

Early Learning and Child Care Facilities Overview

City of Seattle Departments: DEEL, HSD, & SDCI

Presentation to the Governance & Education Committee

May 11, 2021



Child Care in the Spotlight

Child Care, and facility development, is receiving attention at different levels of governments:

- Federal proposals/legislation (ARP, AJP and AFP)
- State legislation (Fair Start for Kids Act)
- County Best Starts for Kids (BSK) Renewal



Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL)

Seattle Preschool Program Provider Facilities Program



Seattle Preschool Program Provider Facilities Program

- DEEL first received capital funding for preschool facilities as part of the 2014 Seattle Preschool Program levy (\$8.5 million) – recapitalized in the current FEPP Levy
- DEEL uses the funding in three ways, all solely to support the expansion of the Seattle Preschool Program (serving 3-and-4-year olds)
 - Pre-Development Services Program - provides a technical assistance pool of architects to support our providers in the funding and project process
 - SPP Provider Facilities Fund RFI - Annual funding process that for eligible center and FCC providers
 - Direct Investment- direct funds to develop partners such as SPR (community center initiative) and LIHI (Fire Station 39)
- Since 2017, DEEL has invested approximately \$8.4 million in more than 30 projects, dedicating approximately 600 new licensed slots to SPP.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Flexibility: DEEL funds are strictly tied to preschools and participation in the Seattle Preschool Program
- Provider Capacity: Complex funding and regulatory environment for early learning providers to complete projects
- Planning: Difficult to retrofit/renovate sites not originally designed for early learning programming
- Access: Equity issues on who benefits from the funding

Opportunities

- New funding partners: Since DEEL has started investing in early learning facilities, the State has started a facilities fund and PSTAA/County will also have a facilities fund.
- Collaboration: With increased interest and resources, opportunity for funders to streamline funding opportunities and requirements
- Capacity: Funders can strategize how to build development infrastructure to support providers looking to expand.

Department of Human Services (HSD)

Community Facilities / Child Care Bonus Programs



Brief History/Overview

- Community Facilities – city’s capital funding program to help develop social service facilities, and home to Child Care Bonus Program (CCB)
- Child Care Bonus – land use code mitigation program/fund
- City CCB Partners – O/H, SDCI, DEEL, OPCD, Law
- CCB Priorities – Home & Hope, serving underserved, TOD’s
- CCB Program Accomplishments – 12 centers completed, in development or awarded funds

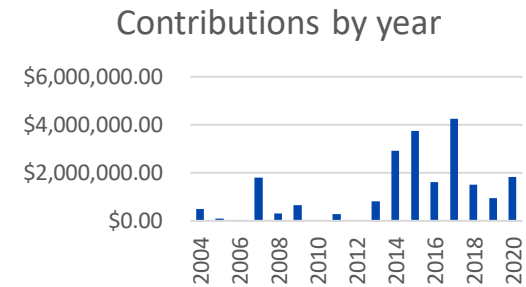
Challenges/Opportunities

- Challenges

- CCB revenue is unpredictable.
- Use is restricted by geography and type.
- High cost of development - \$3M-\$6M/new center. Lack of access to private financing requires public intervention.
- Long timeline from award to final payment/opening of center.

- Opportunities

- HSD is aware of approximately 15 centers in early- to mid-planning stages.
- Investment in pre-development for communities with historical barriers to capital will result in more childcare options in those communities.
- System-wide collaboration to build funding model.



Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI)

Permitting and Code Requirements

2020 “Childcare for All” legislation eased Code requirements

- Made childcare use “permitted outright” in more zones – a simpler review
- Deleted a “dispersion” distance: 600 feet between institutions in single-family & multi-family zones
- Childcare space does not count against floor area limits in certain zones (multi-family, Seattle Mixed)
- Removed a size limit in more localized Neigh. Commercial 1, 2 zones (10,000 and 25,000 sq. ft.)
- Can put childcare use in accessory structures
- Removed a student limit on home-based childcare - but the State limit of 12 children remains



Current Challenges/Opportunities

Challenges

- Public still may be concerned about noise, traffic from childcare next door
- Still are minimum parking requirements in many residential zones; can reduce with extra analysis
- State law still has a 12-student limit on home-based childcare

Opportunities

- More properties are eligible to host childcare due to removed code barriers
- Easier and faster City permitting path
- Can fit within neighborhoods closer to families: more convenient

Conclusions

- There is both ongoing work and new opportunities on the horizon for the development of child care facilities
- There are some limitations to the current City resources
- Coordination, alignment, and an intentional focus on technical assistance will be crucial to maximize impact

