EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER SCHEMATIC DESIGN

Frequently Asked Questions

Early Childhood Education Is Essential Community Infrastructure. The City of West Lafayette conducted an early childhood education (ECE) gap analysis in 2024 that identified a need for an Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC). To help long-term stabilization and affordable access – the City is looking to provide a facility to help address this.

General information.

1. Why is this project taking place?

a. In 2023, APA Consulting was contracted by the City of West Lafayette Redevelopment Commission to conduct a gap analysis of early childhood education availability. Completed in early 2024, the analysis found that the northern area of the city had the highest concentration of families in need of early childhood care. The report identified affordability, for both families and providers, and access to high-quality education as key challenges. Importantly, this gap was identified before the announcement of several new industries and facilities expected to operate around the clock, including advanced semiconductor packaging and research facilities and major healthcare developments.

b. With changes at the state level to the voucher program and the childcare environment shifts. Indiana has experienced childcare voucher waitlists and funding uncertainty. Leaving providers to navigate affordability and capacity challenges. This landscape reinforces why local stabilization efforts are needed.

c. The guiding idea is simple: early education helps children thrive, helps parents remain in the workforce, and helps keep our community accessible to families. As carved into Margerum City Hall: “An Education is the Birthright of Every Child.”

2. Where can I learn more or stay informed?

a. Review the Early Childhood Education Gap Analysis at Early Childhood Education Study: Gap Analysis - WLMoves.

b. Sign up for alerts at City of West Lafayette - WLmoves - Stay-In-the-Know.

c. Follow City Social Media Channels at Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor.

d. Participate in public meetings and virtual engagement opportunities.

About the Project

3. What stage is the project currently in?

a. The project is currently in Schematic Design, where the design team develops preliminary concepts that communicate the overall vision, organization, and programming of the facility. Community input is essential at this stage to help shape a future facility to meet the needs of West Lafayette families.

4. When does construction start and how long will it last?

a. No construction is imminent. The earliest time construction and a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a construction management contract (CMC) would be considered for this project is 2029 or 2030.

b. The City's focus is on responsible planning, community, input provider feedback, and making sure any future facility meets the needs of West Lafayette Families. Project updates and a more detailed timeline can be found on WLMoves.

5. Why this potential location?

The City is evaluating the potential site along Kalberer Road, adjacent to Fire Station No. 3 and across from the John R. Dennis Wellness Center.

See Chapter 3: Site Analysis for the full breakdown. In conclusion this location was chosen to be studied based on the following:

i. A high concentration of children ages 0-5
ii. Significant unmet demand for childcare at the time of study 75-125 slots
iii. Continued residential growth in this area of the city.

6. Where can I find more information about this project during construction?

Project information and updates can be found at: West Lafayette Early Childhood Education Center - WLMoves. You can also contact development@westlafayette.in.gov with any questions throughout the project.

7. Will the center replace existing childcare providers?

No, the project is intended to help provide space for an existing provider to help address affordability and access to high-quality education. This work is being shaped alongside early childhood education providers, employers, community partners, and regional institutions. Recent engagement has included provider-focused input sessions, internal department-head review, and conversations with partners such as Right Steps, Ivy Tech, the Career Academy, the Community Foundation, the Lilly Foundation, and employer groups.

8. How is priority determined for the slots?

Priority will focus on West Lafayette residents, with the availability benefiting the Greater Lafayette community by supporting workforce participation.

9. Will the early childhood education center be just for SK Hynix to meet federal requirements for the CHIPS Act.

a. No, the initial phase of the early childhood education center is to prioritize affordability and stabilize access to West Lafayette residents and the Greater Lafayette area in the northern part of the city. Future phases may be considered in partnership with local businesses or as part of competitive business recruitment efforts to encourage companies to invest in development that supports their workforce needs.

b. No. In 2023, the West Lafayette Redevelopment Commission contracted APA Consulting to conduct a gap analysis of early childhood education availability. Completed in early 2024, the analysis identified capacity for an additional 75 to 125 children from birth through age five. This need was documented before the announcement of several new industries and facilities expected to operate around the clock, including advanced semiconductor packaging and research facilities and major healthcare developments.

10. Why is the center proposed to operate 24/7?

The center is proposed to operate 24/7 to accommodate facilities that operate 24 hours a week and on federal holidays. This is to accommodate second and third shift workers for both current and future growth.

11. Will the City of West Lafayette operate the Early Childhood Education Center?

If construction moves forward – a separate request for qualifications for an early childhood education provider/operator will be issued. Provider must be a non-profit for consideration.

12. Will the pond be sectioned off?

The pond-like structure articulated in the concept previews is a stormwater detention basin and landscape area. It is not intended to retain significant amounts of water on a regular basis and

will be designed, constructed, and maintained in compliance with all applicable stormwater management and safety requirements.

13. Was a traffic study issued?

If the project moves forward a traffic study will be issued specifically for the project. The architectural and engineering design team used a recent traffic study for the SK Hynix site. A copy of the agenda, traffic study slides, and construction traffic control can be found at Agenda - default. The meeting can be found at Traffic Commission. The city's Engineering Department is necessitating the exit and entry be right turn in and right turn out.

14. How has the public been engaged?

- Public engagement began during the 2023–2024 gap analysis.
  The City worked with both local school corporations, which distributed information to families, and with community and regional partners to gather input and complete the analysis. The findings were also presented publicly. As the project has progressed, opportunities for public input have continued at each stage, including two public meetings focused specifically on the schematic design.

  May 14, 2024 - More information from this public meeting can be found here.

- Redevelopment Commission
  September 20, 2023 – Gap study was issued.
  May 15, 2024 – Gap analysis study was presented

- Schematic Design
  1. May 12, 2026 – Early Child Education Provider focused workshop
  2. June 17, 2026 – July 17, 2026 - Virtual input session
  3. July 7, 2026 - The City of West Lafayette hosted a public meeting in late 2026 to collect public feedback from providers and residents.
  4. September 2, 2026 – the second community input session will be held.

At this phase we are listening, testing assumptions, and gathering feedback from providers, families, and community members before any final project decisions are made.

Additional Questions?

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