



## CHILD CARE VOICE CHILD CARE CAPACITY INITIATIVE

Author | Cheri Beavers

## NEWSLETTER

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One year ago, we began to implement a new approach for change in the early learning and child care landscape. The professionals who serve our community's children have been weighed down with bureaucracy, lack of funding, and had little recognition or hope for change, all this while they work tirelessly below living wages.

Putting your child into care in Washington State costs just over \$14,000 a year on average. This accounts for 39% of the median income of a single parent. Parents and caregivers in Pierce County are paying more income toward child care than for the entirety of their living expenses in most cases.

The early learning educator and the child care crisis has traditionally been largely ignored as a worthy social justice issue despite the majority of providers being racial minorities. At the same time, families suffer paying egregious child care costs. This has left the child care industry decades behind other important social causes. The Child Care Capacity Initiative Project is an opportunity to heal the wounds of neglect and crisis. At our finger-tips are strength-based solutions that are working to repair and rebuild child care.

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CONFERENCE



# LITTLE VILLAGE ENRICHMENT CENTER



The Joyce family has served the Hilltop and Central Tacoma community for decades.

Debra and Robert Joyce started an in-home child care in Tacoma 30 years ago. After several years of serving families in their home, Debra joined the Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center (MCFHC) team. She worked alongside MCFHC's Gail Neal, Executive Director, for years. Robert reflects, *"These relationships enriched our lives and our understanding of community."*

Robert Joyce was working for Metro Parks overseeing youth development programs when he heard about an opportunity to purchase a preschool located in The People's Community Center. This is the opportunity they had been waiting for and The Little Village Enrichment Center soon opened 2008! For twelve years they served families there until the 2020 pandemic hit.

Uncertainty loomed as everyone tried follow new and changing governmental regulations. Little Village couldn't continue their lease with Metro Parks and after twelve years of serving families at this site, their doors closed.





Their team searched hard and found a new site. They excitedly prepared to start serving families in Central Tacoma in 2021 but delay after delay brought on by the city, state, and licensing department caused their team to have to go get new employment. The Joyce family found themselves having to take on the financial burden of paying a lease without serving families. This was an extreme hardship, but they held out hope that they would soon be able to open their doors.

"We did everything the city wanted us to do, we hired an architect to do the renovations, we hired contractors, plumbers, installed the flooring ourselves and fixed all of the things that were requested." Robert shares that this cost their family upwards of \$60,000 + of their personal savings and retirement. They still pressed forward.

Once they got their certificate of occupancy, they thought it was finally time to open! Then Fire Marshall noticed that the awarded occupancy was not what their site needed. Somewhere along the line the occupancy certificate was issued for the wrong group! Robert Joyce emailed, called, and physically went down to get resolution without response from the city. Soon, DCYF and the city of Tacoma let the Joyce family know that there was a requirement for an ADA parking stall to be put in at their site before they could be licensed. These delays caused another year of waiting while still paying their lease on an empty building that was ready to serve children.

Then their landlord stepped in to help assist in finding solutions with the city, but more months passed with no resolution. That's when they heard about the Child Care Capacity Initiative Project (CCCI). After 2.5 years of excessive delays for the Joyce family's child care center and no solutions in sight, they applied for Cohort B of the CCCI Project.



CCCI got involved and began advocacy and support of the Joyce family in August of 2023. The ADA parking delays are nearly resolved apart from signage. The updated certificate of occupancy is still needed to be issued for their site but is in process. The original issuer retired which has caused continued delays.

**Today we celebrate The Little Village Enrichment Center's upcoming opening!** It has been years in the making and we are looking to open this site in early 2024. Would you like to get involved? Join the Child Care Voice Action Team by emailing [ccci@pcecn.org](mailto:ccci@pcecn.org).

**This is one early learning educator's story, and it reflects what local educator's face on a daily basis in our county. When we explore the lack of affordable, equitable, culturally inclusive child care in our county, it is not due to lack of providers. There are many layers of requirements in place causing excessive delays that many providers are forced to give up and walk away out of necessity to provide for their own families. If a provider is open and operating, we can be certain as a community that they have faithfully and determinedly persevered against many barriers to follow their desire to serve our community.**



# CHILD CARE CAPACITY INITIATIVE

## DECEMBER 2023 YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT BY CHERI BEAVERS



  
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REPORT](#)

Child Care Capacity Initiative project leaders, along with local early learning educators and key community partners, have been working tirelessly to ensure new spaces are created in which families can access equitable, affordable, high-quality, culturally-inclusive child care in Pierce County, Washington.



# THE CHILD CARE CAPACITY INITIATIVE INVITES YOU TO:



Blueprints 2024: An Architectural Conference for Early Learning Design offers a unique opportunity to build relationships and gain knowledge from passionate experts committed to improving the quality of early childhood environments. If you were three years old and three feet tall, how would the elements in your environment inspire you to play, take risks, and create?

The Child Care Capacity Initiative is bringing together experts and thought leaders to elevate the physical environment by designing, developing, and uplifting early childhood education. We are hosting an ongoing dialogue around creating and celebrating exceptional spaces for early learners that reflect the community they welcome. We seek to create spaces that acknowledge that children and educators are capable and competent. The result is a creative, dynamic, physical space that enhances the relationships between children, families, and educators.

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