



100 Pine Street Suite 1800
San Francisco, CA 94111
www.liifund.org

tel 415.772.9094
fax 415.772.9095

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From: Maria Raff
Director, ABCD Initiative
Low Income Investment Fund

Re: ABCD Initiative Evaluation

I am pleased to announce the completion of the first year of a five year evaluation of the Affordable Buildings for Children's Development (ABCD) Initiative. The ABCD Initiative began implementation in 2003 with the delivery of capital (loans and grants) and child care facility support to community real estate developers. In 2004, the ABCD Initiative rolled out its other strategies including the development of local child care facility intermediaries, financing and development trainings and technical assistance, new tools and guides, and informing policy makers on effective strategies for child care facility development. Together, these strategies are intended to foster development of a sustainable system to support development and financing of child care facilities throughout California, with a short term goal of supporting development of 15,000 child care spaces by 2010.

In 2005, LIIF contracted with BTW informing change (BTW) to create a theory of change for the ABCD Initiative, which served as the road map for development of a one-year evaluation plan covering activity through June 2006. This first-year evaluation is intended to assess and document the impact of the ABCD Initiative during its development and the early stages of implementation. It is also intended to evaluate the Initiative's strategies and tactics to determine if they are appropriate and on track to achieve long term goals.

As you will read in the evaluation report, the ABCD Initiative has exceeded some goals, is on track with others, and in some areas is evolving to meet external policy and fiscal factors affecting child care facilities. BTW has already begun the second year evaluation, and we look forward to continued documentation of the activities of the ABCD Initiative as they are implemented and evolve over the next three years.

The first year evaluation was made possible by generous support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. LIIF is also very appreciative of the leadership of the evaluation advisory committee which includes LIIF staff, representatives of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, First 5 California, and local Constructing Connections partners. The evaluation would not have been possible without the thoughtful insight of key partners who gave their time to be interviewed, complete surveys, compile data, and participate in site visits. To those of you who invested your time and critical feedback – thank you very much.

On behalf of LIIF, BTW, and our partners I hope you enjoy the first year evaluation report. If you have any questions or comments regarding the report please contact me at (415) 489-6119.