

“Drop by drop,
the river is formed” — Rumi



DIG Childhood Center is a toddler to preschool program creating self-reliant, empathetic, mindful, compassionate community builders — young people instilled with conflict resolution skills, resilience, and freedom from shame.

Save our School Capital Campaign

board@digcenter.org

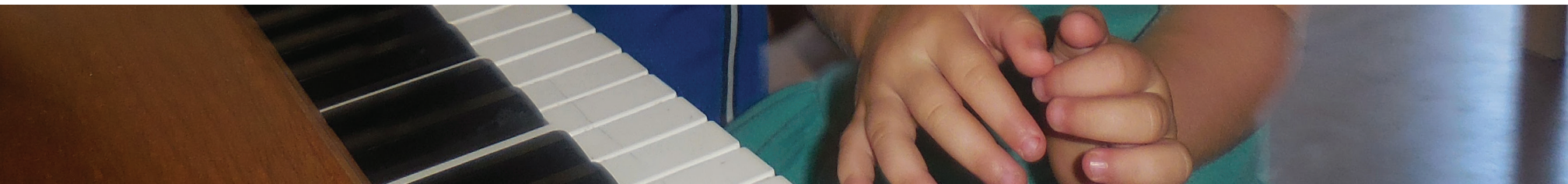
digcenter.org/capitalcampaign

(424) 272-8988



“Early childhood experiences are so important to lifelong outcomes...the early environment literally becomes embedded in the brain and changes its architecture.”

—Andrew S. Garner, MD, PhD, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics and national expert on early brain development



Preschools are failing our children.

Visit a typical preschool these days and you will see three and four year olds sitting at desks, outdoor playtime reduced to mere minutes at recess, structured play organized and run by adults, and punitive responses to normal childhood behavior.¹

The push for early achievement reading and math is shifting American preschools away from social emotional learning and relationship building. **All the data points to how the current educational model in the US does not work and is failing our children.**^{2,3,4}

Kids are not developing executive function, for instance, the ability to self-regulate, to control their emotions and behavior, resist impulses, and exert self-control and discipline.

“Poor executive function is associated with high dropout rates, drug use and crime. In fact, good executive function is a better predictor of success in school than a child’s IQ.”³

But there is another way — Since the school opened in 2011, we have implemented a more effective approach to early education.

“Self-regulation, problem solving ability, social and emotional competence, imagination, initiative, curiosity, original thinking — these capacities make or break success in school and life”

—Nancy Carlsson-Paige, early childhood development expert

1. www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/09/05/490226345/preschool-suspensions-really-happen-and-thats-not-okay-with-connecticut
2. www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/01/the-new-preschool-is-crushing-kids/419139/
3. www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=19212514
4. www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/11/24/how-twisted-early-childhood-education-has-become-from-a-child-development-expert/





“Many schools we toured had all the ‘right’ answers regarding curriculum, conflict-management, handling separation, etc. but simply didn’t walk the talk when I observed a class. The YWCA [now DIG] over performed on all of their promises.”

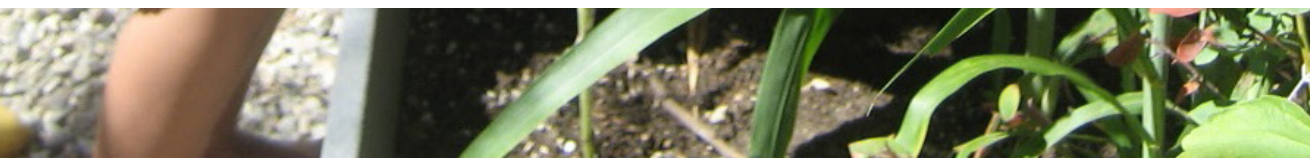
— Korenna Barto, alumni parent

We have changed the model— and it’s working.

We believe in spending time outside, rain or shine, and connecting with plants and trees, dirt and water, stones and wood. **Our program is child-directed and focuses on each individual’s social and emotional well-being.** We provide this support via our wonderful outdoor classroom, our free-flowing space, and our low teacher student ratio.

At DIG, we are creating a world of self-reliant, empathetic, mindful, compassionate community builders: young people instilled with non-violent conflict resolution skills, resilience, and free from shame. We see the whole child and rather than judging good and bad behavior **we instill and model tools to navigate the waves of life, creating emotionally intelligent adults who are equipped to contribute to the world.**

Learn more about our philosophy on our website www.digcenter.org and in our [video](#)



WHAT MAKES DIG DIFFERENT

and why it matters

- **1:4 Adult to Child Ratio**
Allows for individual needs to be met.
- **Child-led Learning, Play-based Program**
Creates freedom for children to practice and test out their new skills.
- **Focus on Social-emotional Growth**
Development is understood and celebrated, mistakes are allowed, feelings are validated, and connecting with others is supported.
- **Outdoor Classroom**
We believe children need a connection with nature in order to be whole. Full integration of indoor and outdoor spaces is optimal learning and growing environment for young children.
- **Non-judgmental Approach**
Allows individual to experience life for him/herself, with guidance, not control, building an intrinsic sense of self and an acceptance of others’ differences.
- **Family Participation**
Creates a bond between teachers, parents, and children.
- **Support for Parents and Families**
Strengthens family dynamics and well-being, creates an extended family.

The Immediate Challenge: Relocate and Rebuild

The DIG Childhood Center faces a critical challenge today which is why we are asking for your help.

We were heartbroken to have to move from our home of six years at the YWCA Santa Monica/Westside after the building was sold and programs shut down. But our community quickly banded together to save our beloved school. We formed our own non-profit and became licensed as our own entity with a new name — DIG Childhood Center.

We have managed to keep going, with the efforts of our families and staff, in a temporary space while we searched for a new location, and now we can't wait to move into our permanent home at the West LA Korean Church on the corner of Grand View and Pacific.

But we need your help to bring the space up to compliance and rebuild the magical outdoor classroom which is integral to our philosophy and to our kids.

We have already raised 75% of our goal and construction is in the works, but we still have a bit more to raise to complete the job and open in the new location by August 2017.

“The first few years is like building the frame of a house. You’re constructing the framework upon which everything else will develop.”

—Charles A. Nelson III, Ph.D., Professor of Pediatrics Harvard Medical School and Boston Children’s Hospital





“Why [is] early childhood so attractive? Because, literally, the return on invested dollars in [the] first five years [of childhood] is more than almost every other philanthropic endeavor.”

—J.B. Pritzker one of the country's leading investors in early childhood

We Need Your Help.

Be an active participant in making a difference in our community.

Your support will create a home for hundreds of families for years to come. ACT NOW.

You can help create a world where people are self-reliant, free of shame and judgment. A place where people work and live together respectfully and communicate with each other successfully. Where violence is reduced, and a thirst for learning lasts a lifetime.

We need your help. **Without your support we will not be able to continue.** Closing our doors for good would mean leaving almost 50 families without a place to send their children to school. Your donation will preserve this curriculum that has transformed the lives of hundreds of families, and impacted our larger community.



PLEASE DONATE NOW AND HELP SAVE OUR SCHOOL

There are many ways to support our school, we are grateful for all you do!

Fund us at: www.digcenter.org/capitalcampaign

text to donate right now [click here.](#)

write a check to
DIG Childhood Center
c/o Capital Campaign
11700 National Blvd. L-104
Los Angeles, CA 90064

donate your time email board@digcenter.org
to find out how you can help

Become a fundraiser We are relying on our families, teachers and alumni to reach out to their extended community to make this happen.
[Click here to sign up.](#)

DIG Childhood Center (License #197493069, State of California, Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division) is owned and operated by Venice Parents Daycare & Preschool, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our Tax ID number is 95-4587330.

Our Budget

Every penny of your donation will help create our new school.

Your funds will not be used for operating costs. Your tax-deductible gift will create a lasting community resource for years to come.

The \$200,000 is earmarked for the following:

PHASE I — to be completed prior to initial move-in.

- Building and safety inspections, abatements, and permits
- Fire sprinkler installation
- Egress on west end of building for street access and fire safety
- Fence to create separate outdoor play area and access path
- ADA compliance updates
- Parking lot re-striping
- Installation of sinks in playroom and outside space
- Cabinets
- Construction of doorway between small playroom and hallway per code
- Window tempering for safety
- Hallway gates
- Shade structures
- Creation of outdoor play environment including possible partial asphalt demolition
- Trees, plants, soil, gravel, boulders
- Moving existing supplies, materials, structures from current location

PHASE II — to be completed during predetermined school breaks as funding and time allow.

- Conclusion of asphalt demolition and finalizing of natural playscape outdoors
- Opening up two sets of double doors from indoor playroom out onto Big Yard, to complete indoor-outdoor free-flow
- Opening of wall between two playrooms to link rooms and facilitate child-led play



“There is a garden in every childhood, an enchanted place where colors are brighter, the air softer, and the morning more fragrant than ever again.”

—Elizabeth Lawrence

Key players

We have an experienced and dedicated team of teachers, B.O.D, staff and family who are working tirelessly to save the school. JOIN US — [donate today!](#)



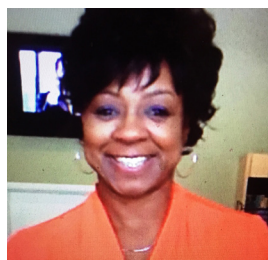
Nicki Backlar

Executive Director, DIG Childhood Center

Involved with DIG since: 2015

Expertise: Humanistic education

Favorite thing about DIG: Being in a place that honors and respects the whole child for who they are and where they are in their development.



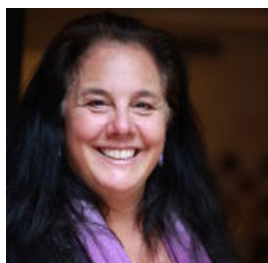
Paula Murray

Lead Teacher, DIG Childhood Center

Involved with DIG since: 2012

Expertise: Pillow room support (although most of us consider Big Yard her office)

Favorite thing about DIG: Supporting the children's play



Gina Oster

Lead Teacher, DIG Childhood Center

Involved with DIG since: 2011

Expertise: Supporting children, parents, and staff with their feelings

Favorite thing about DIG: Acting out stories in morning meeting



Barbara Olinger, MSW

Family Consultant, Former Director of Family Development, YWCA

Involved with DIG since: 2011

Expertise: Parent education and support; preschool teacher training

Favorite thing about DIG: Supports children exploring the world from their perspective; helps children feel a deep belonging within a strong community.



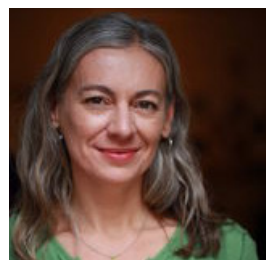
Nina Moench

Director of Environment and Curriculum, DIG Childhood Center

Involved with DIG since: 2011

Expertise: The Outdoor Classroom Project

Favorite thing about DIG: Being a stage manager for the children's play.



Amanda Harris

Lead Teacher, DIG Childhood Center

Involved with DIG since: 2012

Expertise: Child development, early childhood education, outdoor classroom

Favorite thing about DIG: Outdoor classroom; the free-flow/choice that our children have in their day.



Ashley Alexopoulos

President, Board of Directors, DIG Childhood Center

Involved with DIG since: 2015

Expertise: Child development, early childhood education, financial analysis

Favorite thing about DIG: The community—sharing a vision and valuing the same outcomes for the kids.



Thank you.

We are grateful and delighted you've taken the time to learn more about our school, vision and dedication to making the world a better place for everyone, one child at a time.

Help save our school: Text to Donate NOW

by making a credit card donation, here's how:

Text to **41444**

In your message:

saveDIG space **Amount** space **Your Name**

(Example: SAVEDIG 250 John Smith)

Hit **send**

Click on donation link to enter payment information and complete your gift.

You can also donate on our website at digcenter.org/capitalcampaign

Thank you!

We are so grateful for your support.

All proceeds to benefit DIG Childhood Center, owned and operated by Venice Parents Daycare Preschool, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our Tax ID number is 95-4587330.

