

New early education center is coming to New Bedford's South End

"Mayor Jon Mitchell joined city and state officials Thursday afternoon at a groundbreaking ceremony for NorthStar Learning Centers' Early Learning Academy at the corner of Rivet and Hyacinth streets.

The City awarded \$2.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to NorthStar for the facility, which will serve more than 130 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. It is the second-largest ARPA fund the City has awarded.

"NorthStar's new early childhood education center will offer lasting impacts on children and parents alike," Mayor Mitchell said. "Not only will better access to childcare keep more parents in the workplace, but expanded early education programming will help more children be better prepared to start kindergarten."

NorthStar kicked off the project in 2017 in an effort to provide more affordable and accessible early education services in the City. The Early Learning Academy will also have a commercial kitchen to promote healthy food habits, and will be used as a gathering place for meetings and other events on evenings and weekends.



New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell helps NorthStar Learning officials break ground on a new facility Thursday afternoon. Funding came from a mix of private and public entities, from individual and corporate donations, the City's ARPA award and NorthStar equity investments.

"We know that quality early childhood education plays a major role in shaping the future of a child, and NorthStar's new facility in the South End will pay dividends for New Bedford families for generations to come," Congressman Bill Keating said. "This project will allow parents to return to the workforce while 130 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers receive quality education and care in a safe, modern facility. This project represents an excellent use of federal resources, including \$2.5 million in ARPA funds, in partnership with other public and private investment."

"Our city's long-term economic well-being and social health depends on our ability to educate, guide, and support children to be future workers, citizens, and parents," said Maria A. Rosario, executive director of NorthStar Learning Centers. "Research confirms that there is no better place to start than at the pre-k level."