



Aug 19, 2021

Dear Madbury Planning Board,

Attached you will find our Application for Site Plan Review for Coldstream Properties, LLC for the construction of a remodeled and replacement deck on the north side of our building. This project minimally impacts our site plan, but offers necessary and significant life safety improvements to our site. The life safety improvements include the replacement of an old deck that we inherited from the prior owners, expanding the deck to include an ADA ramp to the play yard, plus creating a second means of egress. We will be converting the existing office into a classroom, adding a fire-rated door indoors to allow direct access to the existing classrooms, adding a second means of egress, and relocating non-essential office staff to an off-site location.

In my communications with Liz Durfee, Town Planning Consultant, she indicated, "If you do not intend to submit any of the items in submission requirements, you may request a waiver from the Planning Board." As part of this submission, I respectfully request a waiver of the technical requirements of the submitted plans. The plans included with this application are quite detailed and are consistent with my prior submissions. To the extent that they may not comply with all of the technical requirements, I hope that you will find them sufficient for this purpose, given the limited modifications taking place. At Little Tree, we take great pride in the appearance and condition of our property and commit the same high-level of construction as we undergo this project.

The existing deck is being removed as it is near its useful life and needs to be replaced. While replacing this deck, we feel it is critical to use this opportunity to improve life safety by adding an ADA ramp, plus a second means of egress. The ramp will require a large amount of space, so the during the design, we considered and included additional improvements, including a second means of egress. Maximizing this remodel creates dramatic improvements that will increase egress, expand accessibility, enhance life safety, and improve outdoor space / flow for the children, teachers, and families.

As part of this project, we will be remodeling the current office space into classroom space. Please see the attached floor plan for review. We have reviewed these plans, including the remodeled deck design with the Fire Chief. We will be subject to all Department of Health and Human Services licensing requirements, including inspections from Madbury Fire & the Health Inspector.

We are licensed for 75 children. Little Tree Education is a Licensed Plus center, a distinction of honor and quality care made to only 5% of childcare centers across the State. Though this pandemic, the State has encouraged us to remain open for essential workers, expand offerings, and increase capacity. This proposal would increase our total license to 85-90 children. The final

exact number is determined by the NH Department of Health and Human Services during their final inspection. We will be increasing enrollment by 12-14 children, however, the traffic to and from our site will decrease. Approximately one-third of our school population are siblings. Therefore, we will be welcoming about 8 new families compared to the 12 staff members that work in the office on a routine basis. Not all positions work at one time as the space is small, but the office has a ton of traffic as it serves as our headquarters for both schools, plus our new Montessori Teacher Training Program.

Contrary to the unpredictable schedules of the office staff, children and their families maintain incredibly routine and pre-scheduled arrivals and departures. Children in our care arrive and depart at designated time-slot each day, which are made by reservation and limited to 15-families every 10-minutes. The reservation system has increased traffic flow & reduce congestion by smoothing out the peaks and creating a more steady flow to and from the site. By converting the office to a classroom, we will be reducing the vehicular trips to the site by a modest estimate of 18 trips per/day, with 9 of these trips during peak hours.

To conclude, I would like to highlight that the American Rescue Plan Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Child Care (OCC) have received an additional \$29M to support childcare centers like our to expand, improve, and build a strong workforce. We plan on applying for these funds to assist in stabilizing tuition rates, while increasing wages and benefits for our teachers, and ultimately to expand care. Madbury (and most of the State) is a childcare desert, meaning there are more children that need care compared to spots available. At Little Tree Education, our dedicated team of educators are committed to continuing our growth. By converting the office to a classroom we are further supporting our community at large.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Greenshields

Little Tree Education, LLC / Coldstream Properties, LLC

## **Additional Notes / Resources:**

**Special Exemption:** The conversion of this space does not alter our Special Exemption as we are still operating as a licensed childcare center. It is critical to note that a licensed child care facility may operate in several types of buildings that have been converted for childcare. The majority of childcare centers in New Hampshire do not call their spaces classrooms, but refer to them as “Age Groups” or “Mixed Age Groups” or “Rooms,” like the “Rainbow Room.” We pride ourselves as being not just a “day care” but a school even for babies, and as such, we have adopted the use of the word classroom, but construction alterations to this space are minimal. We will not have whiteboards or desks, but rather an in-home environment including cribs, low shelves for lessons and classroom materials, and child-sized tables and chairs.

**Repurposing the Current Office Space:** The remodeling and addition to the deck is not altering the footprint of our building. While this is a de minimis change to our overall site plan, this alteration will positively improve the overall operations and use of our property. Primarily, it is time that we relocate our office staff that currently park on-site each day. This team has grown over the years as our business has scaled. The office staff come and go from the property often, including lunchbreaks, trips to run errands, visitors from our Dover location, including Head Teacher meetings, Director meetings, and trainings. The conversion to classroom space will reduce this traffic.

**Family Reservation System for Drop-off & Pick-up:** Family schedule their drop-off and pick-up times for each day a child attends through our reservation system. Families are not permitted to arrive at a non-scheduled time in support of our continued COVID-19 policies and procedures. Following the pandemic, we plan to continue the use of this reservation system as it has helped the children with the stress at drop-off and pick-up, decreased congestion in the parking lot, and supported families with a speedy in and out as they maintain their busy lives.

**Waitlist Status & Urgent Need for Care:** Currently, we have a waiting list of nearly 200 families. In Madbury, we plan to convert our office space into a classroom for infants to generate some much needed relief to our waiting list & to help more local families. Infant care is of the greatest need as we have several currently enrolled children that have or are expecting siblings.

**Existing Condition of Deck:** The old deck that has reached its useful life as we are unsure when it was originally constructed. We have used this space for years, but have a growing concern for failure. With new materials we can address current challenges, including splinters, peeling paint, deterioration / concern of stair failure, and aged wood that bugs love. The newly remodeled and enlarged deck will enhance our overall aesthetic, matching the front of the building & landscaping.

**Office staff positions that currently utilize the office in some capacity include:**

- Chief of Staff (FT)
- Executive Director (FT)
- Registrar (3/4T)
- Park Ranger (Responsible for Inventory & School Supplies) (PT)
- Sparkle Squad Captain (Responsible for all COVID-19 policies & procedures) (PT)
- Madbury Director (FT)
- Bookkeeper (PT)
- Montessori Teacher Trainer (FT)
- Montessori Mentor (PT)
- Scheduler (3/4T)
- Maintenance Manager (FT)
- Dover High School Montessori Teacher Trainer (PT)

**Staff vs. Family Vehicular Trips Per/Day:**

Vehicular Trips as Classroom:

Times	7-8:30	12:30	4-5:30
Families	8	4	4
Teachers	3	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

Vehicular Trips as Office (based on clock-in & clock-out data):

Times	7-10:30	12:30-2	4-5:30
<b>Office Staff</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-5</b>

**American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)- Ideas for Using New Hampshire's Discretionary Funds:**

Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Child Care (OCC), NH will receive approximately \$29,000,000 American Rescue Plan Act Discretionary Funds. The purpose of these funds is to build child care back stronger by using this opportunity to:

- expand access to high-quality child care and move toward a more equitable child care system;
- further support a system that meets the developmental needs of children;
- provide parents with true choice and equal access to child care services that best suits their family's needs;
- appropriately compensate an essential and skilled workforce;
- facilitate a robust and more equitable high-quality child care systems for America's families.

NH has until September 30, 2024 to use the funds. The use does not have to be COVID related, which is different than the previous funding for child care in the NH Child Care Recovery and Stabilization Program (CCRSP), COVID-19 Child Care Assistance Supplement Program (CCCAS), CRRSA Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), and the current Child Care Achieving Stabilization Grant Program (CCASP). We are interested in how you think we should prioritize the funding in an effort to strengthen the child care industry in NH.