



MBS Urban Initiatives Supports Transformational Early Childhood Education Center in Zion, Illinois

\$35.6 Million Educare Lake County Project Expands Early Learning, Family Services, and Economic Opportunity

SAINT LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, August 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- MBS Urban Initiatives CDE (MBS UI), the Community Development Entity affiliate of [McCormack Baron Salazar](#), is proud to announce the successful financial closing of the Start Early Educare–Lake County project in Zion, Illinois. Reaching financial close in July 2026, the \$35.6 million development represents a significant investment in early childhood education, family support services, workforce development, and community revitalization.



This investment reflects our belief that transformative community development extends beyond housing"

Nicole Blumner, Senior Vice President and Director of MBS UI

Located in one of Lake County's highest-need

communities, the project will deliver a 38,000-square-foot state-of-the-art early childhood education center serving 174 children, from six weeks to five years of age. The facility will include classrooms, collaborative learning environments, family resource areas, community gathering spaces, and administrative offices. All classrooms will operate as Head Start and Early Head Start programs utilizing the nationally recognized Educare model.

"This investment reflects our belief that transformative community development extends beyond housing," said Nicole Blumner, Senior Vice President and Director of MBS UI. "By supporting high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive family services, we are investing in children, strengthening families, and creating long-term economic opportunity for the entire community."

The project is expected to create 70 full-time jobs, including 19 accessible positions, while providing comprehensive services such as parent engagement, home visiting, health and mental wellness resources, family advocacy, and workforce development opportunities for parents and residents.

Developed through a collaborative partnership with the City of Zion, Zion Elementary School

District 6, the Lake County Health Department, the Zion Park District, LEARN Charter School, and numerous community stakeholders, Educare Lake County is part of a broader effort to create a family-centered education campus that supports children from infancy through middle school. Complementary investments in nearby schools, parks, and neighborhood improvements will further strengthen the community.

MBS Urban Initiatives provided New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) financing that helped make the project possible by ensuring the development could move forward without significant reductions in scope. The investment reflects MBS UI's mission of deploying NMTC resources to projects that expand access to essential services, create quality jobs, and generate lasting economic opportunity in underserved communities.

"This project demonstrates the power of strategic partnerships and mission-driven investment," said Nicole Blumner, Senior Vice President and Director of MBS UI. "Educare Lake County will provide children with a strong start in life while supporting families, creating quality jobs, and serving as a catalyst for continued revitalization in Zion."

About MBS Urban Initiatives

MBS Urban Initiatives CDE is the Community Development Entity affiliate of McCormack Baron Salazar. Through the New Markets Tax Credit Program, MBS UI invests in projects that create jobs, expand community services, and promote equitable economic development in underserved communities.

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