



TO: Mayor Jefferson and Members of City Council

FROM: Dorothy Hargrove, Director
Parks, Recreation and Library Department

THROUGH: Eric Keck, City Manager

DATE: February 3, 2016

SUBJECT: Discontinuation of Englewood Recreation Center Preschool Program
Council Request #16-036

The difficult decision to discontinue the preschool program at the Englewood Recreation Center reflects the changing demand for this service in our community as well as the challenges of complying with new regulatory requirements.

The current enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year is 16 children. Enrollment has been steadily declining for the past several years. Although we raised the price slightly this year, we estimate a loss of approximately \$18,000. Even at full capacity of 24 children we would still not break even on expenses.

Our goal, of course, is not necessarily to make money on the preschool but to use resources wisely to meet the needs of families and children in the community. Because the majority of families today have two working parents, there are simply fewer people able to take advantage of a preschool that meets for just 3 hours on weekday mornings. As part of the decision process, staff gathered information on other community and recreation center preschools. We discovered that while our tuition is at the low end of the market range we couldn't expect to raise prices sufficiently to cover our costs. We also discovered that smaller recreation departments have or are considering discontinuing the service due to low demand and increasing State regulations. Only the larger recreation districts, such as South Suburban or Foothills, plan to continue their preschools, although they report declining enrollment as well.

Changes in regulation have also driven the necessity to consider changing our service model. About 5 years ago, we were informed that the preschool program would need to meet requirements for educational preschools throughout the State of Colorado. Before that time, the ERC program was not officially regulated as a preschool program but was simply an extension of family and child recreation activities.

Several of the regulations were fairly easy and inexpensive to incorporate into our existing program. Let me be quick to state that the health and safety of our children have never been in question. The difficulty has come with the need to hire more highly qualified staff and meet changing curriculum guidelines. We have experienced significant staff turnover. It is difficult to

recruit and retain qualified teachers who are willing to work the limited number of hours at an affordable salary. We are actually paying tuition and costs for a current teacher to take early childhood education courses she needs to stay in compliance with State requirements. Our continued discussions with the regulators have made it clear that even more stringent requirements are being considered to improve the educational rigor of preschools. The traditional activity-based preschool program that is consistent with the goals and the resources of the recreation center is no longer an option.

We gave the attached letter to families last week in order to give them ample time to find alternate preschools before we discontinued the program for the summer. The families have been aware that staff has been struggling to keep the program alive and we sincerely regret disappointing them, and our dedicated teachers, with the necessity of this change.

The Englewood Recreation Center is still committed to serving families and young children but the type of program that we can most effectively deliver is changing. We have just hired a dynamic new Youth Program Administrator to help us develop new services that better reflect the changed realities of our environment and community. We are exploring, for instance, the possibility of providing evening and weekend drop-in day care to better serve the needs of working parents. Our summer camp programs are popular and successful. We will continue to work with the community to find programs that are sustainable and successful.

We would be happy to provide more information or to answer any questions.

Attachment (1)

January 28, 2016

Dear Friends and Parents,

I am writing you today with some difficult news. With regret, Englewood Parks and Recreation has decided that the All Aboard Preschool program will close in May of 2016. Discontinuing this program was not an easy decision. Staff spent the past two years reviewing state licensing demands, enrollment trends and ultimately assessing the community's needs and came to the conclusion that we can no longer operate a licensed preschool program. This program will continue through the remainder of the school year with a strong dedication to education, culminating in a graduation in May.

Whether this is the first school year with us or your family has been a part of our preschool program for many years, we are grateful that you have chosen to enroll your child(ren) in our program. I also want to extend my gratitude to Mrs. Hanks and Mrs. Valdez. for their hard work and perseverance.

While we can no longer provide a separate preschool program we will continue to offer special classes and events for young children. We look forward to serving you and your children again in the future.

Included is a collection of licensed preschool programs in the area to assist you and your family in the transition for next school year. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your support and understanding.



Jones

Program and Facility Supervisor

Englewood Recreation Center

303 762.2692 jjones@englewoodgov.org

Local Preschool Information Contacts

As of 1/19/2016

Local Preschools				
Name	Address	Contact #	Notes	Director
Eng. ECE / Maddox	700 W Mansfield	303 781.7585	M-F Full Day + M-TH 1/2	Marnie Yanacheak
First Plymouth Learning Center	3501 S Colorado Blvd	303 762.9355	MWF 9a-2:30p	Karrie Gleason
St Mary's	4545 S University Blvd	303 762.8300	Jr. Kindergarten 4yr	Mary Hefferman/Coely - Admissions
Children's Preschool	3885 S Broadway	303 781.3216	6wk - 5yr / 3.5 -5 M-F 7:30a-12:30p or Full Day	Amanda Wheeler
St James	3601 W Bellevue	303 798.7844		
All Souls	4951 S Pennsylvania	303 783.9099	3-5 Early Learning Center/Full day + options	Sally Wallace
Bethany Early Childhood Center	4500 E Hampden	303 758.0266	Many options	Carrie Lapham
Stepping Stones Academy & Family Center	451 Englewood Pkwy	303 781.900	Montessori full day	Kaela Chaffin
Emmanuel Methodist	2700 S Downing	303 758.1697		Jeanne Johnson
Little Learners	4343 S Elati	web only		Cheryl Radosovich

Recreation Agencies

Location	Address	Contact #	Notes	Director
South Suburban	Goodson / Lone Tree	303 483.7075	MWF, MW, TTH & F 11:30 Zp	Cindy Stogsdill
Foothills		303 409.2127	MWF, TTH 9a-12n or 1p Full Day Day Care 6:45a - 6p	Amber Stowe



TO: Eric Keck, City Manager
FROM: Dorothy Hargrove, Director of Parks, Recreation and Library
Joe Sack, Recreation Manager
DATE: February 16, 2016
SUBJECT: Preschool Costs and Fees

State of Colorado Preschool licensing requirements include the following staffing positions: Director, Teacher, Aide and Sub-Director. We do not have a qualified Director or Sub-Director on staff at this time and would need to hire at least one additional staff member to be in compliance with State regulations. Qualifications for a Director include an appropriate baccalaureate degree, Early Childhood Education credits and a minimum 5460 hours of experience working with children under 6. These staffing requirements create difficulty in hiring qualified part time staff.

Current 2016 Budget

• Labor	\$23,626	Part Time Preschool Teacher & Assistant
• Recreational Supplies	\$1,300	General operating supplies
• Food	\$200	Food and refreshments
• Books/Magazines	\$75	Books
• Other Pro Services	\$700	Nursing fee, background checks, inspection fee, excursions
• Travel & Conf	<u>\$2250</u>	Trainings required by State
Sub- Total	\$28,151	

Additional Staffing required (Currently not funded)

Director - 20 hours week with benefits \$16.00/hr. = \$22,630 year

Current Program Supervision (Currently indirect cost not included in 2016 fee structure)

Program administrator 25% of time; \$49,000 plus benefits = \$16,660 year

Total Operational Cost \$67,441

In order to recover these costs, fees for program participants would need to increase substantially. These estimates are based upon the preschool operating 33 weeks per year.

Programs Fees

3-4 years old T/TH 9am -12N \$511 non-resident /\$409 resident per month

4-5 years old MW/F 9 am -12N \$766 non-resident /\$613 resident per month

2016 Current Fees

3-4 years old T/TH 9am -12N \$176 non-resident /\$138 resident per month

4-5 years old MW/F 9 am -12N \$220 non-resident /\$176 resident per month