Master Gardeners. Looks like we are just in time to start planting seeds for carrots, corn, squash, and more delicious food!



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Best Plants to Add to Your Child Care Center's Garden

It can be overwhelming trying to decide which plants will work best for children in your space. This list, developed by Growing Minds, a farm-to-school program, describes the safe and non-toxic plants that work well in an early childcare environment. If you are unsure of what plants will work best in your own outdoor space, don't be afraid to stop by your local nursery to ask questions too.



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How to Start a Butterfly Garden

A number of plans that were developed as part of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Facility Grants included a science and discovery zone in their play space by use of a butterfly garden. Incorporating a few bushes and plants that attract these beautiful creatures is a great way for children to interface with the natural environment up close and personal. If you are interested in learning more about how to create a habitat that will attract butterflies, please refer to this website:



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Getting your Air Conditioner Ready for Summer



The weather is getting warmer, so now is the time to make sure your air conditioning unit is ready to take on the heat. Here are some simple steps to ensuring proper maintenance for your AC during the cooling season:

- Have an HVAC company inspect your unit in the spring before you want to turn your cooling on. They will check the condensate drain to make sure it isn't clogged and verify that all mechanisms are in good working order. The cost of an inspection ranges from \$50-\$150, which is a lot cheaper than replacing a broken piece!
- Replace your filter with a new one, check it every month, and replace it every three months.
- Make sure there is proper clearance (about two feet) around your unit.
- If your unit is outside, check it every week for debris.

Doing these little things can help elongate the life of your system and prevent costly repairs!

Have you missed any of our previous eNEWS or 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.

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