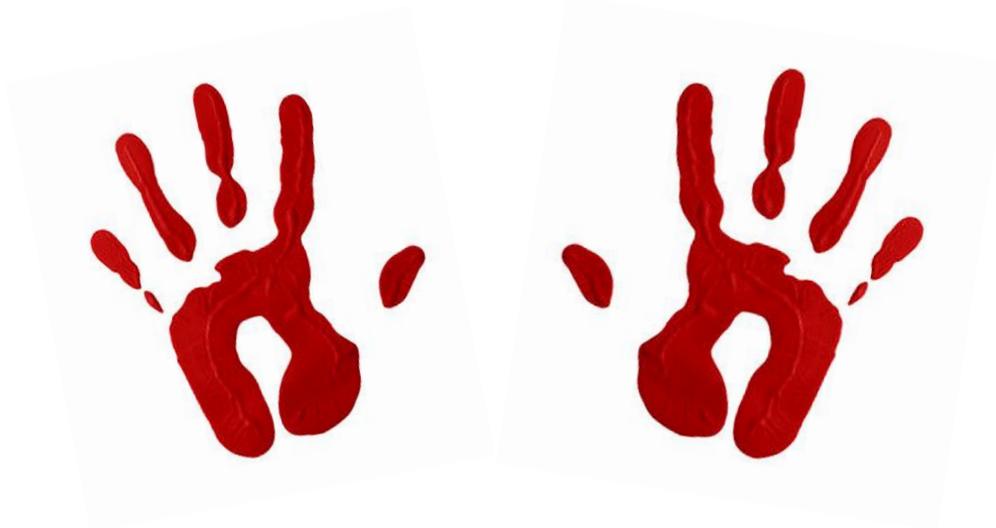




# **Cooperative Play Program**

## **Parent Handbook**

**2013 - 2014**



# Table of Contents

MISSION STATEMENT .....	1
ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY and REQUIREMENTS .....	1-2
HEALTH CERTIFICATES	
Background Check	
DEFINING ROLES and DPR FACILITATORS .....	2
ROLE OF DPR	
ROLE OF THE DPR FACILITATORS	
ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES .....	3-4
SAMPLE DAILY ROUTINE	
CO-OP CALENDAR	
CO-OP CLOSINGS	
OUTDOOR PLAY	
DUTY DAYS .....	5
DUTY PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES	
DAILY ACTIVITIES	
NANNY POLICY	
SIBLING POLICY	
MATERNITY LEAVE	
MULTIPLE CHILD POLICY	
SNACKS .....	6-7
PEANUT POLICY	
SNACK IDEAS	
SNACK NON-PARTICIPATION	
HEALTHY HABITS .....	7
HEALTH ISSUES/SICKNESS POLICY .....	7-8
FEES .....	9
PARENT ADVISORY BOARDS .....	9
LOCAL PARENT ADVISORY BOARDS – SUGGESTED POSITIONS .....	9-10
BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY .....	10-11
COMMUNICATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION .....	11
FIELD TRIPS .....	12
WHAT TO BRING/NOT TO BRING TO CO-OP .....	12
TERMINATION .....	13
PARENTS’ STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT .....	14
APPENDIX A: Cooperative Play Emergency Planning Document .....	15

# DPR Cooperative Play Program (Co-op) Mission Statement

The DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Cooperative Play Program (Co-op) advances youth development using outcome based programming and developmentally appropriate practices in a creative and recreational play environment.

The Co-op recognizes that all children grow and develop in different stages. Through structured play and creative experiences, the DPR Cooperative Play Program assist in advancing youth development outcomes, which are the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors that all children should strive to achieve. Our programming offers young children a solid foundation for emotional, physical, social, and intellectual growth.

Children are encouraged to explore and engage in all experiences offered with the help and guidance of their DPR Facilitator. Creativity within a cooperative play environment allows children to develop a positive identity and demonstrate increased abilities associated with knowledge and skills.

At the DPR Cooperative Play Program:

- All children are respected.
- Children are provided many opportunities to have constructive developmental and social experiences.

## Enrollment Eligibility & Requirements

The DPR Cooperative Play Program is an equal opportunity program. Registrations are accepted without regard to race, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, or political beliefs.

The following programs are listed according to the available age of enrollment. Participants are eligible for enrollment based on age requirements. Listed below are the sites and the corresponding age minimum:

- Columbia Heights, Deanwood, Hardy, Rose Park & Volta Park (Bunnies) programs:
  - Children must be 18 months old by September 30<sup>th</sup>
- Chevy Chase CC and Mitchell Park programs:
  - Children must be 2 years old by September 30<sup>th</sup>
- All other Co-op programs:
  - Children must be 2 ½ years old by September 30<sup>th</sup>

With the exception of the 18 to 29 months old Co-op groups, children are to be at least in the process of potty training (using pull-ups) before beginning the program in September. No child will be accepted if still wearing diapers. Children 2½ years or older are to be potty trained; however, if actively potty training and wearing pull-ups, children can still be accepted into the program. All duty day parents and guardians are expected to assist with bathroom duties.

### **Health Certificate**

All **children** and **duty parents or caretakers** must have an updated DC Health Certificate form prior to the Co-op program opening date. Physicals/TB/Lead test must be completed. All parents or caretakers who will be volunteering for duty days must have Physical/TB test.

### **Criminal Background Check**

All persons in a family that will be serving duty days are required to **complete a DC Department of Parks and Recreation Criminal Background Check** before serving duty days.

### **Oral Health Assessment**

The DC Department of Health recommends that all children 3 years of age and older have an oral health examination performed by a licensed dentist and have the DC Oral Health Assessment Form completed. The DC Department of Parks and Recreation requires that this assessment form be completed and submitted to the Co-op program prior the first day of participation.

All enrollment forms must be completed prior to the start of the program. Forms can be found on the DPR website at [DPR.dc.gov](http://DPR.dc.gov).

## **Defining Roles – DPR & Facilitators**

### **I. Role of the DC Department of Parks and Recreation**

DPR manages all aspects of the Cooperative Play Program including, but not limited to, the hiring and supervising of the Facilitators, liaison with facilities management, management of registration of children, collection and accounting of tuition, and communication of best practices between Facilitators city-wide.

DPR also acts as an agent of stability – though each playgroup includes input from the parents at each site (in coordination with the Facilitator), these parents frequently move out of the program after 1-2 years when their children reach Pre-Kindergarten age. DPR can maintain an “organizational history” to assist new parents who join the leadership team each year.

DPR will make every effort to provide a substitute staff person when the Facilitator is absent; however, there may be occasions when duty parents will be required to operate the program independently. Those occasions should be very rare.

### **II. Role of the Facilitators**

All Facilitators at Co-op sites have been carefully screened by the DPR Cooperative Play Program Coordinator and other DPR staffers for the following: an educational and employment background in early childhood care, education or a related field, a criminal background check, drug test and employment references. The Facilitators meet regularly with the Co-op Coordinator to discuss the program and services for the parents and children. In addition, the Co-op staff will participate in professional development seminars offered by DPR throughout the year.

## Arrivals and Departures

The Co-op program meets Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Duty parents are required to report at 8:45 am to prepare the facility, but children whose parents are not volunteering that day should not be dropped off until the session begins at 9:00 am. Children can be picked up any time during the session day, but no later than 12:00 pm. As a courtesy to your Facilitator and your children, parents are asked to arrive promptly to pick up children at the end of each daily session.

In order to motivate punctuality, duty parents will be relieved in order of arrival.

Children are signed in by their parent or caregiver upon arrival and signed out upon departure. Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent or designated caregiver, unless previously communicated to the Facilitator in writing.

### **Sample Daily Routine** (\*\* Daily schedule may vary by center)

- 9:00 am – Welcome, wash hands, free play
- 9:30 am – Clean up playroom, begin circle time
- 10:00 am – Begin daily project
- 10:30 am – Wash hands, begin story time and snack
- 11:15 am – Play outside (weather permitting)
- 11:45 am – Possible closing activity, story, puzzle, etc.

### **Co-op Calendar**

The Co-op program will begin on Monday, September 9, 2013, and end on Friday, May 23, 2014. The Co-op program will close based on the same holiday closure schedule as the DC Public School (DCPS) calendar. This calendar includes scheduled holidays, winter and spring breaks, and vacations. The Co-op will be open on scheduled DCPS Professional Development Days.

The Co-op Facilitators may participate in two scheduled professional development days each year. Dates have yet to be solidified; however, families will be given ample advance notice. All Co-op programs will be closed on those dates. In addition, Co-op Facilitators are expected to attend DPR's Professional Development Academy (PDA), which is scheduled for most Tuesdays from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm.

### **Co-op Closings**

When DC Public Schools are closed or have a delayed opening of two hours due to inclement weather, all Co-ops will be closed.

When the location must close for any other reason, the Facilitator or Co-op Coordinator will notify the Parent President, who will in turn activate their local Co-op telephone tree to notify remaining families. This procedure will also be followed should a special planned activity, such as a field trip, be cancelled or postponed.

The building will also close if there is:

- No heat
- No air conditioning
- No water
- Other adverse conditions that affect the ability to deliver a quality program

If a center has to be closed during the normal hours of Co-op operation, staff will make every effort to locate another suitable recreation center to meet.

## Outdoor Play

In the winter months, when the temperature falls below freezing (32 degrees), as indicated by [www.weatherbug.com](http://www.weatherbug.com), the Co-op children will not play outdoors.

## Duty Days

Duty parents are an integral part of our Cooperative Play Program, as well as being an essential component of maintaining the proper adult-child ratio. All persons in a family that will be serving duty days are required to **complete a DC Department of Parks and Recreation Criminal Background Check** before serving duty days.

Every effort is made to ensure that all parents are scheduled equally. Duty day calendars will be distributed via e-mail on a monthly basis by the Local Parent Advisory Board Scheduler or designee, and a copy will be posted on the playgroup bulletin board. Since each situation will vary when enrolling in the Co-op program, all families should plan on one duty day per child per week. If a parent is unable to complete his/her duty day, they must make arrangements as soon as possible for another parent to cover for them. Parents are allowed up to three unexcused absences before they are asked to withdraw from the program. Duty day parents are to:

- Provide a nutritious snack sufficient for the whole class as assigned.
- Follow the routine as outlined by the Facilitator.
- Interact and assist in supervising the children.
- Assist with the daily activity; by planning, preparing and leading the activity as assigned.
- Assist with hand washing.
- Share responsibility with other parents for toilet usage or diaper changes.
- Prepare snack.
- Clean tables and sweep under them after snack time.
- Tidy playroom.
- Answer phone and take messages if the Facilitator is busy.
- Assist in supervising outdoor play.
- Watch the children at all times. Never leave them unattended. Duty parents are responsible for supervising ALL the children, not just their own. All conversation between parents should be at a minimum during the supervision of indoor/outdoor activities.
- Interact with the children at their own level, participate in activities, songs, etc. and sit at the tables or on the carpet.

- Show a genuine, friendly interest in the children and their activities. Let them be independent. Move into the situation if the child is in danger, is becoming frustrated with a difficult toy, or is having problems in a social situation.
- Cell phones should not be on or in use during supervision of children, unless an emergency arises.

In addition to the above, parents are required to regularly attend meetings as scheduled throughout the year by the Local Parent Advisory Board; details follow in further sections.

### **Daily Activities**

All parents are responsible for preparing and presenting projects or daily activities throughout the year. The number and frequency of the activities varies by center and will be determined at the beginning of the year based on the number of children and the Facilitator's preferences. Additionally, at most centers, parents are responsible for assisting with the decoration of the playroom and/or bulletin boards.

Resources are available from DPR to help Facilitators and parents plan goals and activities.

### **Nanny/Duty Parent Policy**

In an effort to make Co-op available to all families, regardless of the employment status of the parents, the District policy is to allow nannies, or other primary caregivers (such as grandparents) to perform Co-op parent duties. All caregivers must complete a Background Check through the DC Department of Parks and Recreation prior to serving duty days. In addition, there must be two (2) parents/caregivers on duty for each day and one of them is required to speak English.

### **Sibling Policy**

Duty parents are NOT allowed to bring non-enrolled siblings to the program and are expected *to provide alternate childcare arrangements* for all siblings not enrolled in the program. In the event that alternate childcare cannot be arranged, the duty parent can exchange their duty day with another parent. Such an occurrence should not happen on a regular or frequent basis and would be considered an emergency or exceptional situation.

### **Maternity Leave**

In cases where a child is born or adopted shortly before or during the program, the parent will be entitled to six weeks off from duty days, which must be made up. Each parent group will determine the schedule and manner in which the duty days missed will be made up. Some families may find it more convenient to schedule a substitute caregiver to complete duty days rather than making them up before or after the maternity leave.

### **Multiple Child Policy**

When a parent has two or more siblings enrolled in the same center, it will be the decision of that particular local Co-op parent board, in conjunction with the Facilitator, as to whether or not that parent will be required to work twice the number of duty days as the family of a single child. Consideration will be paid to the total number of children in the class, the number of families enrolled with more than one child, and the experience and opinion of the Facilitator.

In cases where the multi-child parent does not participate more than once per week in the playroom, he or she should contribute to the class in other ways (e.g., serving as an officer, off-hours playroom maintenance, etc.). Since each situation will vary when enrolling in the Co-op program, all families should plan on one duty day per child per week.

## Snacks

During each class the children have a snack provided by the parents on a rotating basis. The frequency of snack duty varies by center and will be discussed at a parent orientation meeting before the program year begins. Each parent group will determine the best snack procedure for their Co-op.

*Some example procedures and best practices include:*

- One parent provides the snack for the week and one parent brings fresh fruit each day, on a rotating basis.
- One parent provides the daily activity and one parent brings the snack, on a rotating basis and based on the duty day schedule.
- Each Co-op determines five agreed upon snacks that rotate weekly.
- Every child brings his or her own snack every day.

*Some Co-ops have decided to implement a vegan diet. Others have allowed children to share snacks with each other. Below are some questions to consider when establishing the best snack policy for your site:*

- *What will the Co-op do for 'special celebrations' snacks?*
- *What will the policy be regarding snacks with sugar (e.g., cookies)?*
- *What is the back-up plan if the snack parent cannot make their duty day?*
- *Will the snack be provided for adults too?*

## Peanut Policy

Due to the potentially fatal nature of peanuts for children or adults with allergies, if any parent in a center identifies his or her child as allergic, that center will become a peanut-safe playroom. In such rooms, no peanut products may be served at any time and every parent has the responsibility to diligently read the labels for any peanut components. (Parents in affected families can provide alternative names for peanut products.)

## Snack Ideas

- Cheese and crackers
- Pancakes
- Muffins
- Cottage cheese
- Sandwiches
- Non-sugared breakfast cereals
- Pizza on english muffins
- Eggs deviled or scrambled
- Noodles tossed with cheese
- Smoothies - blend yogurt & fruit
- Macaroni and cheese
- Jell-O
- Applesauce
- Carrots & celery spread with cream cheese
- Fruit, fruit salad or fruit chunks on skewers

## **Snack Non-Participation**

If a family objects to participating in a shared snack for reasons of health or religious concerns, that family may send their child with a personal snack to Co-op everyday. The snack will be eaten at the same time as the group snack, it should not be overly complex, nor require onerous preparation by the parents on duty. The snack must abide by the peanut prohibition if applicable in that center.

## **Healthy Habits**

In order to reduce the incidence of communicable infection, and teach good habits to the children, the Co-ops will abide by the following:

- Supervised hand washing with soap and warm water at least once per day; and before all meals/snacks.
- Ideally hands should be washed three times a day – upon arrival in the morning, before snack, and after playground.
- Parents and Facilitators will also wash their hands upon arrival.
- Parents will wear plastic gloves for serving snacks.
- Toys will be cleaned on Friday, or after a known illness in the group.

## **Health Issues/Sickness Policy**

An ill child should be kept at home. Many communicable diseases start with cold-like symptoms. The Facilitator should be informed about the nature of any illnesses. If, at any time, the Facilitator feels that your child is too sick to remain in the program, you will be notified. We expect you, or someone designated, to pick up the child IMMEDIATELY. It is to your advantage to establish a back-up person upon whom you can depend in the case of such an emergency. This policy is designed to maintain the health of all the children and the staff.

Children should not be sent to the program, and will be sent home, if any of the following are apparent:

- A temperature of 101 degrees or more (Children may return to the program after being fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication.)
- Conjunctivitis - until treated and cleared to attend the program
- Contagious diseases including, but not limited to, measles, chicken pox, mumps, etc.
- Unidentified rashes
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Impetigo, lice or ringworm - until treated and cleared to attend the program
- Severe cold with fever, coughing, sneezing, and/or nose drainage
- Bronchitis or other throat infections - until treated
- Pain reported in stomach or head
- Inability to participate in daily activities

## **Medication**

No medication will be administered at any Co-op site by any DPR staff or duty parents. A child's parent is the only person authorized to administer medication to their own child.

## Immunization Policy

Upon enrolling a child in the Co-op program, the parent or guardian must provide the Facilitator with the District of Columbia Provider Health Certificate (adults) and a Child Health Certificate. The Child Health Certificate must include the specific dates of immunization for the following communicable diseases:

- Diphtheria and Tetanus (usually combined)
- Polio (3 doses of oral or 4 doses of vaccinations)
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis Assessment and testing
- Lead Poisoning Assessment and testing
- Varicella - DPR requires all children who have not had the chicken pox to receive the vaccine. Please state on the Health Certificate one of the following: a) *My child has had chicken pox*; b) *My child has not receive the vaccine* and state why; or have the child's doctor record the date of vaccination on the form.

A medical exemption maybe given in the case of a child deemed to have a medical contraindication to an immunization, if a physician's signed statement is provided as proof. A religious exemption maybe granted upon receipt of a signed statement (reason) or request by a parent or guardian.

A non-immunized child may not be allowed to attend the Cooperative Play Program if any cases of the communicable diseases listed above have been identified in children attending the program or if District of Columbia Health officials have determined that an outbreak or communicable disease exists in the area.

## Injury Policy

If a child is injured during the program day, how it is handled will depend on the severity of the injury.

- In the event of a serious injury, 911 will be called and the parents will be notified so that they can meet the child at the hospital.
- In the event that an emergency room visit is not immediately necessary, but parental attention is required sooner rather than later, the parents and/or secondary emergency contact will be called so the child may be picked up from the program.
- In the event that the child can continue with the program day, the Facilitator will apply first aid (for minor injuries such as scrapes, scratches, or a bloody nose), and the parent will be notified of the incident at pick-up.
- In all cases, the Facilitator will complete an Incident Report, which will be filed with the Cooperative Play Program Coordinator and DPR's Risk Management Division.

SEE: APPENDIX A for the Co-op Safety Precautions and Emergency Action Plan

## Fees

In addition to program fees, the local parents group will collect a supplemental fee which is used to fund co-op activities, field trips and parties. The fees will vary by center but have historically ranged from \$50-\$100 per child, per year. Supplemental fees are due to the Co-op Treasurer on the day chosen by that site's Parent Board.

All fees are non-refundable, regardless of the reason for withdrawal from the program. Late or non-payment of enrollment and supplemental fees is grounds for termination from the program.

**Program Fees are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month.** A reminder will be emailed to families on the third late day. Children will be dismissed from the program if payment has not been received by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of that month.

## Parent Advisory Boards

The Local Parent Advisory Board is a group of parents who:

- Reside in the District of Columbia.
- Meet monthly to discuss matters relevant to some or all Co-op programs.
- Act as arbiters in disagreements between parents and the local parent board.
- Act as the program's liaisons to DPR.

Membership on the Co-op Parent Advisory Board (PAB) is open to all parents who are willing to attend meetings 3 or 4 times during the program year. The PAB group will have a minimum of one representative from each Co-op site (usually the local PAB President), but may have several. In cases put to vote to the Co-op Advisory Board, each site will be entitled to one vote, regardless of the number of local PAB participants.

## Local Parent Advisory Boards: Suggested Positions

At each center, the parent group should elect (or self-volunteer) officers to ensure the smooth running of the Co-op. Each center may determine their own positions, with the below list as a guide. At a minimum, all centers should have a President and Treasurer, and at least one regular representative to the Parent Advisory Board. The Local Parent Advisory Board (site based) should meet at least 3-4 times during each program year, but can meet monthly if needed.

- I. **President** - Preside at all board meetings; arrange orientation in the Fall; oversee all board members to assure jobs are being done and the business of the Co-op is running smoothly; sign Co-Op local parent fund checks as necessary; send introductory letters to respective class parents in late summer; meet with parents, Facilitator, and District officials as necessary to resolve issues and for regularly scheduled meetings.
- II. **Secretary** - Keep minutes of board meetings; make a copy for the board president to approve before distributing it to the board; submit a typed copy for publication via e-mail; create and update phone tree and roster as necessary.

- III. **Treasurer** - Keep financial records; pay all bills, receipts, sign checks, monitor financial condition of Co-op and report to board; maintain monthly records; prepare yearly financial statement and proposed budget.
- IV. **Scheduler** - Maintain a common class calendar and record of duty days for all parents. Identify number of duty days required during each period and remind parents to sign up for duty days. Assist parents in finding substitutes when they are unable to work on a given day.
- V. **Bulletin Board Coordinator** - Maintain bulletin board; keep notices tidy and current; post photos of board members with job descriptions in fall; post newsletter; display calendar listing special events, holidays, all monthly meetings, field trips, etc. Gather information from Scheduler and Field Trip Organizers.
- VI. **Field Trip Organizer** - Work with Facilitator and parents on dates, times and location; inform Scheduler and Bulletin Board Coordinator of dates, times and locations. Announce upcoming trips at parent meetings.

## Behavior Management Policy

One of the key objectives of the Co-op program is the development of social skills in preschool age children. Unacceptable behavior is typical at this age and can be viewed as another teaching opportunity for the program. Therefore, it will sometimes be necessary for parents and Facilitators to intervene when children are behaving badly. In such cases, the following guidelines will apply:

Discipline should be:

- Presented in a positive manner.
- Appropriate to the developmental level of the child.
- Designed to assist the child to learn appropriate behavior.
- Implemented as soon as possible after troublesome behavior.

Use positive statements whenever possible, such as “The sand stays in the sandbox,” rather than, “Don’t throw the sand.”; or “Use your inside voice,” instead of, “Stop shouting.” Language is a valuable outlet for feelings and DPR encourages children to use words that express their needs, as opposed to pushing, hitting or physical situations.

The following is NOT permitted at ANY Co-op site in ANY situation:

- Spanking or other types of corporal punishment.
- Sarcasm, belittling, and degrading remarks. These are humiliating to a child and can produce a mental block, which can hinder development of good self-image and inhibit the ability to pay attention and learn.

The use of “time outs” will be at the discretion of the Facilitator; redirection of a child is encouraged to reduce problem behavior.

While adjustment challenges are natural and expected at the beginning of the year, occasionally, a child will continue to have behavioral issues. Examples include children who are overly aggressive, bite frequently or with extreme severity, or refuse to follow adult instructions, potentially endangering themselves and others.

In such cases, parents of the offending child will be notified that there is an issue, and an action plan will be developed in coordination with the Facilitator and the parent board. To the extent an improvement is not noted, the child will be placed on probation for an agreed upon period (generally 60 days). If the behavior has not subsided by the end of the period, it will be at the discretion of the parent board and the Facilitator whether the child will be subject to dismissal from the program.

## Communication and Contact Information

### List Serv's

Communication between parents within a Co-op group is imperative. For this reason, each Co-op site should establish an e-mail group or list serv (Yahoo, Google, and other web services offer them for no charge). A shared electronic calendar is also available in the same forum, and makes an ideal place to publish duty days and the Co-op calendar.

### Facebook

DPR maintains a Co-op Facebook page where families can share ideas and communicate with other co-op families. Membership is restricted and must be approved by designated DPR staff, in order to maintain the privacy of the group. The page link is [DPRCooperativePlay@groups.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/DPRCooperativePlay@groups.facebook.com).

### Cooperative Play Program Office Staff

Behind the scenes, Co-op Staff are planning and providing support to all of the Co-op programs across the city. The office staff contact information is as follows:

<b>Co-op Primary Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:cooperative.play@dc.gov">cooperative.play@dc.gov</a>	<b>(202) 671-0421</b>
Yvonne Jones Cooperative Play Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:yvonne.jones2@dc.gov">yvonne.jones2@dc.gov</a>	(202) 425-2859
Vanessa Gerideau Garrison Seasonal Programs Manager	<a href="mailto:vanessa.gerideau@dc.gov">vanessa.gerideau@dc.gov</a>	(202) 671-0397
Dr. Sharia Shanklin Community Services and Programs Officer	<a href="mailto:sharia.shanklin3@dc.gov">sharia.shanklin3@dc.gov</a>	(202) 671-0412

## Field Trips

Trips outside of the Co-operative play sites are planned to broaden the children's environment to the community and enhance the overall experience for each child. The Co-op programs will have field trips planned throughout the year, either by parents, or in conjunction with DPR. One parent or caregiver (who is cleared for duty days) per family is required to attend each field trip. Field Trip Organizers can arrange trips. The Co-op Facilitator must submit the request to the DPR Service Request Center (an electronic form).

Requests should be submitted to the Cooperative Play Program Coordinator via email. Hand-written correspondence is not acceptable. The Program Coordinator will then enter the pertinent information to the DPR Service Request Center (online).

Please include the require information in your request:

- Co-op Site Name
- Name of Destination
- Street Address of Destination
- Departure Time (from co-op site)
- Return Time (back to co-op site)
- Number of children participating
- Number of adults participating
- Signed permission slip for each participating child
- Mode of transportation (e.g., DPR bus, public transportation, parent vehicles)

Time line guidelines for submitting field trips requests are as follows:

- Out of town travel (outside of DC): Requests must be submitted *via email* **at least 30 days** in advance of the trip
- Local travel (inside DC): Requests must be submitted *via email* **at least 14 days** in advance of the trip

Please be sure to submit field trip requests within the aforementioned time frame, in order to ensure sufficient processing time.

## Sibling Policy

Siblings who are not enrolled in co-op are not permitted to participate in field trips. Occasionally, exceptions can be made with advance approval from the Facilitator; however, parents/caregivers must remain cognizant of their roles as chaperones for the entire group, not just for their own children

## What to Bring/Not to Bring to Co-op

Children should not bring money, candy, snacks, bottles, or sippy cups to the site. Children are allowed to bring toys for morning meeting or share time on designated days. Each child must be appropriately dressed for the weather with hats, heavy coats and mittens in cold weather; snow boots during snow; sunscreen on sunny days (applied at home); and rain gear in the rain. Each child must also have a weather appropriate change of clothes left at their play site that includes at least a pair of socks, underwear, pants and a shirt in the event they get wet in a puddle, someone spills juice, etc.

## Termination

Though rare, there are occasions when there is not a fit between a family and the Co-op.

Some examples of when this may occur are:

- When a parent fails to comply with their assigned duties.
- When a parent does not regularly attend parent meetings.
- When a parent/families do not pay required fees (to the District or local parent fund).
- When a child has a severe or consistent behavior problem.
- When a parent does not follow the procedures outlined in this manual.
- When there is disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior (verbal or physical) by parent, guardian or designated drop-off and/or a pick-up person. This action will result in immediate termination.

In such cases, the family will be given an opportunity to correct the issue.

The process for correction is as follows:

- The Facilitator or a parent, representing the parent group, will identify the issue, in writing, to the respective family.
- An action plan, complete with dates and goals, will be developed, and included in the written communication to the family in question.
- If the goals are not achieved within the stated period, the parent board will have the discretion as to the termination status of the family.

## Appeals

If a family feels as though the action plan or termination decision has been made in error, the case will be referred to the Co-op Parent Advisory Board (comprised of Local Parent Advisory Board Presidents). If this is the case, the parent will appear on their own behalf, and either the regular representative to the Board, or his/her designee, will present on behalf of the Parents Group. The members of the Co-op Parent Advisory Board will vote, with the representative from the center in question abstaining from the vote.

**The decision of the Co-op Parent Advisory Board will be final and binding.**

## Parents' Statement of Understanding and Agreement

In consideration of my child being accepted in the DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Cooperative Play Program (Co-op), I agree to:

1. Pay Co-op fees to DPR and Parent Board assessments, regardless of whether or not my child attends on each scheduled day, without exception.
2. Keep my child out of Co-op if s/he shows any signs of a communicable disease or condition.
3. Participate fully on my duty days, in accordance with the guidelines posted, and to provide a snack in accordance with the schedule.
4. Complete a Criminal Background Check.
5. Arrange for an approved substitute or another enrolled parent to attend in my place if I am unable to attend on my scheduled duty day.
6. Bring problems concerning the operations of the Co-op to the attention of the Parent Board or to voice them at the monthly business meetings.
7. Bring problems concerning the program to the notice of the Facilitator and/or Cooperative Play Program Coordinator.
8. Attend regularly scheduled Parents Meetings.
9. Participate fully on the volunteer committees to which I am assigned, and to do my utmost to enhance the day-to-day operations of the Co-op.
10. Abide by the all items outlined in the Parent Handbook, as well as the decisions of the Co-op Parent Advisory Board, concerning Co-op policy.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*Print Name*), agree to abide by these and all other regulations as outlined in the Co-op Parent Handbook. I understand that my failure to abide by any or all of these terms, may be grounds for my child's dismissal from the program, in accordance with the termination process outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Co-operative Play Emergency Planning

## **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

- Children are to be supervised at all times.
- On wet days or snowy days, children will not be allowed to play on playground structures.
- Parents, as a group, will determine whether they consider any portion of the playground unsafe for their children to play in and set limits as to where children can play.
- Children must remain seated during snack time.
- Facilitators will have an emergency action plan available at the site in case of evacuation or injury.
- Facilitators and duty parents will not use cell phones during programming, unless they have to take an emergency phone call. The remaining parent(s) or Facilitator must be notified, in order to cover the group during the temporary absence.
- During recess, facilitators and parents will coordinate specific areas of supervision or specific children to supervise.
- Facilitators will have an emergency phone list available at the site.
- Co-op volunteers are required to be actively engaged in the supervision of all children while serving duty days.
- Facilitators will monitor first aid supplies and request additional supplies as needed.
- Facilitators will have current CPR and First/Aid certification. DPR Staff will schedule course opportunities. Duty parents are encouraged to take CPR and First Aid certification programs.
- Each Co-op site will have an emergency evacuation location, in the event of an emergency, at the site. These site locations will be provided prior to the start of each year.
- Parents will be informed about emergency procedures/ action plans and any other important emergency information during the first orientation meeting.

## **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

1. Assess the situation quickly.
2. Make sure all children are removed from harm.
3. Call 911, if needed.
4. Apply first aid, if needed.
5. Call the child's parent. If the parent is not available, call the secondary emergency contact. If they cannot be reached, the Facilitator and Co-op volunteers will collaborate to make a decision on how to proceed.
6. Call the Co-operative Play Program Coordinator.
7. If first aid has been applied or a head injury occurred, complete an Incident Report Form and include all details of the incident.
8. If requested, the facilitator will provide a copy of Incident Report to the child's parent. The facilitator will provide the Co-op Coordinator with the report and the coordinator will notify the Risk Management Division, and submit a copy of the report. The Facilitator will retain a copy in the program files.
9. Place request for replenishment of first aid supplies, if needed.