



MARICOPA COUNTY

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER

**SUBMITTING FOR
A4LE 2025
JAMES D. MacCONNELL AWARD**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Being the catalyst to a child's earliest memories of receiving an education.

The Early Childhood Education Center project was initiated by Maricopa County to provide a safe, functional, and welcoming 24-hour daycare facility for families of county employees, including first responders, correctional officers, judiciary staff and other essential workers. The project involved the transformative renovation of an existing 12,000 square foot historic warehouse, presenting several exciting opportunities:



Providing a safe and nurturing environment in a dynamic urban setting.



Integrating sufficient exterior lighting into interior spaces, creating a comfortable and inviting atmosphere.



Converting a historic warehouse while preserving its unique historic character and breathing new life into a community landmark.



Creating a licensable, functional, and inviting environment for children and parents, fostering a sense of belonging and discovery.

SCOPE OF WORK AND BUDGET

“We build confidence for life.

- Operator's Mission Statement

The project scope included the full design and construction administration services for the renovation of an existing 12,820 square foot facility on the City of Phoenix Historic Register.

Our goal was double-ended: to renovate and restore an historically significant building with thoughtful attention to detail and communication with the County, and then design an educational environment with the safety and comfort of children as a top consideration.

176
Students

12,820
ft²

\$5.8 mil
construction
cost

24/7
childcare

**6 weeks -
5 years**
age range



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT



CONTEXT

MAKING MARICOPA RESIDENTS & EMPLOYEES HEARD

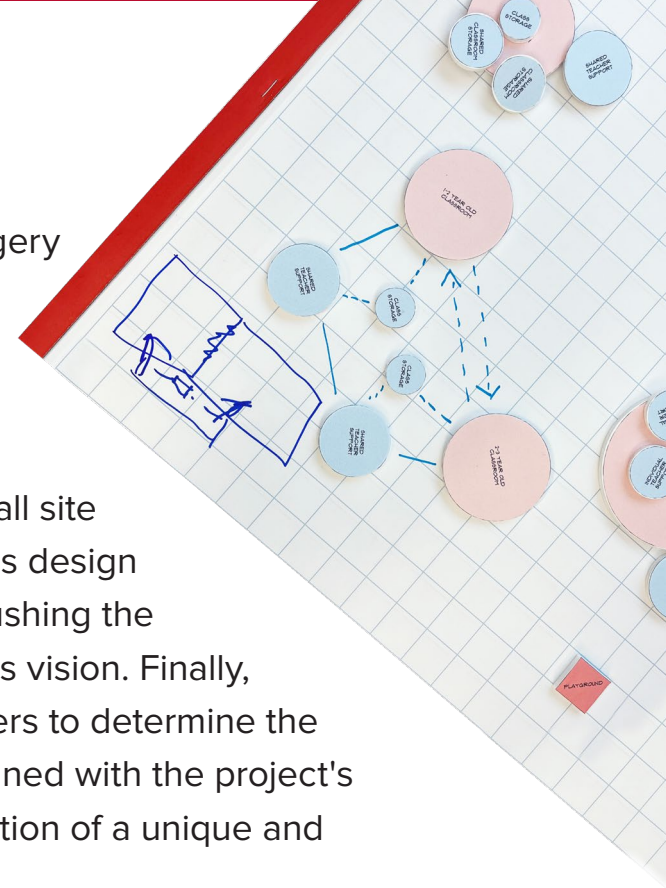
The Early Childhood Education Center project demonstrates a strong commitment to school and community needs, recognizing the vital role that childcare plays in supporting working families. Driven by the needs of Maricopa County employees, the project placed a high priority on understanding

and addressing the specific requirements of this community. The project engaged key stakeholders from both Maricopa County and the operator to ensure that the design would meet the needs of both the client and the end-users. This collaborative approach was crucial in addressing the challenges of creating a safe and welcoming 24-hour daycare within a demanding urban setting. Careful consideration was given to the surrounding context, including the need to provide a secure environment for children and staff. The design also focused on integrating sufficient exterior lighting into the internal spaces to create a positive and stimulating environment. The diversity of lighting creates a unique experience in every classroom to keep each new space engaging as children age up. The lights are also dimmable to allow for naptimes and other programmable activities. Furthermore, the project involved the adaptive reuse of a historic warehouse, requiring a sensitive approach that balanced the preservation of the building's character with the functional requirements of a modern childcare facility. Throughout the process, the goal was to create a space that was not only functional as an early childhood school but also inviting and nurturing for children and their parents.



PROCESS

Over the course of several months the team began by reviewing precedent imagery and gathering assets, including presentations, to establish the desired look and feel for the spaces and building. This process was not merely an exercise in replication; it was about sparking creative inspiration and envisioning how the space could be reinvented. Hands-on activities with the client were conducted to prioritize adjacencies, program elements, and the overall site layout. This collaborative effort informed the development of various design options to address both interior and exterior design challenges, pushing the boundaries of conventional design to ultimately shape the project's vision. Finally, physical materials were reviewed with both the client and end-users to determine the final pallet of the project, ensuring that the selected materials aligned with the project's aesthetic and functional goals, while also contributing to the creation of a unique and inspiring environment.



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

PRESENTING CONCEPT NARRATIVE OPTIONS

Organic



Color-Infused



Themed



CLIENT-LED WORD MAP GOALS



SCHOOL & COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS



Using **direct feedback from Maricopa County** to make prescient, real-time changes that led to an evolution in design and programming over time.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

CONTEXT

THE HEART OF METRO PHOENIX

Located on 5th Avenue and W Madison St, the Early Childhood Education Center is as downtown as downtown gets.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

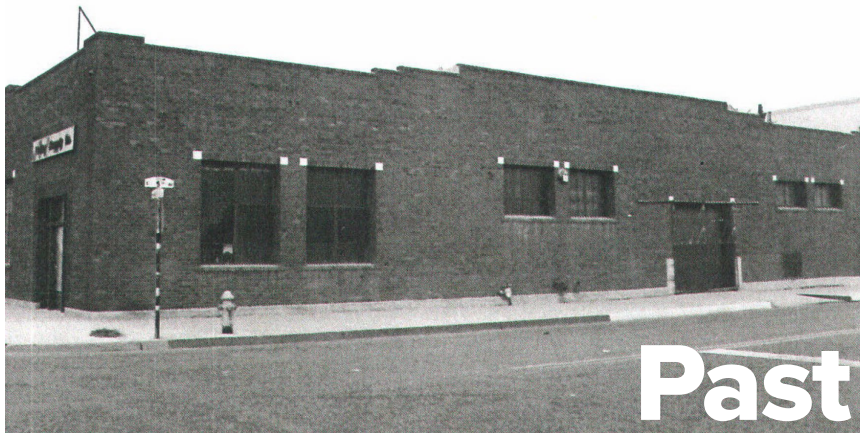
- ◆ Located in urban area, surrounded by county facilities
- ◆ Diverse staff and students from all across the metro Phoenix area
- ◆ Designated with Historic Preservation overlay zoning
- ◆ Directly adjacent to the county jail
- ◆ Two blocks from former unhoused area, known as "The Zone"
- ◆ Previously used as a warehouse
- ◆ Direct street access to a heavily trafficked road



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

CONTEXT

HISTORY MEETS THE NEWEST GENERATION OF PHOENICIANS



"The Pressroom" circa 1990


PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

CONTEXT

REHABILITATING HISTORY

In the bustling heart of Phoenix, at 441 W. Madison Street, stands a building with a story etched into its very walls – the former General Electric Supply Warehouse. Constructed in 1930, this edifice was purpose-built to serve as General Electric's Arizona wholesale distribution office, a crucial hub for the company's operations in the region. For a quarter of a century, until 1955, it played this vital commercial role, witnessing the ebb and flow of the city's growth.

The building showcases a 20th Century Commercial style with a distinct nod to Spanish Colonial Revival influences. It has most recently been used as an entertainment venue called "The Pressroom". Though its function has evolved, its physical presence remains, a solid link to Phoenix's commercial past. The building occupies a corner site in what was, and still is, a warehouse area with county-owned buildings including the sheriff's office, facilities management department, and prison, contributing to the overall character of the district. Its unique polychrome and terra cotta detailing offer a glimpse into the architectural flair of its time.

"HISTORIC BUILDING FORM"		SHPO INVENTORY NO. _____	
ARIZONA STATE HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY			
IDENTIFICATION		COUNTY: <u>Maricopa</u> SURVEY SITE: <u>48-2</u>	
SURVEY AREA NAME: <u>Phoenix Commercial</u>		USGS QUAD: <u>Phoenix</u>	
HISTORIC NAME: <u>Copeland's Wholesale Merchandise</u>		T <u>1N</u> R <u>3E</u> S <u>8N</u> 1/2 <u>1/4</u> OF THE <u>1/4</u>	
ADDRESS/LOCATION: <u>435-441 W. Madison</u>		UTM	
CITY/TOWN: <u>Phoenix</u>		Description (contd.)	
TAX PARCEL NUMBER: <u>112/19/27, 29</u>		ROOF TYPE: _____	
OWNER: <u>Stein, Gayla & Kofman Evann</u>		ROOF SHEATHING: <u>built up</u>	
OWNER ADDRESS: <u>1222 E. Missouri Avenue</u>		EAVES TREATMENT: <u>stepped parapet</u>	
Phoenix, AZ 85014		WINDOWS: <u>15 light steel awning windows</u>	
HISTORIC USE: <u>electric supply</u>		ENTRY: <u>door-sidelights and transom</u>	
PRESENT USE: <u>storage</u>		two front entries at ends of building	
BUILDING TYPE: <u>Commercial/Warehouse/Store</u>		PORCHES: <u>n/a</u>	
STYLE: <u>Spanish Colonial Revival influence</u>		STOREFRONTS: <u>intact - 2 at ends</u>	
CONSTRUCTION DATE: <u>1930</u>		NOTABLE INTERIOR: <u>small center windows -</u>	
ARCHITECT/BUILDER: <u>T.B. Stewart Construction</u>		<u>casement, entry framed in purple brick</u>	
INTEGRITY: <u>original site/alterd minor</u>		<u>black tinted mortar.</u>	
CONDITION: <u>good/maintained</u>		OUTBUILDINGS: _____	
DESCRIPTION		ALTERATIONS: <u>building: awnings missing.</u>	
STORIES: <u>21</u> DIMENSIONS: (1) <u>100(w)</u> <u>120</u>		PHOTOGRAPH	
STRUCTURAL MATERIAL: <u>brick</u>		PHOTOGRAPHER: <u>Garrison</u>	
FOUNDATION MATERIAL: <u>cast-in-place concrete</u>		DATE: <u>August 198</u> VIEW: <u>SW</u>	
WALL SHEATHING: <u>brick</u>		NEGATIVE NUMBER: <u>PC Roll A, Frame 14</u>	
APPL. D ORNAMENT: <u>cast stone scrolls at parapet,</u>			
<u>original windows, wrought iron grill over</u>			
<u>two small center windows.</u>			
SKETCH MAP:			

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESPONSE

A SAFE PLACE TO PLAY, A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO LEARN

Our landscape team was mindful of the facilities adjacent to the ECEC, designing sectioned, gated playgrounds for infants, toddlers, and young children to enjoy. We created multiple layers of security by adding an interior ornamental fence within the playground area, and covering the perimeter with trees and vegetation, using nonabrasive materials to clean and repair the original exterior facade. Due to the Arizona climate, it was critical to create both interior and exterior playgrounds with a variety of different equipment to allow for different playstyles and encourage sociability.



Four Guiding Pillars

Educational Excellence

People & Engagement

Health & Safety

Operations & Growth



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESPONSE

NATURAL LIGHT, COZY COLORS

The innovative aspects of the physical environment include the addition of skylights to the infant classrooms, which lack exterior windows, bringing in natural light to create a comforting atmosphere. The baby blue suspended "clouds" decorate the ceilings of most of the interiors, serving to both diffuse light and complete the natural scene designed to depict the local Sonoran desert. Additionally, the classrooms of each age group were color coordinated to make it easier for children to find their classroom, and for parents to drop off and pick up.



The **addition of a clerestory** alongside the existing facade with windows creates **unique lighting** in each room that allows for plenty of **natural light**.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

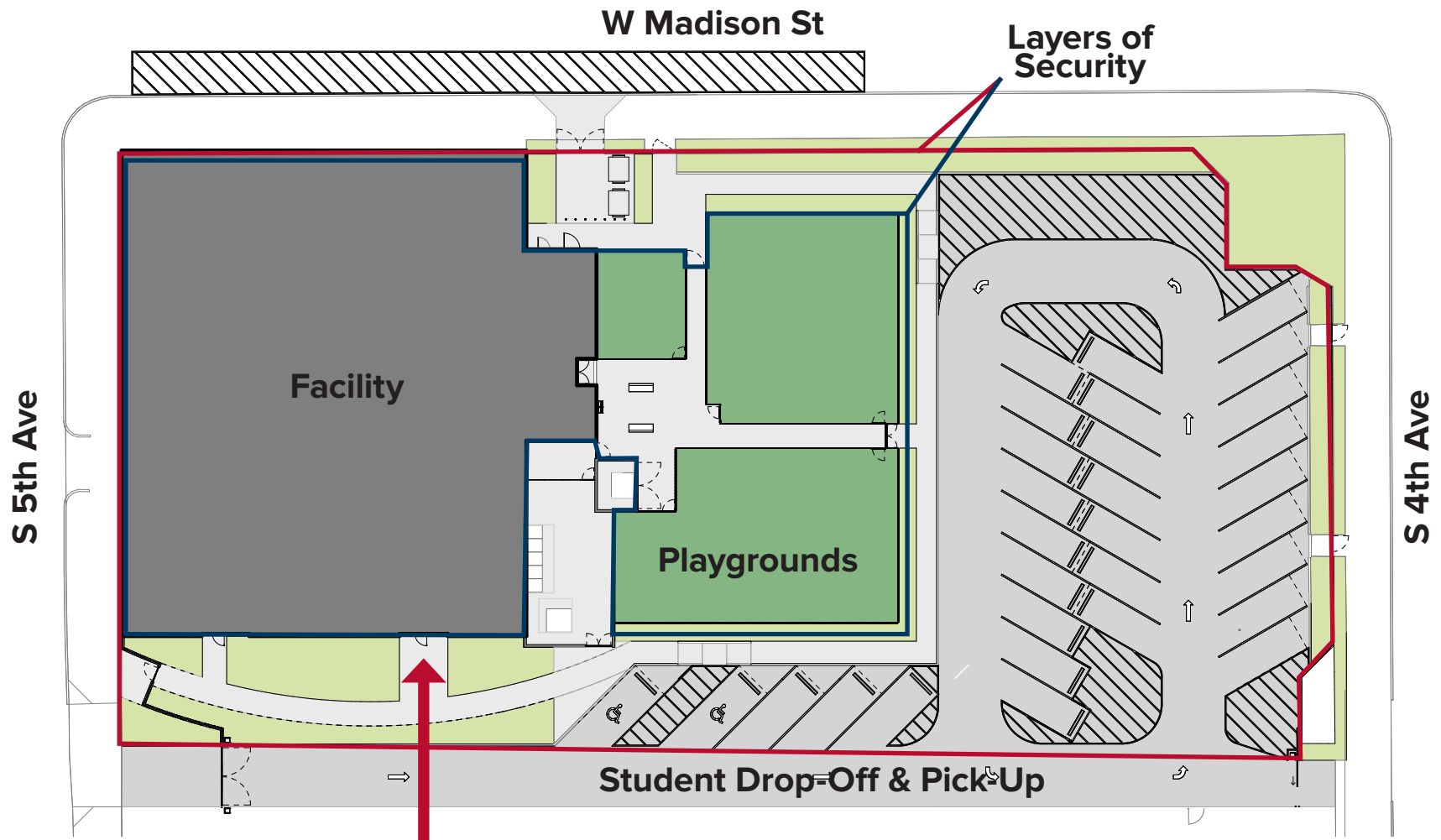
“ We flipped the entrance to the south to limit public street access, and increase safety. Creation of a colorful canopy above it makes it inviting for kids and parents alike.

- Project Manager



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

SITE PLAN



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

CONTEXT

EDUCATION EQUITY

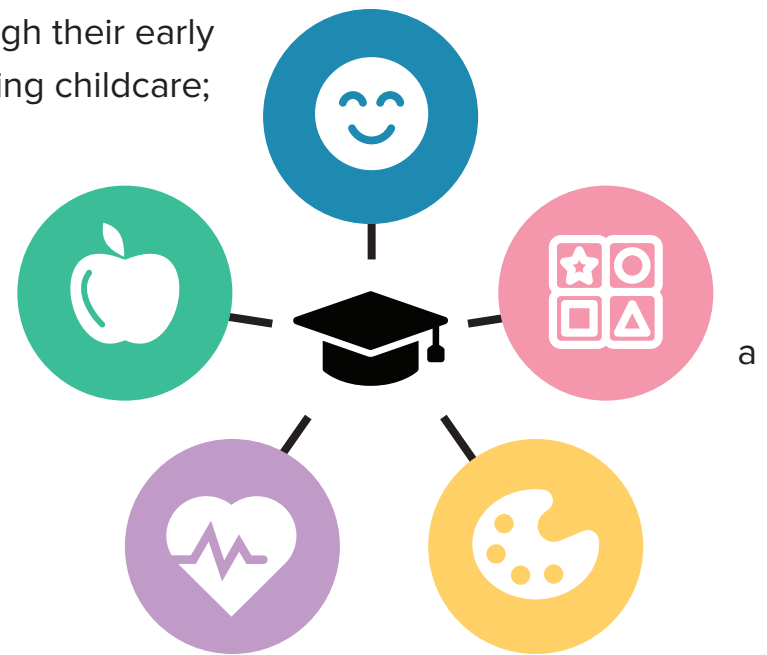
Maricopa County wants a future where all children have access to high-quality early childhood education, recognizing the profound impact of the first five years on a child's development. Their central goal is to build confidence for life by providing enriching and nurturing environments for children from infancy through their early school years. The operator of the school goes beyond simply providing childcare; they actively partner with non-profit organizations to broaden educational opportunities for families nationwide and collaborate with employers to offer crucial family care benefits. They strive to serve a diverse range of families, understanding that access to quality care strengthens communities and contributes to more productive society.



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

A Holistic Approach

A complete education encompasses not only academic development but also prioritizes **nutrition**, the **arts**, **motor skills**, **social skills**, and **emotional wellbeing**.



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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

BUILDING SECTION

Social Skills



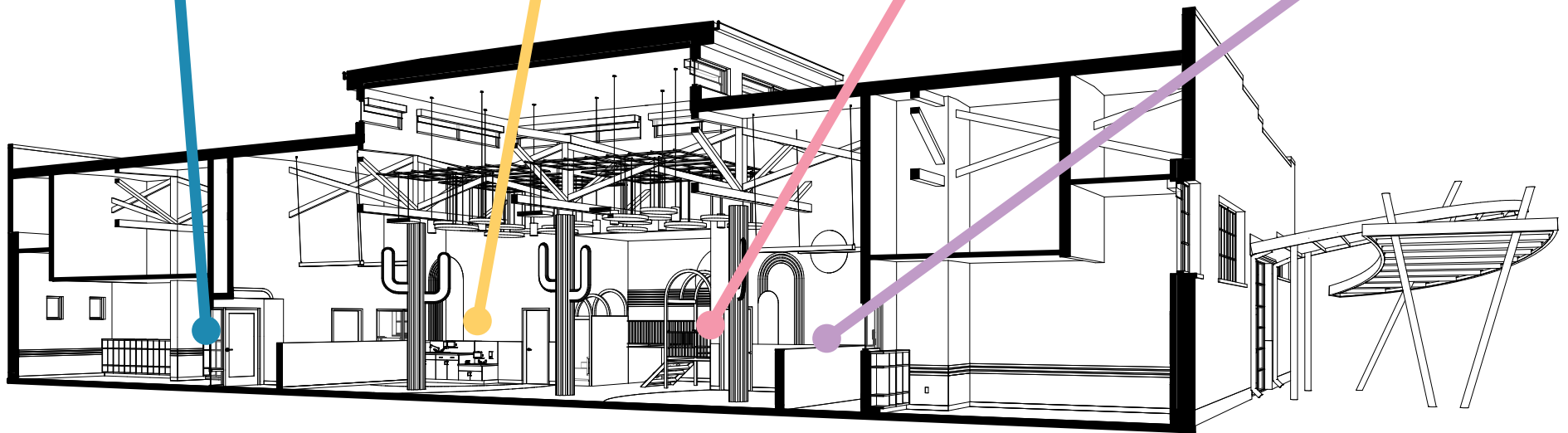
Arts



Motor Skills



Emotional Wellbeing



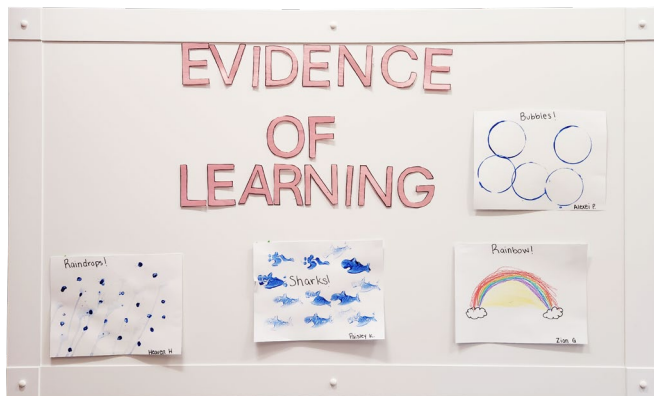
EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

RESPONSE

EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

This educational environment thoughtfully integrates its physical spaces to bolster the curriculum, foster adaptability, and introduce innovative features. Each classroom is intentionally designed to be both welcoming and functional, laying a strong foundation for effective learning. The inclusion of an interior motor skills space, illuminated by natural light from a clerestory, innovatively supports the curriculum by providing a vibrant area for physical activity regardless of weather conditions. Furthermore, the age-separated outdoor playground ensures that the curriculum can be appropriately delivered and supervised for each developmental stage. The environment also demonstrates remarkable adaptability through classroom spaces that can be flexibly organized

to accommodate varying student numbers across age groups, each equipped with the necessary amenities for seamless transitions. Shared teacher support spaces further enhance this flexibility by enabling staff to readily assist colleagues in neighboring classrooms as needed.



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

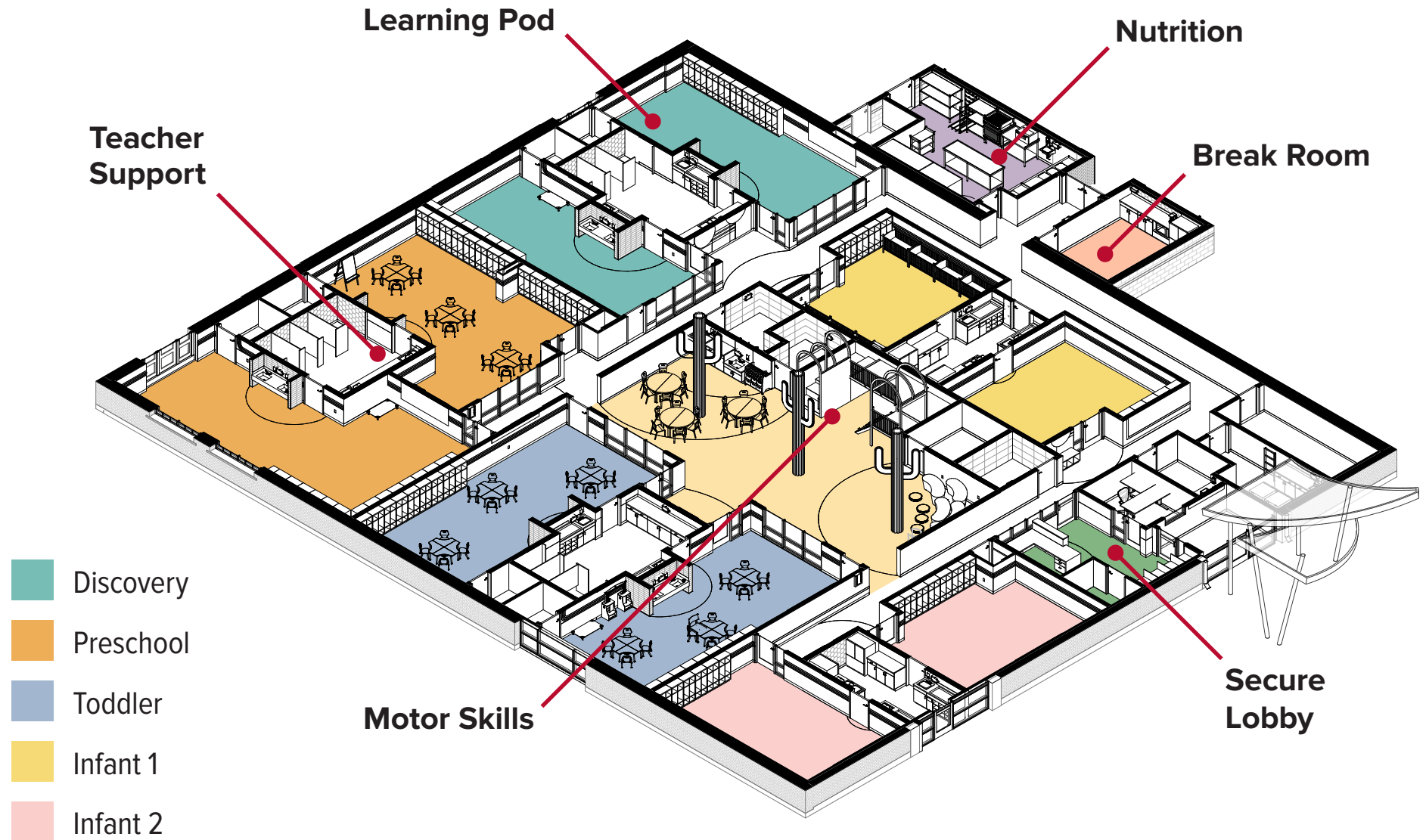


EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

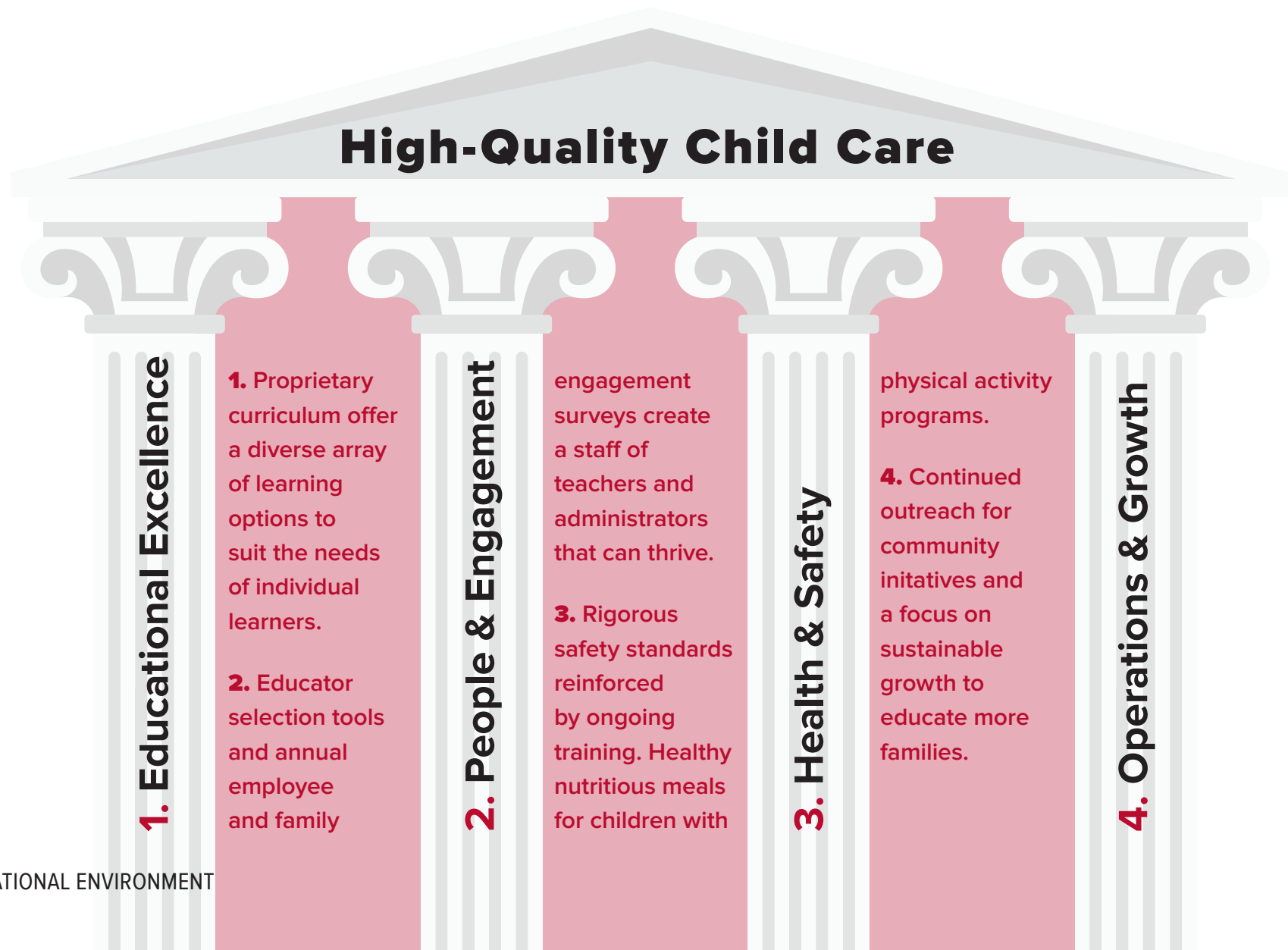


EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

FLOOR PLAN



Four Guiding Pillars



RESULTS



A NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR MARICOPA CHILDREN

The Maricopa County Early Childhood Educational Center (ECEC) integrates educational goals and objectives by providing a nurturing, accredited, and licensed learning environment staffed by over 20 dedicated educators and staff. By caring for the children of essential personnel like first responders, correctional officers, county employees, and judicial staff, the ECEC directly contributes to school district goals by supporting the well-being and productivity of families within the county system, ultimately fostering a more stable and engaged workforce. The curriculum is designed to foster holistic child development, encompassing cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. Nutritional programs and physical fitness options further support these educational aims, ensuring children are healthy and ready to learn. An unintended yet significant achievement of the project lies in its thoughtful preservation of the building's historicity, demonstrating a commitment to the community's heritage while creating a modern and secure learning space. Furthermore, the addition of enhanced security measures in the downtown Phoenix location provides an extra layer of reassurance for families. The ECEC demonstrates value and good stewardship of financial resources through its efficient operation, qualified staff, and comprehensive programs, ensuring that invested funds directly benefit the children and families it serves. By supporting the children of key community workers, the ECEC empowers the workforce that keeps it running.

RESULTS

"HISTORIC BUILDING FORM"

SHPO INVENTORY NO. _____

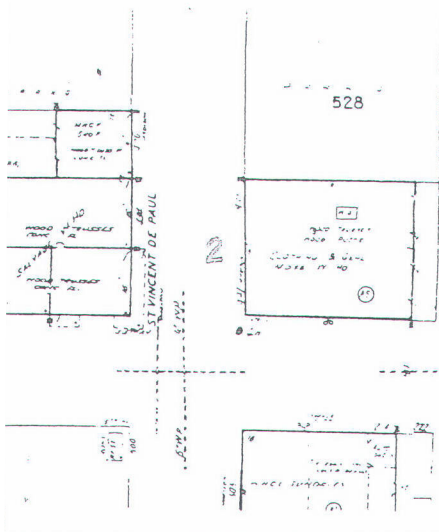
ARIZONA STATE HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY

HISTORICITY AND ORIGINALITY

The Maricopa County Early Childhood Educational Center stands as a testament to thoughtful preservation, carefully maintaining its historical significance and honored place on the historic register. This commitment to the past is seamlessly interwoven with a vision for the future, transforming the space into a contemporary and innovative school designed to inspire young learners. By preserving key features

and adding brand new ones, we've designed a school that will honor the past and educate the future.

SKETCH MAP:



HISTORIC USE: electric supply warehouse
 PRESENT USE: storage
 BUILDING TYPE: Commercial
20th Century Commercial
 STYLE: Spanish Colonial Revival influence
 CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1930
 ARCHITECT/BUILDER: T.B. Stewart Construction
 INTEGRITY: original site/altered minor
 CONDITION: good/maintained

COUNTY: Maricopa SURVEY SITE: 48-2
 USGS QUAD: Phoenix
 T 1N R 3E S 8 N 1/2 1/4 OF THE 1/4
 UTM Zone 12 Easting 399685 Northing 3701040



PHOTOGRAPH _____
 PHOTOGRAPHER: Garrison
 DATE: August 1987 VIEW: SW
 NEGATIVE NUMBER: PC Roll A, Frame 14

