

apple seeds



Profile

Alison Berna and Allison Schlanger, both mothers of twins, met while struggling to shoehorn their double strollers into a tiny elevator on the way to music class. "Everything was rushing, rushing, rushing," says Berna. "It would be a 20-minute walk to one place for a 45-minute class that was really 30 minutes by the time you took off hats and scarves. And there was no place to hang out afterwards." You know what happened next: In March 2007, Berna and Schlanger and their husbands, Bobby and Craig, opened Apple Seeds, a 15,000-square-foot kid-tastic wonderland just off the family-friendly Madison Square Park. The indoor playground was designed by Roto Studio, the folks behind the Children's Museum's acclaimed learning zones, who built nine city-centric installations, from a New York deli complete with bountiful crates of plastic fruit to a yellow cab that two can climb inside and "drive." Cleanliness is a big priority. Three times a day, all the toys in the playground are replaced with new, sanitized versions, and strategically placed disinfectant bins allow plastic items that have been stuck in mouths to be dunked. The playground requires a \$945 yearly membership, but anyone can sign up for the exhaustive list of classes for newborns to 5-year-olds. Branded music classes like Music Together are the big draws, and others come with a twist: Each session of My Chelsea Art Opening, for example, is themed on a classic children's book, and students host a "gallery opening" for family and friends at semester's end. — Sarah Bernard

Best of New York Awards

- Best Kids' Music Class (2010)
- Best Play Space (2009)
- Best Play Space (2008)