

**DATE:** April 14, 2025

**TITLE:** Early Childhood Education Grant Approval

**TYPE:** Action

**PRESENTER:** Jennifer Lawhead, Community Education Director

**BACKGROUND:**

Julie Hecimovich, Austin Public Schools' ECFE teacher, on behalf of the early childhood programs at the CLC, received a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources No Child Left Inside Grant Program, received a grant for \$2642.78. This grant will be used to reinvigorate the outdoor garden at WEC. Julie is an MN Master Naturalist and has great insight into how to utilize green spaces to their fullest potential. The grant funding will be for curriculum writing, an Outdoor Education Course from Take Me Outside, with the bulk of the grant spent on materials for students to use outdoors including magnifying glasses, binoculars, and watering cans.

**RATIONALE:**

- The purpose of the grant is to enhance outdoor education experiences for preschool students.
- Outdoor education has a profound impact on early childhood development including physical and mental health, cognitive development, social skills, and creativity and imagination.

**RECOMMENDATION:** I recommend approving accepting the grant funding from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Grant Program for use at the Community Learning Center at Woodson Education Center.