
July 2026 Newsletter - An ECLC Progress Update

1 message

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An ECLC Progress Update: Building the Foundation for Lifelong Opportunity

The building is nearly complete. Now, we're focused on preparing every classroom, every learning space, and every detail so East Savannah's children and families can walk through the doors with confidence on day one.

ESU's Early Childhood Learning Center is Nearing Completion

Every family deserves the peace of mind that comes from knowing their child is safe, nurtured, and learning while they work, pursue an education, or build a better future. For many families in East Savannah, that opportunity has been difficult to access. The Early Childhood Learning Center is changing that.

After years of planning alongside residents, community partners, Chatham County, and the Housing Authority of Savannah, the vision is becoming reality. The East Savannah United Early Childhood Learning Center will provide high-quality early education for children while strengthening the foundation for families and the neighborhood as a whole.

Located at the gateway to East Savannah, the ECLC represents far more than a new building. It serves as the first step in ESU's cradle-to-career education pipeline, a place where children begin their educational journey, parents gain reliable childcare that supports employment and economic mobility, and the entire community benefits from stronger educational outcomes for generations to come.

Our work is entering its next and equally important phase: transforming this beautiful facility into a fully equipped, high-quality learning environment where children can thrive from their very first day.



Early Learning Builds the Foundation for Lifelong Opportunity

A child's earliest years lay the foundation for everything that follows. When children have access to high-quality early learning, they develop the language, confidence, relationships, and curiosity that prepare them not only for kindergarten, but for life. The benefits extend beyond the classroom. Reliable, high-quality childcare allows parents to pursue employment, advance their education, and provide greater stability for their families. For employers, it strengthens the workforce by helping recruit and retain talented employees who can work knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing environment.

Delivering exceptional early childhood education requires highly qualified teachers, low child-to-teacher ratios, evidence-based curriculum, enriching learning materials, and safe, thoughtfully designed classrooms. Those investments create the quality every child deserves, but they also place that level of care beyond the reach of many working families when supported by tuition alone.

The East Savannah United Early Childhood Learning Center was created to help bridge that gap, expanding access to exceptional early learning while ensuring that a family's zip code or income does not determine a child's opportunity because we recognize that access, not willingness, is the barrier.

As a proud member of the **Purpose Built Communities Network**, ESU believes early learning is not a stand-alone program. It's the cornerstone of neighborhood transformation. By connecting education with housing, economic mobility, health, and community leadership, we're revitalizing our community, one home, one family, one future at a time.



Designed for Children. Built for Community.

Every space within the Early Childhood Learning Center has been intentionally designed to support how young children learn, grow, and explore while creating a welcoming environment for families.

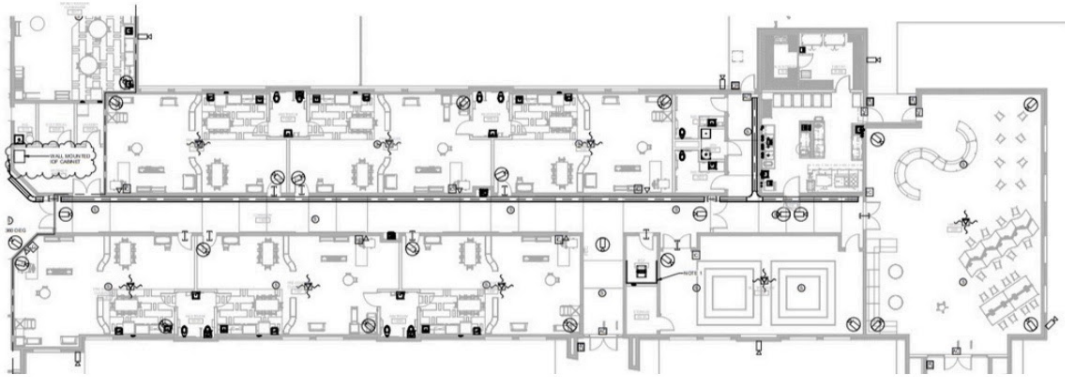
From bright, developmentally appropriate classrooms to engaging outdoor play areas, the Center reflects research-based early childhood design that encourages curiosity, creativity, and meaningful learning experiences from a child's very first day.

The Early Childhood Learning Center will feature:

- **11 classrooms** designed for infants, toddlers, and preschool learners
- Purposefully designed indoor and outdoor learning environments
- Age-appropriate furniture, learning materials, and educational technology
- A commercial kitchen to support nutritious daily meals
- Secure entry, modern technology, and safety systems
- Family meeting spaces and administrative offices
- Dedicated space for children's health services and family resource partnerships

More than a childcare facility, the ECLC has been designed as a neighborhood resource where children are nurtured, families are supported, and community begins.

To bring this vision to life, East Savannah United has partnered with **The 3E Collective**, whose expertise in high-quality early childhood education will guide the Center's daily operations, educational excellence, and family-centered approach from opening day and beyond.



A Building Is Complete. A Learning Community Is Still Being Built.

A building alone is not yet a learning center.

Before the first child walks through our doors, every classroom must be thoughtfully prepared to provide a safe, engaging, and enriching environment where children can learn, explore, and thrive.

That preparation includes everything required to transform a completed building into a fully operational early learning center, from licensing and teacher recruitment to classroom furnishings, curriculum, educational materials, technology, security systems, kitchen equipment, and family support resources.

These are critical start-up investments that cannot be funded through tuition alone. They must be in place before opening day to ensure the Center meets the highest standards of quality, safety, and care.

Every investment made today helps prepare a classroom, equip a teacher, and welcome another child into an environment designed to change the trajectory of their future.



Building Momentum. Together.

Momentum continues to build as the Early Childhood Learning Center moves closer to opening.

Over the past several weeks, ESU has welcomed philanthropic partners, community leaders, and prospective investors for exclusive behind-the-scenes tours of the ECLC. These visits have offered an opportunity to experience the vision firsthand, explore the thoughtfully designed learning spaces, and see how this investment will strengthen children, families, and the future of East Savannah.

Each conversation has reinforced a shared belief: the building is nearly complete, and now it's time to prepare every classroom, every teacher, and every resource needed to welcome children on opening day.

As we move toward opening, our fundraising efforts are **focused on four key priorities**:

1. **Start-Up Readiness:** Licensing, teacher recruitment, professional development, curriculum, technology, security, and everything required to prepare the Center for opening.
2. **Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment:** Outfitting classrooms, family spaces, offices, the kitchen, and wellness clinic with the resources children and educators need to thrive.
3. **Operating Support:** Investing in exceptional educators through competitive wages, quality programming, and appropriate child-to-teacher ratios that define high-quality early learning.
4. **Tuition Assistance:** Ensuring that children from East Savannah can access the Center regardless of their family's financial circumstances.

Together, these investments will transform a completed building into a place where children are inspired to learn, families are supported, and opportunity begins from day one.



Investing in Access

The Early Childhood Learning Center was built for East Savannah families, and access must remain at the heart of its mission. Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in a high-quality early learning environment, regardless of a family's income.

Tuition assistance will help ensure the Center reflects the community it serves while providing working families with reliable childcare that supports employment, education, and economic mobility. When we invest in access, we don't just open classroom doors, we create opportunities that strengthen children, families, and the future of East Savannah.



The Opportunity Before Us

The Early Childhood Learning Center is more than a building, it's the first step in East Savannah United's cradle-to-career vision, creating opportunities for children, strengthening families, and supporting a more resilient workforce.

As construction nears completion, our focus shifts to preparing every classroom, recruiting exceptional educators, and ensuring the Center opens with the quality every child deserves. **The investments made today will help transform a completed facility into a thriving learning environment where children can flourish from day one.**

Together, we have the opportunity to open more than doors. We can open pathways to lifelong success.

Looking Ahead

The Early Childhood Learning Center represents one of the most significant investments in East Savannah's children and families in a generation. While important work remains, the vision is clear, the momentum is strong, and the community is moving forward together.

We are grateful to every donor, partner, resident, and champion who has believed in this vision. Because of your support, children will begin their educational journey in a place designed to nurture their potential, families will gain access to dependable, high-quality care, and East Savannah will continue building a future where opportunity begins early and lasts a lifetime.

We're not simply opening a learning center. We're opening the front door to a stronger East Savannah.



Clockwise from top left: exterior envelope still under construction in April 2026; aerial view of the ECLC in May 2026; architect's rendering; exterior of building at 75% completion in May 2026.

Give Here to Support the ECLC

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