



July 29, 2020

Dear AppleTree Families,

Over the last few months, we have spent countless hours grappling with the best way to safely reopen AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School while continuing to provide our students and families with a high quality education experience. Our planning has been informed by many of you, city officials, and government agencies. We have made significant investments, to improve facilities, procure personal protective equipment and operating supplies and we modified our award winning curriculum to support a robust in-person or virtual learning experience for students. We have made tremendous strides and I am proud of the work the team has been able to accomplish.

As we all know, the unpredictability of COVID-19 impacts the way we will open school in the fall. To help ensure a safe return it is imperative that we not only closely monitor health data associated with the virus, we must also take into consideration decisions made by surrounding school districts and the readiness for all stakeholders, students and staff to return to school.

These factors are the reasons why I announce today that AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School will start the 2020-2021 school year virtually and will remain virtual for at least the first quarter of the school year. We will closely monitor the city's health data and work closely with city officials and government agencies to help us make an informed decision about how and when we can resume in-person instruction. We know many of you expressed a desire to return to school in-person; however, given the recent spike in COVID-19 cases across the city, region and nation, we believe that starting the school year virtually is the best option at this time. The safety and overall well-being of students and staff remains our priority.

Distance Learning

Distance learning at AppleTree does not change our mission. In this model, we will continue to educate the whole child, encourage the pursuit of individual interest, build confidence, encourage play as a foundation of learning and work in partnership with families to provide students with the essential skills they need to succeed in Kindergarten and beyond. AppleTree's model blends daily synchronous (live) instruction with asynchronous (accessible anytime).

- **Daily Live Community Connections.** Monday through Thursday there will be an opportunity for students to come together virtually as a class to connect with each other and engage in critical social-emotional learning. Timing for this meeting will be based on the times that work best for families in each class. Each Connection meeting will be recorded in the event your student is unable to attend on a given day.
- **Small Group or One-on-One Instruction.** Small group instruction is a key component to our personalized learning model when students are in classrooms. Our enhanced distance learning model will build on this practice and provide small group instruction or one-on-one instruction twice a week to ensure we continue to meet the individual needs of each and every student.



AppleTree

- **Interactive and Recorded Instruction Opportunities.** Throughout the week, students will have the opportunity to engage in Read Aloud lessons as well as STEM lessons (which we call Learning Lab). Some of these lessons will be led live by teachers and others will be pre-recorded so that your student can watch them and engage in the lesson in their own time. We fully understand that full-time distance learning places a significant burden on parents and caregivers to help facilitate student learning at home. We will continue to produce recorded content to support independent learning that can adapt to the schedule of your family.
- **Guided At-Home Activities.** Each day, there will be a combination of guided and semi-independent activities for your student to engage in at home. These activities will focus on the types of lessons that are harder to replicate over video, such as independent play and journaling. There will also be an opportunity for you to engage in your own Read Aloud with your student each day, using an electronic book that can be accessed via your student's school issued Chrome Tablet.
- **Parent Breaks:** We are exploring the option of providing "Parent Breaks" a couple hours each week at local parks and playgrounds near each of our campuses for families who are interested. There will be limited spots available each week and families would need to sign-up in advance. Students in attendance will engage in outdoor activities led by an AppleTree staff member and receive a snack. If interested, please let us know by completing this [short survey](#). We will follow-up with you if we are able to move forward and there is enough interest.

Important Start of School Dates:

Please mark your calendars and look for invites and additional information about each of the upcoming events.

August 17 - 21: Virtual Parent Orientation

August 17 - 28: In-Person Meet and Greet (instructional supplies and technology distribution)

August 31: First Day of School

Continued Planning for Potential In-Person Instruction

To assist with planning, we are still asking all families to complete [this survey](#) and select their instructional model preference for the 2020-2021 SY. by July 31. This will help us more efficiently transition to an in-person hybrid option in the future. If you completed the survey previously and would like to make adjustments, please complete the survey again. Information submitted is for planning purposes only and not binding.

AppleTree Family Reopening Webinar # 1 Held on July 2, 2020

If you were not able to attend the webinar on July 2nd, [here](#) is the recording (password: 9W\$63D\$F). We ask that you take a moment to listen to the webinar in its entirety so that you will better understand steps AppleTree is taking to keep students, staff, and families safe and what instruction will look like for students in the fall. You may also access the slides separate from the webinar by clicking [here](#). **Please remember this webinar was held before we made a decision to start the school year virtually.**



Enrollment Has Its Benefits

- All students will receive a device for use at home.
- Free year long subscription to Noggin, Sparkler and other education applications to support learning at home.
- Wellness support available to support students' and families' mental well-being.
- Opportunities to participate in virtual family engagement events and access to resources available through our various partnerships.
- Access to AppleTree's award-winning early childhood curriculum content.
- Flexibility to access content and resources as your schedule permits.
- All students will be provided with supplies and materials to facilitate learning at home.
- Services for students with disabilities and English Language Learners will continue through small groups or one on one instruction provided by a special education teacher and in collaboration with general education teachers.
- All students will be assigned highly-skilled teachers to help facilitate learning at home.
- Opportunity to connect with other families and form small learning groups.
- A guaranteed seat at AppleTree next school year and this year should we progress to full in person instruction.

Thank you! We sincerely appreciate your feedback, flexibility and commitment to AppleTree during this unprecedented time. We could not do this work without you. You are what makes AppleTree such a special place and why we remain committed to working in partnership with you every step of the way to help all of our students succeed this year and in years ahead.

Sincerely,

Jamie B. Miles

Jamie B. Miles
Chief of Schools