



# The Learning Garden

## April 2020



THE LEARNING GARDEN  
Nurturing Young Minds

This has definitely been an interesting past few months. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted us all in so many ways and so quickly things change. In the beginning of March we were about to set an all-time high enrollment record at Hamline, opened a new location in Inver Grove Heights, achieved our 3-star Parent Aware Rating at our Hamline and Como locations and had 27 staff on the payroll. As of today we currently have 30 children at Hamline, 16 at Como and 9 at Inver Grove Heights, and we currently have 16 working between the three locations.

We are using this time to evaluate our programming and to implement some changes. For example, going forward all Lead Teachers will be working a middle shift, either 7:30-4:30, 8:00-5:00 or 8:30-5:30. We feel this change will have a positive impact on the educational programming and the communication between teachers and parents.

### Staffing Update:

**Hareen** will be returning as the Education Coordinator part-time in May, returning to full-time at the end of June.  
**Como:** Cassie will not be returning to infants and so we are currently looking for a new infant teacher. Our toddler room will not re-open until at least June. Hamline has space for any families needing toddler care until then. Ahava and Tajae will continue to co-teach in Preschool until our enrollment increases and then they will split. Keith and Angela will remain the Site Supervisors alternating days between both the Hamline and Como locations.

**Hamline:** Laura has taken a position as a research assistant (congrats!) and her last day will be May 1st. We are currently sending out call-back letters to teachers laid off and then we will post for available positions. Until teachers are in place, Kyra will be in Pre B with Julie in the AM and Nick in the PM. Lasandra will be the toddler teacher with Nick in the am and Emily in the pm. Isaac will remain with his Pre-K group.

**IGH:** Ashley will remain the Site Supervisor/Infant Teacher until our enrollment grows and new teachers come on board. Bebe and Jasmine will continue to work in Preschool and we expect the toddler room to reopen in June as well.

## Impacts of COVID-19 in our Program

We have been trying to keep the daily routines for the children in our program as consistent as possible. One of the things we have not done is require our teachers to wear masks. After consulting with our Health Consultant it was determined that not having the teachers wear masks would not increase the risk for the children or staff, especially if they continue to follow our health and sanitation policies. Children already have so many questions about the pandemic and we don't want to frighten them by having everyone in masks. We also want them to see teachers smile and to be able to communicate effectively with them.

We do want to continue to encourage everyone to include staff, parents and children to wash hands upon arrival and before going home. It might not be most convenient to walk to the nearest sink, but handwashing is more effective than hand sanitizer.

We've had to cancel or postpone many events including Picture Day, field trips, walks to the library and parks, our Spring Classroom Contest, the nurse volunteer program, Kindergarten Visit for Pre-K and our Spring Fling. We are also due for Parent-Teacher Conferences in May, but with the staff changes we will be postponing conferences until June. The Summer Calendar will also look a little different this year, with not as many outings and visitors.

Our Partnership with St. Paul Public Schools is still going strong, but our coaches will not be visiting us until the fall. They wanted us to share a link of resources with you all <https://www.spps.org/Domain/16561>

### Need Assistance with Food?

We have a food pantry at our Hamline location. Hamline Church has also provided us with Cub Gift cards for families in need. Please see Angela, Ashley or Keith for details.

Have you joined our Facebook Group yet?



It is a closed group for current staff and families.

Teachers post photos and videos of the children engaged in our daily activities.

To find us search for The Learning Garden/groups

angela@midwestchilddevelopment.com  
keith@midwestchilddevelopment.com  
ashley@midwestchilddevelopment.com

### REMINDERS:

- All children need to be signed in & out each day on the computer. If you do not have a code, please see Angela, Ashley or Keith
- All children need to be in attendance by 9:30 am or they will not be accepted for the day. If you are running late or have an appointment, please call so that we have accurate attendance numbers for staffing and meal counts.
- With warmer weather approaching all children need to wear closed-toe/heel shoes, no flip flops or sandals please