

Early Growers



HI THERE!

City Blossoms is an organization dedicated to fostering healthy communities by developing creative, kid-driven green spaces. We accomplish our mission through five programs: Early Growers, School Garden Partners, Youth Entrepreneurship Cooperative, Community Green Spaces, and Training & Resource Development. These programs incorporate free or affordable activities, community engagement, resources, and coaching to create holistic expressions of the culture and needs of each community through green space.

THE EARLY GROWERS PROGRAM

Through the Early Growers program we partner with early childhood centers to connect our youngest gardeners, ages 2 through 6, to their environments. During these partnerships children and their educators engage in nature play, gardening, cooking, reading and art-making at their locations and/or a City Blossoms green space. Themes build upon each other helping participants make their first connections to nature and food, resulting in a more holistic understanding of a healthy ecosystem and our roles as community stewards. To build continuity, we also include professional development coaching, resources, and multi-year support for educators.

To learn more about the Early Growers program, partnering, costs and commitment, please contact willa@cityblossoms.org.

ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM

Program Support: City Blossoms staff co-teach two six-week workshop series with teachers in the classroom to model how to incorporate lessons, artwork, activities and outdoor spaces into their programming. Resources, recipes and additional lessons will be shared with classroom teachers during this period to help them build upon these units.

Garden Excursions (depending on location): Between May and September, each partner center will have the opportunity to take participating classes to visit a City Blossoms Community Green Space for up to four garden excursions. The visits to the gardens will give participants an opportunity to interact with their natural environment, harvest their own food, and participate in directed activities as well as some nature-play. Two sessions will be led by a City Blossoms educator and two will be independently led by early childhood educators.





Garden Designs & Builds: For early childhood sites that have outdoor space for a small garden, City Blossoms will co-plan a design and help lead a community workday. Most of these gardens will include a few raised beds or containers, artwork and signage and some nature-play elements. These gardens will be maintained by the early childhood centers.

Coaching for Educators: Educators are asked to participate in 4-6 small group coaching sessions over two years at a City Blossoms site. The sessions introduce educators to hands-on, project-based, garden and nature-themes including:

- Introduction to nature-based and garden early childhood education
- Preparing for spring through literacy and nature-themed artmaking
- Nature-play & basic garden design
- Cooking with kids and families

Resources: Partners receive resources to help educators incorporate garden and nature-based learning into their work. Resources may include:

- *Our First Harvest/Nuestra Primera Cosecha*, our bilingual curriculum
- *Garden Gastronomy/Gastronomia del Jardín*, our bilingual cookbook
- Cooking Box - Specially chosen supplies to encourage classroom recipe-making
- Mini Library or Garden-based Booklist - Age-appropriate books with diverse protagonists, authors and themes.
- Nature Play Backpack - A collection of simple tools for nature play in gardens and along-side community walks
- Youth-grown seeds and seedlings
- Quarterly newsletter with tips and information on other resources

