



Appleseed QuickBits

- ❖ **CONTACT: Anthony Butler, Executive Director, abutler@appleseed.gives, 304-916-4254**
- ❖ We are a non-profit organization.
- ❖ The conversation about the lack of rural child care in our area started at a farmhouse kitchen table.
- ❖ If any one of our partners didn't come through, this operation would not have come to fruition in a timely manner, or perhaps, at all.
- ❖ We have raised over \$2.5 million dollars for affordable, quality child care since 2020.
- ❖ Our operation doubled the number of available licensed child care seats in our county.
- ❖ Our services currently support 61 local employees working at 52 different businesses or entities.
- ❖ Our Appletree Rensselaer operation runs 5 days/week, 12 hours/day, 52 weeks/year for up to 70 children from birth to five years old.
- ❖ We serve families of any household income.
- ❖ We've celebrated one year of serving local families (March 2024).
- ❖ We have a volunteer board of community members.
- ❖ We are a rural Indiana farming community in the third largest county by land mass, not population, and have had the record for the highest total corn yields in the state.

Founded: 2020

Business Model: Appleseed Childhood Education is a non-profit organization that opened the Appletree Rensselaer child care center.

Location: Appleseed HQ and Appletree Rensselaer, 1102 E Grace St., Rensselaer, IN 47978

- ❖ Our facility is on the Franciscan Health Rensselaer hospital campus.
- ❖ We are in Northwest Indiana, halfway between Chicago and Indianapolis off of I-65.

Milestones: From a conversation at a farmhouse kitchen table in 2020 to having a licensed rural child care center operational in 2023 required meeting some milestones.

- ❖ We signed a lease with Franciscan Health, a 145-year-old non-profit regional healthcare system, for our Appletree Rensselaer facility and renovated it for our purposes.
- ❖ We signed an agreement with our operating partner, Right Steps, a 50-year-old non-profit organization in Lafayette, Indiana to be one of the seven facilities they manage.
- ❖ As of April 2024, we have raised over \$2.5 million dollars for this project from public, private and corporate partnerships along with start-up grants.
- ❖ In April of 2024 we had a community party to celebrate our first year of serving families. There was great attendance from the community and supportive others including a Congressman, Senator, and State Representative who see the value of our rural child care initiative.
- ❖ The Infant Room was dedicated in 2024 in memory of a woman in our community who was the 'babysitter' everyone knew. We wanted to acknowledge her passion for child care and early education as she was a local inspiration.

Population:

- ❖ City of Rensselaer: approx 6,000
- ❖ Jasper County: approx 32,000
- ❖ # Children under six years old in Jasper County: approx 2,400

Employees: Appletree Rensselaer currently has 20 employees who receive full benefit packages including free access to advanced certifications and education as part of their employment.

Child Care Seats: Appletree Rensselaer serves up to 70 children from birth through five years old.

Cost of Care: The actual cost to provide Appletree Rensselaer is approximately **\$18,000 per child/per year**. The cost billed to families is based on household income. **No family pays the actual cost.**

Funding: There is not a successful for-profit rural child care business model because of lack of population, lower family incomes and lack of infrastructure. Since we bill our families based on household income, we fundraise the balance of the cost-of-care constantly from:

- ❖ private donations.
- ❖ public/governmental sources.
- ❖ corporate donations and support.
- ❖ extremely limited grant opportunities.
- ❖ CCDF vouchers from qualifying families.

Advocacy: Licensed early childhood care and education needs to be considered legislated critical infrastructure for rural communities to:

- ❖ provide quality child care and early education so children start school with better skills.
- ❖ provide quality child care and early education to help families improve their income or careers.
- ❖ keep young people from moving away to find services.
- ❖ keep companies and corporations fully staffed.
- ❖ attract new businesses to Main Street and the Industrial Park because employees are available.
- ❖ keep the grandparent-generation from leaving the workforce to provide child care.
- ❖ open a new workforce sector in rural communities for early childhood education.
- ❖ cover part of the cost-of-care so child care is affordable for families of any household income especially in lower wage rural markets.
- ❖ make the rural quality child care operation(s) sustainable.

Economic Data: These excerpts are from *LOST OPPORTUNITIES: The Impact of Inadequate Child Care on Indiana's Workforce & Economy* by Indiana University Public Policy Institute, 2018.

- ❖ "...We estimated that Indiana loses nearly \$1.1 billion in economic activity every year due to child care related absenteeism (\$580.7 million) and turnover (\$519 million). These child care related disruptions cost the state an additional \$118.8 million in tax revenue every year. Employers also have direct costs from these disruptions, nearly \$1.8 billion annually. Absences and turnover cost the rural and urban counties substantially. ...the Advisory Board identified four potential funding sources to improve this system: tax credits for ECE-supporting businesses, shared services alliances, social impact bonds, and dedicated revenue sources."
- ❖ Jasper County employers lose \$7.3 million every year because of absences and turnover costs related to unstable child care.
- ❖ 173 full-time equivalent employees are lost from the County's labor force because of non-existent or inadequate child care options.
- ❖ \$750,000 in County tax revenue is lost due to employees having difficulty securing child care.

Media Mentions: Visit our website (www.appleseedchildhoodeducation.org) to:

- ❖ read about our Lilly Endowment Matching Grant.
- ❖ read about our Community Partnership Award with Franciscan Health Rensselaer.
- ❖ listen to our interview on NPR.
- ❖ listen to our interview on Hoosier Ag Today.
- ❖ get to our social media:
 - Appleseed Childhood Education Facebook
 - Appleseed Childhood Education Instagram
 - Appleseed Childhood Education LinkedIn