

Children's Investment Fund Newsletter



Dear Colleagues and Partners,

This summer has been unlike any other in our lifetimes. Dealing with the coronavirus pandemic these last six months has been stressful for everyone. In May, the country watched in horror as George Floyd died pleading for his life, his oxygen cut off by the knee of a Minneapolis police officer. As stressful as this has been for all of us, it has been exponentially more difficult for young children, their parents, and childcare providers.

The precarious childcare industry, with thin profit margins, was struggling to stay afloat before COVID-19 shut it all down, interrupting the revenue stream keeping them afloat. The pandemic exacerbated the financial stressors on childcare programs and worsened the racial and economic inequities faced by families and children, with an oversized burden on children of color.

Over the past few months, Massachusetts has adeptly flattened its curve, but the virus has shown itself to be a relentless competitor. With Massachusetts entering another phase of reopening its economy, the virus is threatening a rebound, with transmissions increasing at a slightly faster rate. It is too early to tell if this is a blip or trend. Under this uncertainty, over the past several weeks early childhood education (ECE) and out-of-school time (OST) organizations are carefully re-opening their doors and more parents are returning to work. Even with the best intentions, we have no idea how this will work out.

At the Fund, we have been working hard to support the ECE/OST sector through this extraordinary time, and we are humbled by the dedication to children we see in the provider community. In April, the Fund was asked by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to create an emergency technical assistance response to the crisis focused on assisting the ECE/OST sector accessing the federal Small Business Administration loan programs, specifically the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) (PPP). **The PPP program remains open for new applications until August 8th; please contact us [here](#) if you are a provider with questions about the PPP.**

As we navigate the second half of 2020 together, as an ECE/OST community and as a state and country, we remain committed to partnering with you to ensure that every child in Massachusetts has access to a healthy learning environment regardless of race or income. We will continue to respond to this crisis as nimbly as we can and look forward to continued partnership with you.

Thank you for your commitment to children.

Best,



Theresa Jordan
Director

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Technical Assistance Effort

In the span of a few weeks, Children's Investment Fund created new technical assistance capacity for the early childhood education and out-of-school time sector focused on small business resources available from the federal government.

The Fund assembled a stellar team including the accounting firm [CliftonLarsonAllen](#), [Goodwin Procter's Neighborhood Business Initiative](#), the family child care system [Clarendon Early Education Services](#), and assistance from two CEDAC project managers. The Fund serves as the convener and manager of all intakes from the child care sector statewide. [Eastern Bank's SBA team](#) and [Accion East](#) have been key lending partners able to take PPP applications from child care providers. The Department of Early Education and Care is funding this work and serves as the central host for all information online.

Since April, the team has collaborated on four webinars and provided one-on-one assistance to over 200 child care businesses. Over 80% are women-led businesses and two-thirds are home-based businesses with less than two employees.

A June report from the [Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center](#) estimated that the PPP has brought \$150M to the ECE/OST sector during the first phase of the crisis. The [Bipartisan Policy Center estimates a similar number](#), placing Massachusetts within the top ten states in terms of the amount of PPP funding secured for child care businesses. We know that much more investment is needed to keep the sector afloat during this time, but PPP funds have helped.

If you are a provider looking for more information, please fill out our intake survey [here](#) or send an email to support@childrensinvestmentfundma.org as soon as possible. PPP funds can help you cover staff expenses, pay yourself, and pay for certain overhead costs. The deadline to apply for PPP is **August 8, 2020**.

Facility Needs during COVID-19

The public health crisis has highlighted the crucial need for early education and out-of-school time program environments to be well-equipped for new health and safety practices. Common best practices include sinks in every classroom for hand washing, adequate ventilation, and enough square footage to implement social distancing measures.

Every year, the Fund releases a survey of child care providers throughout the state. This year, we added questions on COVID-19-related challenges. Results include:

- **87** non-profit centers responded to this year's survey, collectively serving 4,478 children
- **90%** are making COVID-19-related modifications to their centers in order to meet Health & Safety Guidelines
- **43%** of responding centers do not have at least one sink in every classroom
- **42%** are operating with Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems that are outdated and/or not in good working condition
- **53%** lack laundry machines in their centers

We are working to address some of these challenges in the year to come so that we can best meet the needs of the sector.



Building Stronger Centers (BSC) Training - June 2021

Children's Investment Fund has postponed its intensive training for non-profit centers that are planning large-scale facility modifications. Building Stronger Centers was initially scheduled to take place in May 2020 but has now been scheduled for June 2021. The Fund will circulate additional information and begin taking applications in January 2021.

Events:

Greater Lowell YMCA

In March, the Greater Lowell YMCA celebrated the groundbreaking of a renovation project funded by the Early Education and Out of School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund in 2019. The Y received \$1,000,000 to build a small addition at the building's rear that will allow for a dedicated entry, reconfigure and upgrade classrooms (adding natural light, upgraded electrical service, and in-classroom bathrooms), make safety and accessibility upgrades, and refurbish the outdoor play area.

Read more about the project in this [Lowell Sun article](#).



Greater Lowell YMCA Chief Executive Officer Kevin Morrissey joins funders and stakeholders for the groundbreaking, including the Fund's Theresa Jordan (fifth from the left).

Partnership News:

The Rockland Trust - Blue Hills Charitable Foundation awarded Children's Investment Fund a \$10,000 grant for our core work to ensure healthy learning environments for children. We appreciate Rockland Trust's steadfast support over the past five years!



Blue Hills Charitable Foundation

In the News:

A [survey from the National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) found that nationally, an estimated 72% of respondents from large child care centers said their programs had received PPP funds compared to 29% of small child care centers and only 17% of family child care providers.

CIF Board Member and early childhood education advocate Amy O'Leary has been prominent in the media helping to highlight the needs of the ECE sector during COVID-19, like in this [CommonWealth piece](#).

The Fund's Kira Taj participated as a panelist for The Boston Foundation's Early Childhood [Coffee and Conversations series](#) on June 26 to discuss reopening challenges and envisioning a future system.

The Bipartisan Policy Center blogged about the [modifications needed in child care facilities](#) in order to provide safe and healthy environments for children as programs reopen.

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