

Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation



Building Environments That
Enhance Program Quality

Winter 2025-2026

Children's Investment Fund Newsletter



Students at The Learning Tree in Medway enjoy their new outdoor play space. Photo: Paige McWhorter Photography.

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Happy winter! We're thrilled to share several exciting updates on projects that are making a real impact in Massachusetts communities—particularly in expanding access to quality

early learning facilities and strengthening early childhood education. These project highlights reflect our commitment to supporting strong foundations for children and families across the state.

We will be holding our signature training, the Building Stronger Centers Training Institute, this May. This training aims to equip providers with the skills to plan and execute significant capital projects. It will assist them in hiring qualified teams, provide an overview of capital financing and offer support throughout the process.

Thank you for being part of this important work. We value your partnership, and please reach out if you would like to discuss any capital projects or related initiatives!

Best,



Theresa Jordan
Director

Program News

Building Stronger Centers 2026

Children's Investment Fund will host 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 the next 2 - 3 years. Over 100 organizations have attended since its inception in 2001. If you are interested in [learning more](#), please contact bsc@cif-ma.org.

Design Guidelines Training

In November, the Children's Investment Fund conducted a training session for EEC licensors at EEC's Taunton office. The training centered around the ["Design Guidelines"](#) publication created by CIF, EEC, and Dogan Woodie Arthur of DWA Architects.

The licensors shared their feedback based on their field experience, which contributed to a lively and engaging session.

Looking for Facilities Funding?

The Children's Investment Fund provides low-interest, flexible loans for early education and out-of-school time providers looking to finance capital projects. Our rates and terms are often more favorable than those offered at conventional banks. If you're interested in learning more, please reach out to us! You can contact Bree Horwitz at bhorwitz@cif-ma.org or Yesenia Gil at ygil@cif-ma.org.

Project News

People Inc.

On October 17th, People Incorporated celebrated the opening of its new Early Education Center, a 21,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility designed to serve up to 212 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers year-round. The center features two dedicated wings for infant/toddler and preschool programs, connected by a vibrant courtyard and outdoor play area that seamlessly support indoor and outdoor learning.

Each classroom is equipped with modern technology, spacious learning zones, and the timeless materials that nurture early curiosity—from books and blocks to creative play tools. Children also benefit from a dynamic gross motor room that encourages exploration and active development. A full kitchen with contemporary appliances provides nutritious, thoughtfully-planned meals each day.

As the new flagship location for People Incorporated's Children's Services Division, the Early Education Center represents a major investment in high-quality learning environments for families in the community. They received a \$1M EEST grant in 2024.

Read more here: [Fall River has a new early childhood center – Eye On Early Childhood](#)



EEC Commissioner Amy Kershaw, state representatives, and People Inc. board and staff cut the ribbon to the new center.

Woburn Council of Social Concern

On November 5th, the Children's Investment Fund attended a ribbon-cutting for the Council of Social Concern in Woburn. The center has undergone several upgrades including new windows, an accessible infant room, upgrades to the bathrooms, fresh cabinetry and flooring, and a renovated outdoor play space. The installation of new classroom doors which are lighter and slower to close contribute to the accessibility of the center. These improvements were highly welcomed with it being the first major renovation since the center's opening in 2004. Council of Social Concern received a \$500,000 EEST grant in 2024.



Children's Investment Fund, EEC, and Council of Social Concern staff and educators stand in front of the newly renovated center in Woburn.

Square One

Square One held its ribbon-cutting celebration of its new building in Springfield on November 14th. After a tornado destroyed the administrative offices and early learning center in 2011, the new 26,000 square-foot building will house the new Early Learning Center. Dawn DiStefano, Square One's CEO, offered words of gratitude. The new building, designed with the help of Ashley McGraw Architects, houses four early learning classrooms, an outdoor experiential learning area, workforce development programming for families, and family support services. Square One received a \$500,000 EEST grant in 2024.



Dawn DiStefano, CEO, cuts the ribbon for the new Square One building in Springfield, November 2025. photo credit: Paige McWhorter Photography



Square One's new outdoor play space. Photo credit: Paige McWhorter Photography

Other News

CIF is included alongside other CDFIs in this new online resource: <https://capitalforchildcare.org/>

IFF offers [Four Ways to Make Early Learning Spaces More Accessible](#)



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