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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 12, 2024

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11/12, 9 a.m.

Child Care Associates, City of Fort Worth, PNC Foundation & Happy Baggett Fund Unite to Launch Child Care Studio at Riverside

Multi-layered Support Brings Building Revitalization and Outdoor Learning Experiences

(FORT WORTH, Texas) – Child Care Associates (CCA), in collaboration with the City of Fort Worth, PNC Foundation and the Happy Baggett Fund, proudly announces the grand opening of its new Child Care Studio at Riverside. This innovative facility, located in the heart of the Riverside neighborhood, marks the first of several Child Care Studios to open across Fort Worth, designed to provide children with nature-inspired classrooms and outdoor learning environments.

"This Child Care Studio is a great example of how collaboration across our community can make a difference in the lives of our youngest residents," said Kara Waddell, president and CEO of Child Care Associates. "Our community's investment in early learning infrastructure, like Riverside, reflects our shared commitment to enriching young children's experiences and fostering a lifelong love of learning."

CCA spearheaded the renovation project with the support of the City of Fort Worth, utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to expand classrooms for infants and toddlers in high-need areas across Tarrant County. The former Gwendolyn C. Gragg Child Development Center has been rebranded under CCA's Child Care Studios sub-brand and is now officially named the *Child Care Studio at Riverside*. The center offers affordable tuition, tuition assistance, and comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start services.

"The Child Care Studio at Riverside represents the heart of what Fort Worth stands for—community, innovation, and a commitment to our future generations," said Fort Worth Mayor Mattie Parker. "By creating this incredible facility, we're not just addressing the critical need for early childhood education, but we're also building a brighter future for Fort Worth's children, families, and our entire community. The collaboration that made this possible is a testament to what we can achieve when we come together with a shared purpose."

In addition to the high-quality indoor learning environments, the PNC Foundation and the Happy Baggett Fund contributed to the creation of nature-inspired outdoor learning classrooms, designed to promote physical activity and foster a connection with nature. These revitalized areas feature dynamic playgrounds

and nature exploration zones that encourage curiosity, problem-solving, and developmental growth in children.

The PNC Foundation generously funded three outdoor learning environments for CCA's Child Care Studios through PNC Grow Up Great®, a \$500 million multi-year, bilingual initiative that helps prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. The first of these outdoor classrooms, located at the Riverside site, features sensory exploration, physical development and creative play, offering children the opportunity to discover and engage with the natural world in a meaningful way.

"For the milestone anniversary of PNC Grow Up Great, we are excited to provide Riverside's young learners with an outdoor learning area that inspires curiosity and wonder," said Dale Klose, PNC Southwest and Mountain territory executive. "A growing body of research shows that interacting with nature supports children's learning and development. This space embodies the power of nature to enhance early education and spark creativity."

The late developer Happy Baggett, a visionary known for bringing major mixed-use development to Southeast Fort Worth, was a longtime supporter of CCA and was deeply committed to improving the lives of young children – especially babies. Before his passing, Baggett raised funds to create a safe outdoor exploration space for infants at the Riverside facility. His legacy lives on in the play spaces where children will learn, grow, and thrive.

"The infant play area holds a special place in my heart because it reflects my father's lifelong passion for taking care of the littlest ones in our community," said Maggie Baggett Shori, daughter of the late Happy Baggett. "He believed that every child deserves a safe and nurturing space to grow and explore. This play area is a beautiful tribute to his legacy and his unwavering commitment to the well-being of babies and young children."

The Riverside children will help officially open their new building on Tuesday, November 12, at 10 a.m. during an official ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Child Care Studio at Riverside. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour the new facility and hear from local officials, community leaders, and representatives from the contributing organizations who made this project possible.

About the PNC Foundation

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. (NYSE: PNC), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through PNC Grow Up Great®, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

About Child Care Associates

Child Care Associates (CCA) is one of the largest child development nonprofits in North Texas and has served more than half a million young children over the past 55 years. Through Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, PreK and Child Care Management Services, CCA delivers quality early education programs to children and families of disadvantaged means, offsets the high cost of child care for lower income working families and increases the quality of child care delivered across Tarrant County and North Texas.

Visit us at <http://childcareassociates.org/head-start-early-head-start> for eligibility and

enrollment information. For more information, visit childcareassociates.org.