

Early Learning Center Outdoor Learning Enhancement Opportunity

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies will receive funding to support Type III early learning centers' engagement with children in outdoor environments. This opportunity will incorporate training, funding to purchase outdoor learning materials and equipment, and technical assistance to encourage the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices outdoors. CCR&Rs will provide training, materials, and support to early learning centers and to family child care providers participating in FCC pilot networks.

Outcomes: Early learning centers will be better able to meet the needs of children as a result of:

1. Extended learning into outdoor classrooms and experiences;
2. Increased learning engagement outside as a result of targeted training for staff; and
3. Targeted support from Child Care Resource and Referral agencies as it relates to implementing outdoor learning strategies.

Process:

CCR&R agencies will conduct a number of activities to support early learning centers in accessing and utilizing funding and resources:

1. Participate in a Department-hosted training for coaches and trainers who will support centers to access this opportunity.
2. Announce the opportunity to eligible centers in the community (Type III and family child care pilot participants).
3. Schedule regular training sessions with centers and their teaching staff, making them aware of the amount of funding that can be accessed by the center. The center director plus two teachers must be in attendance to be eligible for the opportunity.
4. Provide technical assistance to each center to complete an outdoor learning plan (as discussed in the department-hosted training), identifying the most appropriate items that support the center's goals. Refer to the allowable expenses (below). Identify additional funds that may be needed to support installation.
5. Procure the items and have delivered to the early learning center. Consider using the list of Louisiana vendors below, and requesting the state's discounted rate.
6. Once equipment/materials are delivered and installed, schedule a technical assistance/coaching visit to provide additional support in implementing best practices identified in the training and plan.
7. All training and supports are billed on a predetermined per unit cost.

Community Network Participation:

CCR&Rs are encouraged to reach out to community networks to share information about the efforts to enhance outdoor environments. Potential ways to involve networks include, but are not limited to:

- Partnering with networks to establish potential ways that they can support the agency's efforts to enhance child care environments, such as:
 - Providing information about the initiative to the network, enabling them to assist the R&R in disseminating the information to child care providers
 - Determining how the network and R&R can work together to support child care providers in implementing high-quality outdoor play and learning activities
- Asking the network to share what they perceive are centers' current needs related to outdoor play

- Exploring additional strategies to provide centers with materials that are needed for outdoor play, but not attainable through this opportunity
- Provide sites with information on other grant opportunities and training related to outdoor classrooms
- Support centers in the installation and assembly of equipment
- Connect sites to volunteers or high school students who can support outdoor beautification efforts

Allowable expenses for Outdoor Learning Expenditures:

The early learning center may use Outdoor Learning funds for the following items:

- Playground equipment and assembly support
- Moveable outdoor yard structures like playhouses and seating
- Sunshades
- Sand and water tables
- Sandboxes
- Seasonal items, including sprinklers
- Raised garden beds and materials
- Outdoor blocks and building materials
- Gross motor equipment, like play cars, tricycles, push-toys
- Storage supports for outdoor equipment including small sheds and/or wagons for transporting materials outdoors

Funding cannot be utilized for:

- Capital enhancements including concrete, fencing, painting, and/or other construction projects
- Learning materials and equipment most suitable for indoor use

Possible vendors for outdoor equipment

Company	Louisiana Contract number	Contact
Playcore	49241500	Contact: Kelly O'Conner Email: kelly@totalrecreation.net Phone: 832-237-3100 FAX: 832-237-3895
Kaplan, Co	55101509	Contact: Kate Shelton Email: BIDS@Kaplanco.com Phone: 800-334-2014 FAX: 336-712-2243
Voyager SOPRIS Learning Inc	55101509	Contact: Amy Otis Email: VSLBidsContracts@voyagersopris.com Phone: 800 547 6747 FAX: 8888197767