



City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Duluth 1200 Fund announces Tiny Steps Childcare Grant recipients

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

Duluth 1200 Fund announces Tiny Steps Childcare Grant recipients

[DULUTH, MN] At a media conference on Wednesday afternoon, Duluth 1200 Fund board members provided an overview of the funding package it generated to provide financial support to local childcare businesses.

Applications for the Tiny Steps Childcare Grant were solicited and accepted over the summer, with the application window closing on August 25. A total of 21 applications is being funded. Grants of \$10,000 each are being awarded to 10 Duluth childcare centers, and grants of \$5,000 each are being awarded to 11 licensed family-based childcare providers. “The Duluth 1200 Fund will disburse just over \$150,000 in total one-time grants to 21 licensed childcare providers in Duluth,” said 1200 Fund Board President Laura Mullen. “This selection represents a broad mix of center-based and family-based providers spread across our city, ensuring equitable access to childcare services and supporting the creation of 70 new childcare slots.”

Since childcare operators work with very slim margins, making traditional loans difficult to finance, the 1200 Fund saw a need to provide resources to fill the financing gap licensees continually face. “This program was proposed after persistent, tough conversations around the sustainability of Duluth’s childcare sector after the closure of four providers last fall,” said City Councilor and 1200 Fund board member Tara Swenson. “Childcare providers are small businesses. By strengthening the financial position of these small businesses, we’re not only supporting families but also removing a critical barrier to workforce participation. Reliable childcare is essential for economic growth and stability.”

Recipients of the Tiny Steps Childcare Grant are:

- Duluth Nature School,

- Mrs. V's Daycare,
- Pleasant View Playhouse,
- Aunty's Child Care,
- LaVonne Kerfeld's Daycare,
- Duluth Preschool of Fine Arts and Education,
- Summit School,
- Congdon Creek Preschool,
- Montessori School of Duluth,
- The Bunny Patch Daycare,
- Hartley Nature Preschool,
- Little Lambs Learning Center,
- Lincoln Park Children and Families Collaborative,
- Dragonfly Childcare,
- University Nursery School (Coppertop & College Street),
- Lakeside Early Learning,
- Heather's Happy Days Daycare,
- St. Mary's Child Care Center,
- Sunny Adventures
- Krista Cornick

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