

Early Care and Education Facilities | Infrastructure Investment Proposal

Many families – particularly those in low-income or rural areas – lack access to stable, high-quality early childhood centers that parents need to maintain gainful employment and children need to grow and thrive. Despite what is known about the importance of the spaces where learning takes place, the physical environment is an essential feature of programs that is often overlooked. There is no federal dedicated source of capital to help early care and education (ECE) programs develop suitable well-designed facilities, and very few states provide dedicated funding for ECE infrastructure.

The development of proposals to strengthen the nation's infrastructure in order to respond to the new challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic present an incredible opportunity to allocate the resources necessary to address health and safety challenges faced by providers, enhance positive developmental outcomes for children and families, and support the needs of ECE staff. **An allocation of \$14 billion that includes resources for provider technical assistance and capacity via experienced intermediaries (such as community development financial institutions) would help states make significant progress in upgrading facilities to professional quality standards.**

National Facilities Capital Needs Estimate

- There are **20 million** children under the age of 5 in child care settings in the United States, with **33% in organized child care facilities**.¹
- Approximately **129,000 child care centers** in the United States serve **6.98 million children**.²
- **\$14 billion** would be required to upgrade facilities to professional quality standards.³
- **At least \$23 billion** would be required to bring existing facilities up to best practice standards.⁴

ABOUT NCFN

The National Children's Facilities Network (NCFN) is a coalition of more than 30 nonprofit Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), financial and technical assistance intermediaries, and child care stakeholders dedicated to helping ECE providers develop high-quality physical learning environments and sustainable business models. By providing technical assistance and financing to early learning providers, we seek to address capital needs and business capacity challenges that limit working family's ability to gain equitable access to high-quality ECE programs. NCFN works to generate federal resources that support the development and improvement of early childhood facilities in underserved communities nationwide. The Network collaborates with other children's advocacy leaders concerned with addressing the supply and quality of early childhood facilities across the country.

¹ "Child Care in State Economies: 2019 Update"

<https://www.ced.org/assets/reports/childcareimpact/181104%20CCSE%20Report%20Jan30.pdf>

² National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) Fact Sheet: Characteristics of Center-based Early Care and Education Programs

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/characteristics_of_cb_fact_sheet_final_111014.pdf.

³ In Massachusetts, the Children's Investment Fund found that an average of \$18,000 per center was required to bring early education and out-of-school-time facilities up to regulatory standards; \$90,000 per center was required to bring facilities up to professional standards; and \$154,000 per center was required to meet best practice standards (Pardee, Mav. "Building an Infrastructure for Quality", 2011). To obtain the estimate, multiply the number of child care centers nationally by the amount per center required for renovations and adjust for inflation. The dollar had an average inflation rate of 1.48% per year between 2011 and today, producing a cumulative price increase of 15.80%.

⁴ Please refer to footnote 3 for the estimated methodology.