



# the IMPORTANCE

of child care and early learning

# FACILITIES

**NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
FACILITIES  
NETWORK**

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**H**igh quality child care and early learning programs provide measurable benefits to children, families, and communities. They are an investment proven to contribute to positive child development, increased school achievement, increased economic activity and decreased crime and delinquency, producing long-term savings in public sector expenditures of at least \$7 for each \$1 invested.

Because of the important social and economic benefits of child care and early learning, the federal government invests billions of dollars annually, primarily through Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants. In addition, 40 states invest additional funds in preschool education. But there is no dedicated source of capital to help early childhood providers develop well-designed and appropriately located facilities.

As a result, the supply of suitable facilities to house early childhood programs cannot keep pace with the demand for services or the growth of the sector. The shortage of suitable facilities is especially severe in low-income communities, both urban and rural.

In addition, while many factors contribute to program quality, the physical environment is an essential feature that is often overlooked. Too few centers are designed as learning environments for young children, especially in low-income communities where programs typically occupy makeshift spaces only minimally modified for educational use.

Yet the research shows that the space matters. There is growing evidence that a well-designed, well-equipped environment supports learning, while a poorly adapted and overcrowded environment undermines it. The quality of the learning environment has a direct and measurable impact on children and teachers' performance. Design features such as acoustics, climate control, lighting and warm colors correlate with positive educational outcomes. Research conducted at a Connecticut preschool center showed that a well-designed facility led to more frequent teacher-child interactions, more productive child-initiated play, higher staff morale and lower staff turnover — which are all essential factors in program quality.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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## Bright Beginnings Albany, MO

With a \$124,600 loan and \$5,000 grant from First Children's Finance, the owner of Bright Beginnings family child care home expanded her business to create a child care center in a newly constructed building in Albany, Missouri. Currently the only child care center in the community, this project enabled the program to more than triple its capacity from 10 to 35 children and create five new full-time and two part-time jobs.

## Julie's Family Learning Boston, MA

Julie's Family Learning renovated a building to create a high quality educational environment for 61 young children in South Boston, MA. This project enabled the program to move into its first permanent site and to expand its child care program and workforce training in support of low-income single mothers. The Children's Investment Fund provided extensive technical assistance and planning support and contributed \$20,000 to the center's \$3.5 million capital budget.

## Concordia Place Chicago, IL

Concordia Place renovated and expanded a former church and school to create a quality early childhood environment for 211 children ages birth to five in Chicago's northwest side Avondale neighborhood. The facility also provides programming for older children, parents and grandparents, and created 36 new jobs in the community. IFF provided project management services and a \$700,000 loan, which leveraged an additional \$7.2 million in capital funding dedicated for the expansion of early childhood services in high-need communities.

## The nonprofit members of NCFN

offer the most cost-effective and efficient approach to expanding and improving the real estate infrastructure to support the ambitious early education goals funded with public resources. NCFN members can leverage a relatively small public investment with additional private capital, multiplying the total investment in child care and early learning facilities and developing educational environments for more young children. NCFN members also deliver specialized technical assistance and training to early childhood providers to help them successfully undertake complex building projects.



# NATIONAL REACH



### Holy Family Day Home San Francisco, CA

After its center was damaged in the 1989 San Francisco earthquake, the Holy Family Day Home continued operating its 77-year-old program in a set of temporary modular buildings. With technical assistance and \$1.43 million in loans and grants from the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), Holy Family launched a successful \$7.1 million campaign to build a new permanent facility serving 150 children – a 50% increase in capacity.

### New Life Child Care Goldsboro, NC

Ten years and an absentee landlord took its toll on New Life Child Care's rented facility serving 29 children. The director did her best despite a faulty door lock and a leaky roof. With \$168,000 in loan funds from Self-Help, New Life was able to purchase land and construct a new facility, increasing its capacity to 39 children and creating three new jobs.

### Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center, Waterbury, CT

The Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center of Greater Waterbury developed a new facility in the underserved East End of Waterbury, Connecticut, creating 104 new spaces for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, including many special needs children. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) provided technical assistance on quality facility design, and an \$85,000 zero-interest loan that enabled this provider to plan a viable project and secure over \$3 million in state bond financing.

### Mud City Kids Morrisville, VT

Mud City Kids' director had children on her waiting list who were not even born yet. A \$250,000 loan from the Vermont Community Loan Fund enabled this family child care home to expand into a larger facility for 34 children from infants to age six. The expansion also created seven full-time jobs.



# BUILD POSITIVE RESULTS with NCFN

## Benefits of Investing in Child Care and Early Learning Facilities

- **Creates New Jobs:**  
Generates immediate construction jobs and permanent early learning jobs in the new centers.
- **Strengthens the Labor Market:**  
Ensures safe, educational environments for children so parents can find and keep jobs.
- **Produces Good Outcomes for Children:**  
High quality facilities support high quality child care and early learning programs.

**The National Children’s Facilities Network (NCFN)** is a coalition of nonprofit organizations that provide financial and technical assistance on the planning, financing and development of child care and early learning facilities in lower-income urban and rural communities across the country.

NCFN members leverage public investments with private capital, craft innovative financing solutions, and deliver specialized technical assistance and training to increase the supply and quality of early childhood services.

NCFN member organizations have a presence in all 50 states and have financed child care and early learning facilities in 33 states and the District of Columbia. To date, we have invested nearly \$230 million in the renovation, construction and improvement of child care and early learning facilities, leveraging \$877 million to create or improve 3,680 new centers serving over 211,000 children across the country.

## NCFN Members

- Center for Community Self-Help
- Children’s Investment Fund
- Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo
- Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
- Colorado Enterprise Fund
- First Children’s Finance
- Florida Community Loan Fund
- IFF
- Insight Center for Community Economic Development
- Leviticus 25:23 Alternative Fund, Inc.
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Local Investment in Child Care
- Low Income Investment Fund
- New Hampshire Community Loan Fund
- New Jersey Community Capital
- Nonprofit Finance Fund
- Ohio Finance Fund
- Opportunity Finance Network
- Sussman Associates
- The Reinvestment Fund
- Vermont Community Loan Fund
- Washington Area Community Investment Fund
- Women’s Community Revitalization Project

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