

Governor Phil Murphy

# ICYMI: New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy Launches NJ Child Care Facilities Improvement Grant

10/26/2022

## *Child Care Centers Can Begin Applying for Grants of up to \$200,000 on November 15, 2022*

BLOOMFIELD, N.J. (October 26, 2022) – New Jersey First Lady Tammy Murphy today announced that the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) (<https://www.njeda.com/>) will begin accepting applications for grants from the \$54.5 million New Jersey Child Care Facilities Improvement Program (<https://www.njeda.com/child-care-improvement-program/>) on Tuesday, November 15, 2022. Building on the Murphy Administration's comprehensive strategy to support the state's vital child care sector, Phase 1 of the program will provide nearly \$15 million in grants of up to \$200,000 to licensed child care centers in New Jersey to cover the costs of facility improvements.

"Every New Jersey family deserves reliable, safe, high-quality child care, a critical part of Nurture NJ and our work to make New Jersey a leader in child health. This program will help to ensure facilities all over the state provide our children - and most especially our children in underserved communities - with high-quality early childhood environments that have lifelong impacts," said **First Lady Murphy**. "The NJ Child Care Facilities Improvement Program will provide the capital for child care facilities to make essential improvements that will elevate their ability to care for this and future generations."

First Lady Murphy joined NJEDA leadership and other government and elected officials outside ABC Daycare Academy (<https://www.abccademyedu.com/>) in Bloomfield for the announcement.

"I am thrilled that New Jersey is using federal funds I secured in the American Rescue Plan to implement innovative programs like the Child Care Facilities Improvement Grant," said **Representative Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11)**. "At the local, state, and federal level, we are working together to make childcare more accessible and affordable for New Jersey families because we understand its importance to a thriving economy and workforce. I want to thank First Lady Tammy Murphy, NJEDA CEO Tim Sullivan, Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz, and ABC Daycare Academy Owner Anna Hareza for their work on this important issue."

As part of New Jersey's whole-of-government approach to supporting the child care sector, the legislature passed and Governor Murphy signed the Child Care Revitalization Fund into law, appropriating \$100 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to support the sector, including \$54.5 million for NJEDA to provide facility improvement grants and technical assistance to child care providers. **Senate Majority Leader Ruiz (D-Essex)**, who participated in today's event, was a co-sponsor of Child Care Revitalization Fund. Funding for Phase 1 of the NJ Child Care Facilities Improvement Program is supported through the ARP funding, as well as an additional \$4.45 million in state funding.

"School facilities have a profound impact on both teacher and student outcomes. When we invest in our children by making their learning environments healthy, safe and flexible to adapt to complex student needs, the rewards far exceed the cost of the initial investment," said **Senator Ruiz**. "By lessening the financial burden on child care providers, these funds will facilitate the expansion of classroom space which increases student headcounts as well as allow for the purchasing of other critical infrastructure needs such as replacing windows and/or flooring or even playground equipment. Every dollar invested offers a \$4-\$9 return in individual and community benefits. This program, along with other initiatives moving through the legislature, represents a commitment to improving early childhood education in ways that will work to reduce the achievement gap and greatly benefit future generations."

"Under Governor Phil Murphy's leadership, New Jersey is making significant investments to bolster the child care sector, which is crucial to our economy and the ability of New Jersey parents to return to work and have the peace of mind of knowing their children are well cared for," said **NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. "These grants will help child care centers that are the backbone of our economy to emerge better positioned to care for our children and families."

Sullivan noted that child care providers serving low-income children through the New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS) Child Care Assistance Program were significantly impacted by COVID. That program provides subsidies to offset the cost of child care for families at 200 percent or below the federal poverty line. Funding in Phase 1 of the program will be limited to child care centers serving children receiving this assistance. Additionally, 40 percent of the Phase 1 funding will be set aside for child care providers in Opportunity Zone-eligible census tracts, ensuring funding is targeted toward the state's low-income communities.

"We are excited to work in partnership with the NJEDA to make these grants available to child care providers in the state. Child care providers were among some of the hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and are still working to overcome the lingering effects of the pandemic, all the while meeting the needs of New Jersey's working families. These grants will help providers make facility improvements that they may not otherwise be able to afford, so they can provide high-quality early childhood learning environments for our youngest residents. This is in addition to the stabilization grants that Human Services is providing to help providers pay for operational expenses and the \$1,000 hiring and retention bonus payments to assist with staffing. Safe, affordable and reliable child care in New Jersey is vital to our economy and for working families. Under the leadership of Governor Murphy, the state has made significant investments to support the child care industry, and we will continue to work to support this critical workforce and the families that rely on them," said **NJDHS Commissioner Sarah Adelman**.

Child care providers typically face thin profit margins, often forcing them to forego necessary facilities upgrades, repairs, and maintenance. Phase 1 of the NJ Child Care Facilities Improvement Program will provide grants between \$50,000 to \$200,000 to pay for improvements that foster high-quality early childhood learning environments. These interior and exterior improvements could include, but are not limited to, installing energy efficient windows, creating additional classroom space, purchasing new playground equipment, replacing flooring, remediating environmental hazards such as lead or mold, or putting in child-height sinks or toilets. A complete list of eligible uses and details on the program can be found at <https://www.njeda.com/child-care-improvement-program/> (<https://www.njeda.com/child-care-improvement-program/>).

"ABC Academy Daycare is always looking for ways to enhance the quality of early childhood education and always put our children first when making budget decisions, therefore prioritizing the improvements projects while keeping costs down is often a challenge," said **Anna Hareza, owner, ABC Daycare Academy**. "Governor and First Lady Murphy recognize the crucial role New Jersey's child care centers play in setting our children up for success and the grant that will significantly help childcare centers achieve a higher standard of care."

“Every child deserves to go to a world-class child care facility, regardless of a family’s income,” said **NJEDA Executive Vice President of Economic Security Tara Colton**. “The NJ Child Care Facilities Improvement Program will provide funding to help ensure that all New Jersey children have access to high quality early learning environments while giving child care providers access to funding to upgrade their facilities, allowing them to focus on what is most important: caring for our state’s children.”

“The NJ Child Care Facilities Improvement Program will allow child care providers to leverage public resources to upgrade and improve, and to create and sustain safe, nurturing environments intended to help develop young minds,” said **NJ Department of Children and Families (NJDCF) Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer**. “This investment in state-of-the-art child care programs will encourage healthy growth and development for New Jersey’s children, and will strengthen the child care options available to working families. This is a welcome inclusion in efforts to support families and children in New Jersey to thrive.”

Applicants may own or lease the space that will be improved and they must currently enroll, or have enrolled in the 12 months prior to the date of application, at least one child receiving support through the NJDHS Child Care Assistance Program. Child care providers must also commit to enroll in NJDHS’ quality rating and improvement system, Grow NJ Kids. While the NJEDA plans to expand the NJ Child Care Facilities Improvement Program to home-based child care providers registered with NJDHS in subsequent program phases, this inaugural phase will only be open to child care centers licensed by the NJDCF. Full eligibility criteria and resources for applicants can be found at <https://www.njeda.com/child-care-improvement-program/> (<https://www.njeda.com/child-care-improvement-program/>).

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## Statewide

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