

Nurtury Learning Lab

Since 1956, The Nurtury Learning Lab, formerly Associated Early Care and Education, ran its early education program out of the basement of a resident building at Bromley Heath Public Housing Development. Nurtury's goal was to move teachers and children out of the basement, a space that had limited natural light and an ill-fitting, inappropriate layout. After years of working non-stop to stay ahead of failing heating and poor plumbing, Nurtury embarked on the development of a new, state-of-the-art building to serve an expanded population of children zero to five, as well as plans to incorporate an after-school program serving children up to age eight.

Upon completion, the new facility, which is light-filled and designed specifically for the needs of young children and their families, includes space for adult education classes, observation areas for use by institutions of higher learning, an art studio, a documentation studio, test kitchen space, and a greenhouse. Nurtury also developed specific outdoor play space for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.



# Children Served	175
# Slots Improved	?
# Slots Added	92
# Employees	24
Total Project Cost	\$17,200,000
Size of Program Space	22,000 square ft.
Time to Complete	1 year, 7 months
Sources of Funds	Contributions Government Grants New Market Tax Credits Debt

Challenges

- Securing funding while minimizing debt financing
- Anticipating the full expense of the project
- Communicating effectively and consistently with the community
- Meeting our employment goals while supporting local businesses
- Constructing a complex design at a high level of quality and reasonable cost
- Coordinating program and building design

Advice

- Hire an excellent support team of experts where you anticipate the most complexity. We had complex financing and a complex design to build, so the expertise of our financial consultant, project director, and owner's rep were crucial.
- Design the program as early as you can and in enough detail to write supporting grants, determine staffing, and identify operational challenges. The program design should be at least one analogous step ahead of the building design. Ex: When the building is in schematic design, the program should be in detail design development
- If you have a complex building, start working with the construction team as early as possible to inform further and refine budgets. Of course, the simpler the building, the more predictable and lower the costs will be.
- We benefited from an engaged board committee with some real estate and construction management expertise represented.
- Communicate with the community early and often. Our CEO worked throughout the project on garnering the political will and backing from the many quarters required to provide funding, legislation, and community support.

For more information about Nurtury Learning Lab, visit their website:
www.nurturyboston.org