



WHAT ARE WE

We are a seller of toys that inspire, creator of spaces that teach, and source of resources teachers and caregivers need to engage the children they love.

We combine the art of play, the science of learning, and the appreciation of high level craft and design into an inspiring retail environment.

We create inspiring learning and play spaces for children as we work with teachers, parents and caregivers to identify needs and craft creative solutions to meet them.

With an educator with over 25 years of experience in both public and private school settings as a consultant, we ground our merchandising, buying and product assortment decisions on practical advice.

WHAT WE SELL

We sell toys and learning tools that are of a higher level of craft and design. Many of our vendors are global in design and, or execution. We sell art and decor to enhance the learning environment - either classrooms or living spaces. We partner with smaller producers that receive more of an immediate impact from our purchasing.

WHO DO WE SELL TO

Teachers - We see a real connection with Montessori and Waldorf educators, who's pedagogies focus on natural materials, individually directed, and experiential learning.

Caregivers We target those that appreciate well crafted and designed toys that are stimulating on multiple levels.

We have begun to survey the density of purchasing customers in our initial core market. We have only to date tapped into the public Montessori community. We know that there is additional potential in the private Montessori community as well as Waldorf, which has a similar appreciation for the type of goods we will sell. As you will see, there is a robust potential base.

Within the public Montessori community alone to date we see:

25 3-6 level teachers, 28 6-9 level teacher, 19 9-12 level teachers as well as a potential additional 28 teachers across those levels. Each of those teachers represent a classroom with a potential of 25-30 kids each, with associated parents and caregivers. As one can see, those numbers alone yield a tremendous opportunity.

In addition to these numbers, there are over 40 private Montessori school affiliated with Cincinnati Montessori Society. Each of those schools represent an underserved teacher and parent base.

We feel we can also tap into the private traditional education schools and the home-school community. We know a key demographic will be parents who place a high emphasis on their child's education and are willing to invest in quality learning and play resources.

Teachers have little to no local resources for practical classroom materials. The target teachers structure their classrooms around using both real world, and imagination as the basis for learning modules. By providing them with a curated selection of artistic, ethically sourced and produced goods, we will facilitate an easier shopping experience than ordering on-line. Our goal is to also bring new and undiscovered resources to the market - often using non-educational vendors and showing the educational potential for those goods.



WHERE ARE WE

We must balance our need to be “where our customers are” with a fiscal responsibility, and an eye toward long term sustainability. Within each of our markets we will locate in area with a higher concentration of family-focussed businesses and a density of dining, shopping and entertainment options that appeal to a mix of customers. Ideally we want to located in demographic areas that are aligned with our ethos and aesthetic. Our goal is to locate in areas that strive to incorporate environmental and social issues into their purchasing decisions. We

will locate in areas with high density, walkability and higher median income. Being located in an area with a desirable school (people buy into neighborhood because of the educational opportunities) is a key goal. While hitting all of these target goals is desirable, we must also weigh the cost of hitting them. We feel that the teacher segment of our customer groups will be less “location driven” in their purchasing decisions and will seek us out even if we are unable to achieve the targets mentioned above.

In the Cincinnati market, we are identifying a few target areas. Clifton and Northside (areas also possibly served by College Hill), Over The Rhine, Westwood, and Blue Ash / Eastern suburbs are areas with higher concentration of families. Clifton and Northside are also areas with higher concentration of socially responsible and environmentally conscious caregivers.

NORTHSIDE - A very racially and socio-economically diverse population, with concentrations of college students, artists, young professionals, and many members of the creative class. White-collar workers make up 84.24% of the working population in Northside Cincinnati, while blue-collar employees account for 15.76%. There are a total of 5,555 households in Northside Cincinnati, each made up of around 2 members. Family establishments represent 46.3% of these Northside Cincinnati households

Northside Business District - (pr community website) Just five miles Northwest of Downtown Cincinnati, Northside is a hotbed of creativity, and a popular destination for entertainment, nightlife, and shopping, with dozens of independently owned businesses along a two-mile stretch of US-127/Hamilton Avenue and its cross streets. The Northside Business District is situated along Hamilton and Spring Grove Avenues, and the Hoffner Historic District, boasting distinctive Italianate architecture that reflects the city’s German roots. The walkability and social connections of Northside’s business district is a big part of why people choose to visit or make their home here. Northside’s population has remained overwhelmingly diverse over much of the past several decades—despite a rapid increase in redevelopment, and a surge of popularity. In the neighborhood parks, pubs, restaurants, and shops, you’ll find local business owners, artists and musicians, young families and older residents who have raised their children here, arts administrators, young professionals, college students and educators, as well as skilled-laborers and technicians—often with the shared vested interest in maintaining the community spirit that makes Northside so special.

Companion Businesses - Many family focussed non profits as well as family friendly businesses and restaurants often catering to a more specific food population (vegan, vegetarian, ethically sourced etc)

Identified challenges:

- Lack of available, quality retail space

- Rent levels not in alignment with condition of building

- Still a bit “rough around the edges” is our brand too polished for this market

CLIFTON - There are 14,006 residents in Clifton, with a median age of 28.2. Of this, 50.31% are males and 49.69% are females. US-born citizens make up 78.51% of the resident pool in Clifton, while non-US-born citizens account for 5.48%. Additionally, 16.01% of the population is represented by non-citizens.

A total of 9,376 people in Clifton currently live in the same house as they did last year.

Clifton is a neighborhood in the north central part of Cincinnati, Ohio, United States. The population was 8,304 at the 2010 census. The area includes the Ludlow Avenue Shopping and Dining District. Clifton is situated around Clifton Avenue, north of Dixmyth Avenue, approximately three miles north of Downtown Cincinnati. Several historic buildings and homes remain in the neighborhood. Clifton was developed in large part due to the expansion of the street car system in the 1880s-1890s. Located in the center of the City of Cincinnati, just 9 minutes from downtown, Clifton is a village-like community of quiet tree-lined, residential streets flanked by historic homes and mansions. Residents of Clifton are a mingling of students, educators, artists, professionals, and families. Clifton bears close proximity to the the University of Cincinnati, and several leading medical centers. Residents enjoy easy access to all cultural, sporting, and entertainment facilities in the area. Uniquely lacking in strip malls and franchise stores, Ludlow Avenue is the heart of the community with a collection of shops and restaurants, as well as Cincinnati's only surviving art theater. The Ludlow Avenue business district has been designated Cincinnati's first "Main Street neighborhood" in a program sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation; the Gaslight District contains many independent shops, restaurants and a movie theater specializing in independent and foreign films. There is a great diversity of retail outlets and dining and drinking establishments situated along Ludlow and intersecting streets.

Identified challenges:

Lack of available, quality retail space

Higher rent costs associated with density and desirability of area

Population skews less family - more "generational bookends"

COLLEGE HILL - There are 21,337 residents in College Hill, with a median age of 45.5. Of this, 44.78% are males and 55.22% are females. US-born citizens make up 97.63% of the resident pool in College Hill, while non-US-born citizens account for 1.64%. Additionally, 0.73% of the population is represented by non-citizens.

Living in College Hill offers residents a dense suburban feel and most residents own their homes. In College Hill there are a lot of bars and parks. Many families and young professionals live in College Hill and residents tend to be liberal. The public schools in College Hill are above average. College Hill is among Cincinnati's most diverse neighborhoods, and that includes race as well as age and socioeconomic status. The reasons for this are many, but the result is a neighborhood where everyone is welcome. That breeds a sense of community, a sense that will no doubt grow in strength as College Hill enters an exciting new phase in its life as a Cincinnati neighborhood. An active and proactive Community Urban Redevelopment organization that is driving numerous projects. This area can easily serve Clifton and Northside communities as well as West side neighborhoods

OVER THE RHINE WESTWOOD

Westwood is an up and coming area on the west side of Cincinnati. A concentration of public Montessori schools in the community make this attractive to parents. Housing is diverse and generally more affordable. The business district is beginning to see some development, but mostly in the restaurant segment. There is little to no retail and very few viable retail spaces. The proximity to the ones residence also make Westwood attractive as off-site storage would be very easy in this area.

Over-The-Rhine is an area in the urban core where a lot of new restaurants, bars and living options have developed over the past 10 years. While this area has a density of retail and food service, mixed with residential, and offers a level of high visibility, it has a higher CPSF. It is also not ideally positioned to market to families, since the demographics of the area tend to be more “bookends” of young professional and empty nesters.

BLUE ASH EASTERN SUBURBS

Blue Ash is an area of mid - upper mid single family homes with a robust industry, manufacturing and office tax base. This area easily serves Eastern suburbs such as Hyde Park, Indian Hill, Kenwood, and Madiera. New retail development adjacent to Summit Park would be ideal, as this is a heavily programmed, large park with dining and bar options that attracts families. This is new construction and may be out of price range at this time, but could be considered for future growth.

Blue ash would serve the Eastern suburbs referenced above. These are areas of higher income with a focus on family homes. These would be ideal target customers. By positioning in emerging areas such as Blue Ash and College Hill we would be able to connect with these areas at a more affordable CPSF. Retail spaces in the Eastern areas reflect the demographic of the area and may be out of price range at launch.



In Store Experience

The retail space will function as a place to touch, experience and interact with the materials we sell. Ideally 2-3 large tables will act as engagement points where we can discuss the unique qualities of the product while children and adults are able to play and experience first-hand examples. M

Mobile selling tools will allow immediate transactions to take place throughout the store, and product will be pulled from a variety of on floor and back-of-house storage locations, and wrapped to complete the transaction.

The store will have minimal boxed stock housed on the floor to make recovery easier, and create more curated, “gallery of play” experience.

Upbeat music and higher levels of lighting fill a white space. It is accented with natural materials such as stone and wood. Bright colors come through the product, art, and accent walls or LED backlighting that can be changed to correspond to the color-store based merchandising used in the store

A “materials lab” exists at the back of the store where bulk loose parts are merchandised in large glass jars. Supplies and space to dye and paint loose parts creates activity in the

store. This flex space will also be used for learning sessions and seminars. We want the overall feel of the space to be a “modern General Store” with an interactive, community center feel. The goal is for product to be approachable and remove boundaries to play and learning.



The INSIDE Curve

Educator program and bog

One of the exciting aspects of this business is our unique ability to connect educators with resources and products they may not have previously had access to. We also want to be a forum for sharing ideas, inspiration and teaching techniques. We see accomplishing that through two main channels

The Inside Curve Blog - We want our customers and experts to be able to share their passion, knowledge and love for the products that we sell. We will have a blog that features at least monthly posts from a slate of teachers, caregivers, parents and others that can bring relevant information to our community of customers. We will also use the base of subscribers to this blog as our core target group for events, workshops and seminars that we host as part of our SHARING vision.

The Inside Curve loyalty program - Qualified teachers, paraprofessionals, and at-home teachers can purchase from us at a 15% discount on all regular price product. We will also have special vendor events, theme events or “invitation only” sales on certain categories of items. We also offer free registration to any in-house event, workshop or seminar to these “inside the curve” (supplies for “make it” workshops not included in the free registration) We also will offer Co-Op opportunities for our insiders. Insiders may sign up to work evening or weekend shifts (the best time to have teaching experts in store to answer questions from parent and other teachers) in exchange for their time, they will earn store credit at the base rate of \$15.00 pr hour worked. This will be a great way to reduce staffing costs (as these will be considered compensated at 15.00 retail but will cost out at about 7.50 pr hour cost. It will also reinforce our “expert” standing in that we will have trained teachers and product advocated engaging with our customers. We will also host round-table discussions and exclusive product previews for this group. Our goal is to really make these “insiders” feel like the valued members of our communities that they are.

Store Interior Conceptualization



Bright white interiors - Minimal finishes.
Raw surfaces for honest textures
Modular and flexible fixturing
Minimal stock on floor - more "Play Gallery"
Modern General Store, Apothecary



Learning **CURVE**