



CASE
STUDY

Sheetz & Little Sproutz

The Need: At the corporate campus in Claysburg, Pennsylvania, Sheetz constructed new facilities, including a Distribution Center in 2001 and Sheetz Bros. Kitchen in 2008, increasing the need for more employees. Given the round-the-clock work schedules and other hurdles to attain child care, the employees needed access to high-quality child care during non-traditional hours.

The Business Investment: Sheetz, one of America's fastest-growing family-owned and-operated convenience retailers, partnered with Bright Horizons and opened the Little Sproutz Early Learning Center in 2017 to provide early childhood education and care to the children and grandchildren of its employees. Sheetz has a culture that values its employees as an important asset to the company and is dedicated to investing in them. Sheetz strives to create a great working environment where employees feel a sense of belonging and have all the resources they need.



The Innovation: Sheetz provides child care tuition assistance to their employees in the form of scholarships through the Pre-K Educational Improvement Tax Credit (Pre-K EITC). They provided additional scholarships and subsidized teacher salaries during the Covid-19 pandemic as a form of family and teacher retention. Their partnership with Bright Horizons allows them to provide high-quality child care with expanded hours at the Little Sproutz Early Learning Center to meet the needs of their employees' schedules.



How it's Done: Little Sproutz Early Learning Center is NAEYC accredited and a four-star center in Keystone Stars with a total capacity of 130 child care slots. They provide services to infants through pre-K and school-age summer camps with flexible operating hours (4:45 a.m. to 6 p.m.), Monday through Friday, to better support their 24/7/365 business. Sheetz requested in-depth proposals and evaluated a number of potential child care providers. Internal teams were put together to research best practices in child care, leading to their partnership with Bright Horizons, a nationally recognized leader in assisting employers with onsite child development centers.



How it's Funded: Sheetz pays Bright Horizons an annual management fee, families pay tuition fees, and Sheetz provides income-based scholarships through tax-deductible donations earmarked for Little Sproutz to eligible employees based on income.



The Impact: Sheetz reports that there has been increased retention and engagement of employees due to the onsite, high-quality child care approach. Parents have the flexibility to visit their children throughout the day. The child care center also uses a mobile app, My Bright Day, to provide parents with real-time updates about how their child is doing and what they are learning to help them stay connected. The child care center has a Discovery Driven Learning approach and a STEM lab, which provides high quality education. Children enter elementary school better prepared and ready to meet the demands of their new school. Sheetz hopes to eventually expand the Claysburg, Pennsylvania, model to other Sheetz locations.

Get Involved: The Case Studies in Caring series explores best and promising business practices created with available resources that are custom-crafted to meet local child care needs for communities and workforces. To learn how your business can join the movement to invest in caring, contact the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission at info@paearylearning.com and find an online toolkit for businesses to support working families and child care at Investments in Caring PA, www.investmentsincaringpa.com.