

PROGRAM PROPOSAL: Green Apple Garden Preschool
An extension of the program at Green Apple Garden Playschool

Proposal date: 11/10/15

By: Nuola Akinde, Interim Program Director at Green Apple Garden Playschool

1. Description: The extension program will function as a Reggio-inspired garden preschool and kindergarten. The Preschool and Kindergarten would have the same philosophical objectives as Green Apple Garden Playschool including anti-bias and peace-based curriculum, environmental stewardship, nature play, and child-led learning, and would give children ages 4-6 the opportunity to explore nature, art, and community building, in deeper, more meaningful ways.

2. Benefits:

- Learning from play and from hands-on experiences, children benefit from being outside. Research has shown that children learn best when they are engaged and active. Experiencing this in the outdoor setting stimulates all their systems and teaches them from a place-based educational perspective.
- Green Apple Garden Playschool will remain at 2664 Miller as an Infant/Toddler and Young Preschool program with three classrooms; a young toddlers "Pips" room, Older Toddlers "Sprouts" room, and young Preschoolers (age 2.5- 3.5) "Saplings" Room. Children at both sites will benefit from having more space to engage with children in their age groups, and teachers will benefit from being able to meet the needs of a specific age-population. In addition, each site will be able to meet the mission and vision in ways that are meaningful for the children in their care. For example, the older children G.A.G. Preschool will be able to care for a small group of chickens, and a smaller, but very intentionally designed garden space. We will also be able to visit the community garden, at West Park.

3. Design:

This program would include children ages 4-6. The preschool hours would be 8:30-5:30. We would continue to offer the flexible scheduling that is currently offered at Green Apple.

Kindergarten would be Monday through Friday, and families would be offered a half-day (8:30-12:30) or full day (8:30-3:30) option.

Though we could not initially offer early drop off, it is possible that we could hire a morning floater to be available at that time.

4. Staffing:

Age 4-5 requires a 1:12 ratio. We would offer a maximum of 20 preschool spaces, and would staff 1 Lead Teacher, 1 Co-Teacher and a floater and/or parent volunteer.

In order to provide high-quality Kindergarten, we would offer a maximum of 8 Kindergarten spaces, with one teacher.

With Apple Playschools' increased administrative team, we would be able to accommodate the increased paperwork. For example, enrollment and HR paperwork at G.A.G. Preschool would be absorbed into the current Office Manager role. Hiring and Supervision would be provided by the G.A. Director, with support from an Assistant Director/Permanent Sub as needed (30 hour role to be shared between both sites). Ideally the Lead Teacher would also be qualified as a Director. No additional administrative staff would be needed.

5. Curriculum: The curriculum would continue to be emergent, child-led, project-based, Reggio-Inspired and nature based one, with themes that unfold over long periods of time. Teachers will guide children in deep exploration of the topics they choose, and will use the surrounding areas as resources to scaffold their work.

Curricular supplements:

Several additions can be made to the current preschool curriculum to meet the developmental needs of the children ages 4-6. In the current Green Apple Saplings room, the large span of mixed ages does not allow for these in-depth, hands-on lessons. Some additions to the Preschool curriculum would include:

- Weekly field trips to the Downtown Farmer's Market. These walking trips would root the children deeper into the larger community, and give many opportunities for emergent math and literacy activities. Children would also have a more complete understanding of local food growth and commerce. This could also lead to "Soup Wednesdays" where children make soup from the market produce they buy.
- Forest Fridays: These weekly trips to the woods would continue, and with a group of older children, we would be able to take longer trips, and engage in more intentional projects.
- Homesteading: With the addition of a mini-oven in the building, Saplings could engage in more detailed cooking projects from the garden, and farmer's market. We will also be able to have a crafting area, where children have open access to handwork materials like needles, thread, yarn and embroidery hoops.
- Animals: Older children are better able to care for animals. We could have a couple of creatures that help children understand food webs. For example, quails or a couple of hens, as well as snails. Children would learn about the ways that eggshells from birds impact the shell production of snails.
- Small scale sustainability: I'm interested in helping the children learn more about sustainability in small spaces. We would be even more mindful of little things (like vermi-compost and rain barrels) to big things, like implementing micro-farming and permaculture practices into our school garden.

6. Financial Information:

All schedules offered:

We would offer care for the same scheduling options as currently available at the Playschool. At full capacity (twenty preschool children at \$1144/month; eight preschool children at \$1000/month) the site revenue would be \$30,880)

Central Account Contribution	\$10,000
Payroll	\$9,490.00
Building cost: (Rent and utilities)	\$2000
Health Insur. Reimbursements	450
Food	400
Classroom Supplies	300
Office Expenses	50
Meals and Entertainment	100
Household Supplies	175
Subcontractors	100
Professional Development	150
Gift Expense	50
Taxes and Licenses	42
Total expenses	\$23,307.00

Net profit: **\$7,573**

Impact on G.A.G. Playschool (2664)

5. Marketing/Partnerships: We have the benefit of already marketing our program, and this would be a tag-on to what is already established. We have several families on our preschool waiting list, and if we move quickly, we could easily fill a few part-time spots. With our currently four and five year old families (with a couple of exceptions) we could expect \$5,944.70 in enrollment to come with us to 511. Our families have been participating in our expansion explorations for over a year and will be open and satisfied with a final decision.

For the Kindergarten program, we would like to renew discussions with the Leslie Science Center, to discuss forming a partnership.

6. Urgency: There are many reasons why this program extension is an urgent matter. One reason is that we have waiting lists for each classroom, and would like to enroll many of those families before they find other options. Next, in order to increase Apple Playschools' financial health, it would be great to continue expand the number of children and families we are able to serve. And meet more appropriate financial ratios without being constricted by structural (literal and figurative) obstacles. Additionally, this expansion takes the pressure off

winterizing the Art Studio or adding another bathroom to 2664 Miller, although those additions would be needed in the future.

7. Next Steps:

- Approval from the board
- Confirm schedules and interest of current families
- Contact families on waiting list. **It would be best to start with around 12 FT spots filled in January. This would give us a revenue of \$13,728.** We can staff with two full-time teachers and the Program Director can share time. This would have the payroll percentage of 32.34%. Beginning with a small group of children would also give the teachers time to settle into the new program and routine, and enable them to provide higher quality care in the Fall 2016.
- The Preschool Expo is in late January so it would be great to have photographs etc. from the Preschool to market with.

Collaboration, Morale and Green Apple Team Members

I have talked with current staff and they are all very excited about the proposed changes. We will need to give current families some flexibility with choosing their preferred site. I anticipate there will be two families with siblings who will definitely want to stay at 2664 Miller and we can accommodate them with our remaining 8 preschool spots.

Visual Supplement:

Current Classrooms at Green Apple:

Pips (1 yr olds)	Sprouts (2 year olds)	Saplins (3-5 yrs)
8 children	8 children	13 children

Classrooms at 2664 Miller with big preschoolers at 511:

Pips (1 yr olds)	Sprouts (2 year olds)	Saplins (3 yrs)
8 children	12 children	8 children

511 Big Preschool:

Saplins (ages 4-6)	Treelings (Kindergarten)
20 children	8 children