

Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation



Building Environments That
Enhance Program Quality

Fall 2025

Children's Investment Fund Newsletter



Students at NorthStar Learning Center in New Bedford play in their new classroom. Photo credit: Paige McWhorter Photography.

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Happy fall! We are excited to share with you several project updates.

We value your partnership. Please reach out if you'd like to talk about any capital projects or related initiatives!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Theresa Jordan".

Theresa Jordan
Director



Program News

CEDAC's New Executive Director

In case you missed it, CIF's affiliate, CEDAC, welcomed a new Executive Director this June!

Ethan Handelman has been a long-time leader in affordable housing and housing finance in the public and private sectors. Most recently, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Multifamily Housing Programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a position he was appointed to by President Biden in 2021.

We look forward to working with Ethan on our child care work!



Inter-Agency Task Force

Children's Investment Fund is partnering with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to advance two recommendations from the Healey-Driscoll Administration's [Early Education and Child Care Task Force](#) report released in March. The team is gathering more information about co-locating affordable housing and early education, what barriers and opportunities exist, and how CIF can better support this model. CIF disseminated a survey for affordable housing developers in the summer and hosted a focus group in September.

Building Stronger Centers 2026

Children's Investment Fund is offering its Building Stronger Centers (BSC) training from May 18 - 21, 2026. This four-day residential training program is designed for early education and out-of-

school time centers that are planning major capital improvement projects. Over 100 organizations have attended since its inception in 2001. If you are interested in learning more, please contact at bsc@cif-ma.org.

Gratitude for Our Funders

We would like to express our gratitude for recent grant contributions from the following donors:

- Cabot Family Charitable Foundation
- First Citizens Bank

Thank you!!

Project News

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center

On September 23rd, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) held a roundtable discussion on the impact of federal funding for early education. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley listened as parents, educators, and partners shared their insights on the crucial role early education funding plays in the community. CEO Ben Hires highlighted the impact of BCNC's collaboration with the Department of Early Education and Care, Eastern Bank, Boston Public Schools, Children's Investment Fund, and educators and parents. Following the roundtable, Congresswoman Pressley presented a \$425,000 check, representing the federal funding awarded to support improvements to BCNC's center. [Read more about the event here.](#)



CIF's Theresa Jordan, EEC Commissioner Amy Kershaw, BCNC CEO Ben Hires, and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley alongside BCNC staff and partners.



Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley with the CIF/CEDAC team.

Little Folks

In 2023, Children's Investment Fund awarded an EEOST capital grant of \$333,000 to Little Folks Early Learning Center to fund an outdoor play space transformation. The achievement was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in September. The center's Director Jenna Harrity expressed her gratitude to the Children's Investment Fund for their contribution to the project as well as to Arrowstreet Design. This project demonstrates that significant results can be achieved when there are limited options for outdoor space for students.



A mural, painted with the help of the children, now enlivens the outside formerly unusable alleyway.



"Before" photographs show Little Folks Adventure Alley's transformation with the use of EEOST funds.

Tri-Community YMCA/YMCA of Central Massachusetts

Thanks to a \$495,000 EEOST Capital Fund grant awarded by the Children's Investment Fund in 2024, the YMCA of Central MA has renovated the outdoor play space at its Tri-Community Family

Branch. The updated area now features new structures and tactile elements designed for out-of-school time play. In early September, CIF's Yesenia Gil and Theresa Jordan joined members of the project team, staff, and children who celebrated the ribbon cutting of the new play space.



CIF's Theresa Jordan, YMCA of Central MA Executive Director David Cornell and other YMCA staff and partners in front of the renovated play space. Photo credit: E, Maki/YMCA



Students enjoy the outdoor play space including new structures. Photo credit: E. Maki/YMCA

NorthStar Learning Center

In August, the team from the Children's Investment Fund visited NorthStar Learning Center's new building in New Bedford. Executive Director Maria Rosario and her team provided a tour of the classrooms, the commercial kitchen, indoor gross motor space, and a community meeting space. This ambitious project, which took years to develop, allows NorthStar to consolidate programming and expand access to children and families. The center received a \$500,000 EEOST Capital Grant in 2024.



The CIF team with NorthStar Learning Center's team in August. Photo credit: Paige McWhorter Photography



A new toddler classroom at NorthStar Learning Center. Photo credit: Paige McWhorter Photography

South Boston Neighborhood House

In early July, the South Boston Neighborhood House celebrated the completion of recent renovations funded by a \$236,000 EOST Capital Grant. The renovations included refinishing hardwood floors, replacing carpeting and tiles throughout the building, updating bathrooms, and renewing exterior siding. EEC Commissioner Amy Kershaw attended the in-person event, alongside several elected officials and the CIF team.



South Boston Neighborhood Executive Director Kathy Lafferty, EEC Commissioner Amy Kershaw, the CIF team, and the project team at the July 8th celebration event.

Other News

MassDevelopment and EEC announced [over \\$2M in capital grants to family child care providers](#). Applications for a second round of grants are due October 31st.

The Commonwealth Children's Fund has launched a grant program for innovation called the Bright Beginnings Breakthrough (B3) Fund - see [more information here](#)

Research from [Child Trends](#) finds that outdoor play improves social-emotional health



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