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



Fall 2018 eNEWS

## Update on Playground Interventions: *Blue Across Rhode Island Day of Service*



Two of our Outdoor Play Intervention sites, The Genesis Center in Providence, and the Y's Owl Nursery School – Kent County YMCA in Warwick, were selected to participate in the Blue Across Rhode Island initiative, a program of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island, which provided 70 volunteers for a day of service on September 21, 2018. The weather was great, but the spirit was greater as the volunteers took to task to transform each of the

play spaces. Visit [www.bcbsri.com](http://www.bcbsri.com) or search #BlueAcrossRI on social media to learn more about this amazing event.

Thank you to [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island](#) who provided volunteers at each of these sites, [Tupelo Design Studio](#) for creating a beautiful plan to build from as well as volunteer services and donated plant materials, [Wild and Scenic Inc.](#) for donating a myriad of beautiful plants, and to the staff and families that donated time, funds, tools, and materials to complete projects that will certainly engage the children who attend these programs for years to come.

Take a look at some of the incredible transformations:

### Genesis Center

Changes made at this site included removing an extensive amount of tree roots to prepare the site for new grass, painting a trike track on an asphalt pathway, adding painted chalkboard art panels to the building exterior, creating music panels from stockade fence and donated kitchen tools, building a mud kitchen, weeding and planting garden beds, and installing a new stone dust trike track.



### Kent County YMCA - Y's Owl Nursery School

Changes made at this site included painting a trike track (with trike parking and tire planters) in a newly fenced portion of the playground, installing a water pump and mud kitchen, creating music panels, re-purposing tires for vibrant fairy gardens, constructing a "construction" zone, building two planter benches for rest and reflection, and painting new wall murals, chalkboard panels, and a shed in need of some TLC to name a few!



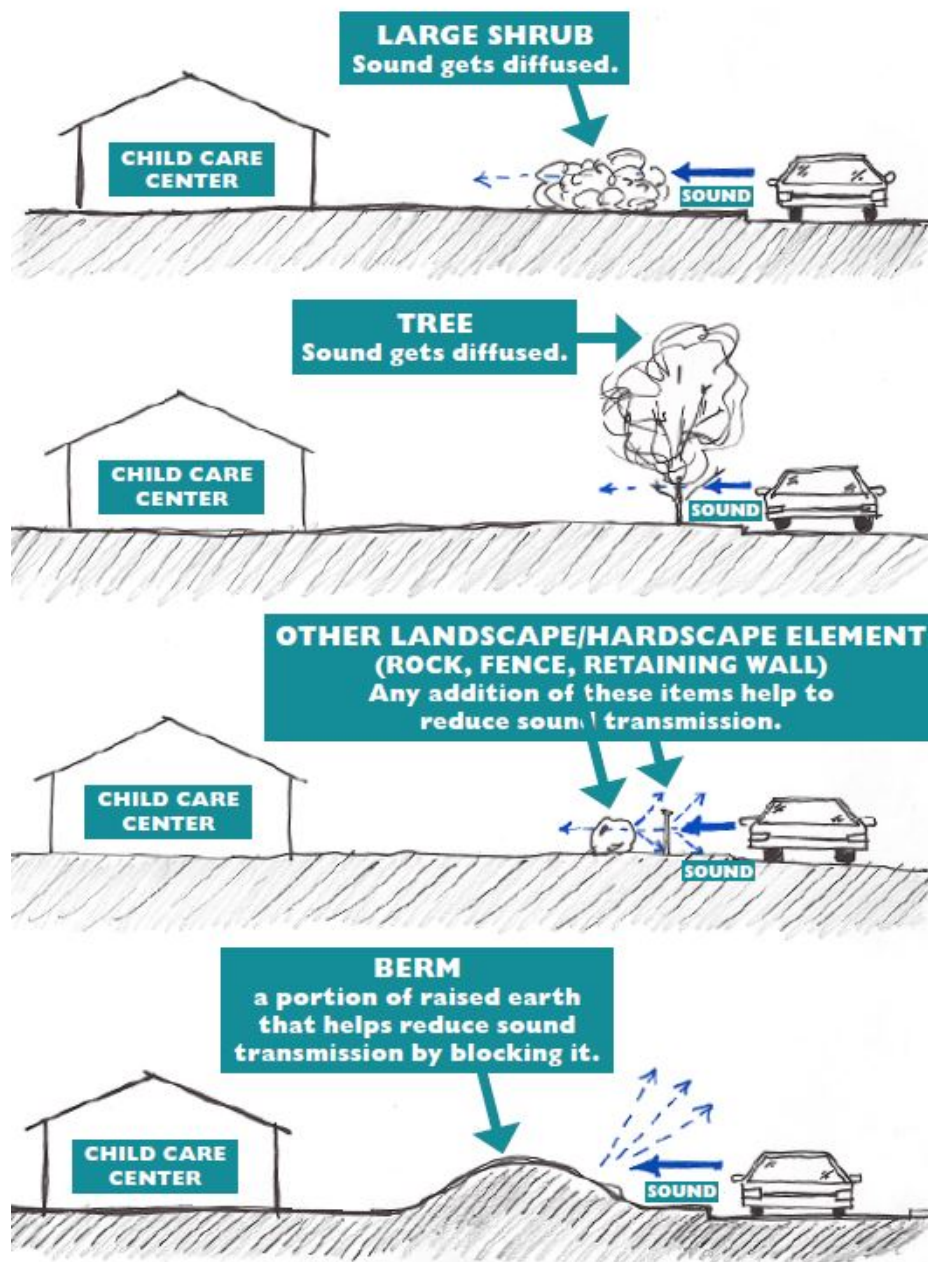
Stay tuned as we continue to provide updates on all of our Playground Intervention projects throughout this year.

## Reduce Noise and Improve Acoustic Control in Your Existing Space

Sound can have a profound impact on a young child's development. While different sounds (human voices, soft music, and natural outdoor sounds like leaves rustling or birds chirping) can create richer and more comfortable surroundings, too much noise can lead to discomfort, distraction, hearing loss, stress, anxiety, and even illness. Acoustic control over the level and type of sound should therefore be a key consideration in the design of early childhood centers. The ideal space will provide a comfortable and pleasant-sounding environment while also reducing noise.

Reducing unwanted noise and lowering sound levels is much more challenging in existing spaces. Sometimes despite your best efforts, the issues with noise in a space may be more than a center owner or director can tackle on his/her own. In these cases it makes sense to enlist the help of an architect or an acoustical consultant to help strategize ways to reduce unwanted noise. Adding insulation to walls and ceilings, relocating mechanical equipment, altering ceiling heights, and adding walls to large open spaces may all be things that need to be considered where unwanted noise is a serious issue. There are, however, a range of modest strategies to improve acoustics that can be implemented without taking on a major construction project:

- **Incorporate exterior landscaping strategies** to enhance your center and provide a buffer to street noise. For example, adding things such as trees, large shrubs, and earth berms as buffers at the perimeter of the lot can create a more dynamic space and will also help to cut down on street sounds. The type of exterior landscaping to use on your site will vary depending on topography, location, size, and budget.



- **Seal around windows** both inside and outside with appropriate caulk. This will reduce the number of air leaks around the frame of the window where outside air may be able to infiltrate. You may also want to do this for additional pest control and weather proofing.
- **Seal any cracks or gaps** in the walls to prevent infiltration. This will reduce the number of air leaks around the frame of the window where outside air may be able to infiltrate.
- **Replace windows** with ones that have higher absorptive properties and are well insulated.
- **Add absorptive materials.** A room with a plaster ceiling and walls and tile floor will likely be very noisy. Consider covering some surfaces with sound-absorbing materials such as cork, homosote, carpeting, area rugs, acoustical walls or ceiling panels, or soft furnishings.
- **Add ceiling panels** at varying heights to help dampen sounds.
- **Insulate** piping and mechanical ducts.
- **Replace light bulbs** that seem to be humming.

- **Rearrange the furniture** layout and create balance within a space.

To learn about each of these strategies as well as different techniques to rethink noise levels, review our recently updated *Child Care Design Guide*.

[Download Our Resource Guide Here](#)

## Online Workshops for Child Care Providers

### Welcome to our Online Workshops!

These sessions are intended to give you a new and engaging way to access information and learn more about the physical environment of child care spaces at your own convenience. These self-guided, interactive workshops have been developed for child care center directors, owners, education coordinators, facility managers, school leaders, architects, landscape designers, and individuals working to support centers and schools in their continuous quality improvement efforts. We hope you enjoy learning more about the importance of space! Thank you

**Tutorial Training**

For more information about our workshops and how to navigate them, please enroll in this brief tutorial.

[CLICK HERE TO BEGIN](#)



**Child Care Center Playground Safety**

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**Development & Financing**

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**Creating Quality School-Age Child Care Space**

[Learn More](#)

The Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund is proud to offer online workshops, which are intended to give you a new and engaging way to access information and learn more about the physical environment of child care spaces at your own convenience. These self-guided, interactive workshops have been developed for child care center directors, owners, education coordinators, facility managers, school leaders, architects, landscape designers, and individuals working to support centers and schools in their continuous quality improvement efforts. We hope you enjoy learning more about the importance of space!

We currently offer three different workshops:

- *Child Care Center Playground Safety*
- *Child Care Center Development and Financing*
- *Creating Quality School-Age Child Care Space*

Currently in development, *Child Care Center Equipment and Furnishings*, is set to be released Winter 2018-2019.

All of our workshops are approved by the Center for Early Learning Professionals.

[View Our Online Workshop Portal](#)

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### **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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