

COOPERATIVE PLAY



2026-2027 Parent Handbook



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DPR COOPERATIVE PLAY PROGRAM (CO-OP) MISSION STATEMENT

The DPR Cooperative Play Program (Co-Op) advances youth development using outcome-based programming and developmentally appropriate practices in a creative and recreational play environment. All children grow and develop in different stages. Through structured play and creative experiences, the DPR Cooperative Play Program assists in advancing youth development outcomes, which are the age and development appropriate behaviors that all children should strive to achieve. Our programming offers young children a solid foundation for emotional, physical, and social growth. Children are encouraged to explore and engage in all experiences offered with the help and guidance of their DPR Facilitator and participating families. Creativity within a play environment allows children to develop a positive identity and demonstrate increased abilities associated with socialization and skills.

DEFINING ROLES - DPR & FACILITATORS

Role of the Department of Parks and Recreation

DPR manages all aspects of the Cooperative Play Program, including, but not limited to, hiring and supervising the Facilitators, liaising with facilities management, managing child registration, collecting and accounting for tuition, and communicating best practices among Facilitators city-wide. DPR will make every effort to provide a substitute Facilitator in the absence of the Lead Facilitator; However, there may be occasions when duty parents will be required to operate the program independently.

Role of the Facilitators

All Facilitators at Co-Op sites have been screened by the DPR Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager and other DPR administration 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 frequently with the Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager to discuss the program and services for the parents and children. In addition, the Co-Op staff will participate in professional development throughout the year. Families will be notified via email of those dates.

The Role of the Facilitator:

- Cooperative Play Facilitators are responsible for leading or coordinating task and/or activities of the Co-Op group
- Provides an overview of daily objectives

- Ensures that the mission of the program is executed professionally and meets desired outcomes
- Enthusiastic Leadership with patience and encouragement to aid in meeting desired outcomes
- Model best practices for early childhood development and behavior management

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:

- Chevy Chase Recreation, Columbia Heights (Caterpillars), Raymond, Turkey Thicket, Friendship, Rose Park, Ridge Road, and Volta Park (Bunnies) programs:
 - Children must be 18 months old by September 30th
- Chevy Chase Community Center (Lions), Columbia Heights (Butterflies), Guy Mason, Ridge Road, Volta Park (Rabbits) programs:
 - Children must be 2 ½ years old by September 30th

All parents/guardians must show proof of the child's age by showing a copy of the child's birth certificate or a passport. This information should be scanned and emailed to kidscampsandcoop@dc.gov. In addition, all parents/guardians must show proof of residency by providing two of the following documents listed on page 6 or page 27. Please scan and email to the same address (kidscampsandcoop@dc.gov).

Potty Training and Bathroom Duties

The 18 to 29-month-old Co-Op groups do not have potty training requirements. Children participating in the 2 ½ - 4 age programs are to be at least in the process of potty training (using disposable training underwear) before beginning the program in September. No child will be accepted into the 2 ½ -4-year-old group still wearing diapers. All DPR staff and Duty Participants are to assist with bathroom duties.

Health Certificate

ALL children must have a current DC Universal Health Certificate form.

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 each assessment form be completed and submitted to the Co-Op program before October 1.

Immunization Policy

Prior to the first day of participation in the Co-Op program, the parent or guardian must provide the Facilitator with the District of Columbia Adult Staff Health Certificate (adults) and DC Universal Health Certificate (children). The DC Universal 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) v Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis Assessment and testing
- Lead Poisoning Assessment and testing
- Varicella
 - DPR requires all children who have not had chicken pox to receive the vaccine. Please state on the Health Certificate one of the following: my child had the chicken pox; my child didn't receive the vaccine and state why; or have the doctor complete the date of vaccination on the form.

Age Verification

Each family must provide age verification of your child to the Cooperative Play Office.

Proof of Residency

All families must show proof of residency by providing two of the following documents:

- i. Valid DC-government-issued photo ID
- ii. Pay stubs (issued within the last 45 days)
- iii. Utility bill (gas, electric, or water within the past 2 months ~~ NO CELL PHONE BILLS)
- iv. Valid DC motor vehicle registration
- v. Valid lease or rental agreement
- vi. A notarized letter signed by the person(s) with whom you reside. The letter must include your name, your child(ren), and address. Also, two pieces of mail with your current

name, address, and date, must accompany the notarized letter valid DC-government issued photo ID, pay stubs (issued within the last 45 days), Utility bill (gas, electric, or water within the past 2 months), Valid DC motor vehicle registration, Valid lease or rental agreement, and a notarized letter signed by the person(s) with whom you reside. The letter must include your name, your child(ren), and address. Also, two pieces of mail with your current name, address, and date must accompany the notarized letter.

PROGRAM FEES

The Co-Op program fee is \$1,920.00 for residents and \$2,560.00 for non-residents per program year. There is a separate non-refundable registration fee of \$75 due at the time of online registration. Prior to the start of the program year, a seat deposit of \$192.00 must be paid by August 10th. This amount will be subtracted from the total program fee, and your remaining balance will be \$1,7286.00 for residents and \$2,304.00 for non-residents. The seat deposit is non-refundable. Payments can be made online via your DPR account with a credit or debit card.

Fees can be paid:

- Online through your DPR account
- For residents' convenience, you are able to remit payment two ways:
 - Pay the annual amount at once, \$1,920.00
 - Pay monthly \$192.00 (Sept. 1st – May 1st)...pending Seat Deposit having already been paid
- For non-residents' convenience, you are able to remit payment two ways:
 - Pay the annual amount at once, \$2,560.00
 - Pay monthly \$256.00 (Sept. 1st – May 1st) ...pending Seat Deposit having already been paid

Payment Calendar

Date	Residents	Non-Residents
August 1st (seat deposit)	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
September 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
October 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
November 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
December 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
January 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
February 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
March 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
April 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00
May 1st	\$ 192.00	\$ 256.00

****There will not be a seat deposit required for those who enrolled in the program AFTER September 1st****

The fee amount will not be adjusted for missed days. For example, if a participant only attends the program Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, they will be required to pay the full amount. In addition, each child must be enrolled in the program to occupy a space, one child=one space. Multiple children cannot share one space. For example, Jason is enrolled in the program and attends Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, but allows his friend Lee to attend the program in his absence on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This is not permitted. Both Jason and Lee must be enrolled in the program and occupy their own space.

Late or non-payment of enrollment and registration fees is grounds for termination from the program. Monthly invoices are emailed just prior to the 1st of every month. A reminder will be emailed to families on the 5th late day. Children may be dismissed from the program if payment has not been received by the 10th day of that month.

In addition, if Co-Op is closed due to inclement weather, the monthly payment amount will not be prorated. DPR does offer a reduced rate option for qualifying families. For more information, please contact the Co-Op office at 202-671-0421 or kidscampsandcoop@dc.gov.

PROGRAM CALENDAR AND CLOSINGS

Co-Op Calendar

The Co-Op program will begin on Tuesday, September 8th, 2026, and will end on Friday, May 21st, 2027. The Co-Op program will primarily follow the DC Public School calendar. This calendar includes scheduled holidays, winter and spring breaks, vacations and Professional Development days.

Co-Op facilitators will attend DPR Professional Development Day on:

- October 30th, 2026
- November 2, 2026
- December 21st, 2026
- January 26, 2027
- February 12, 2027
- April 9th, 2027.
- Please see the Program Calendar for more information.

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. Please check your local media news outlet for this information. When a location must close for any other reason, the Facilitator will notify the Parent President by phone/email. In addition, the Facilitator or Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager will follow up with an email to all the Parents. Possible reasons for closing a location include but are not limited to:

- No heat
- No air conditioning
- No water
- Health emergency specific to that building
- Other adverse conditions that affect the ability to deliver a quality program
- Facilitator Emergency

Should an emergency occur that requires relocation of the Co-Op program during normal operating hours, staff will make efforts to identify a more suitable facility.

Co-Op Important Dates 2026-2027

CLOSINGS	EVENTS / IMPORTANT DATES
- October 2026 Oct. 12th (Mon) – Indigenous Peoples Day Oct. 30th (Fri) –Professional Development Day - November 2026 Nov. 2nd (Mon) – Professional Development Day Nov. 11th (Wed) -Veterans Day Nov.25th-27th (Wed-Fri) Thanksgiving Break - December 2026 Dec. 21st (Mon) Professional Development Dec.22nd-31st (Tue-Thurs) Winter Break - January 2027 Jan. 1st(Fri) – Winter Break <i>continued</i> Jan. 18th (Mon) – MLK, Jr. Holiday Jan 26th (Tues) Professional Development - February 2027 Feb.12th (Fri) – Professional Development Feb.15th (Mon) – Presidents Day - March 2027 Mar. 22nd -26th (Mon-Fri) – Spring Break - April 2027 Apr. 9th (Fri) – Professional Development Day Apr. 16th (Fri) – Emancipation Day	- September 2026 Sept. 8rd (Tues) – First Day of Co-Op Sept. 30th (Wed) – Health Forms Due for Program Participants and Duty Participants AND Background Checks completed - November 2026 Nov. 12th (Thurs) – PAB Meeting 10:30am - December 2026 Dec. 11^h (Fri) – Holiday Celebration Dec. 31st (Thurs) Co-Op Enrollment Finalized <i>no new participants or relocation</i> - January 2027 Jan. 7th (Thurs) – PAB Meeting 10:30am - February 2027 Feb. 2nd – 4th (Tues-Thurs) – Open House Feb. 8th (Mon) – Re-enrollment Forms Out Feb. 26th (Mon) – Re-enrollment Forms Due - March 2027 - April 2027 Apr. 1st (Thurs) – PAB Meeting 10:30am Apr.9th (Fri) – Invoicing for 2025-2026 year begins Apr. 14^h & 15th (Wed & Thurs) – Open House Apr. 30th (Fri) – Seat Deposit Due - May 2027 May 7th (Fri) – Co-Op EOY Event (<i>tentative</i>) May 21st (Fri) – Last Day of Co-Op
Co-Op will also be closed under the following circumstances: - If DCPS is closed or has a 2-hour delay due to inclement weather, Co-Op will be closed - Professional Development Days Co-Op will be open when DCPS has: - Parent Teacher Conference Dates on this calendar are subject to change due to agency and/or site needs	

DPR Co-Op follows the DC Public Schools (DCPS) calendar for holiday closures.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Program registration and movement, participate site relocations, new enrollments, and waitlist placement, will close December 31, 2026. However, the final decision, made by the Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager, will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Waitlist

If a Co-Op site is full, parents may request placement on a waiting list. If your child(ren) is currently enrolled at a site, your child can be placed on a maximum of 3 waitlists. If your child(ren) is not currently enrolled in a program, you can be placed on a maximum of 4 waiting lists. Any waitlist list action, including switching locations, must occur by December 31, 2026. If necessary, the Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager will make the final decision on a case-by-case basis.

Withdrawal

If a family withdraws from the program, and they have paid the program fee in full (\$1,920 for residents and \$2,560 for non-residents), they will be refunded for the months that the child did not participate. For example, if a residential family decides to withdraw from the program in November, and they paid the program fee in full, they will be refunded for the months of nonparticipation, December-May, in the amount of \$1,152. Please note that a 10% refund processing fee will be charged. We do not prorate for mid-month withdrawals or enrollments.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The Co-Op program meets Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Children whose parents are not Duty Participants should arrive at 9:00 am.

Children are to be picked up no later than 12:00 pm. The Cooperative Play program does not extend past 12:00pm. Please be on time as tardiness at pick up leads to dismissal of program.

Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent or designated caregiver, unless communicated to the Facilitator in writing before pick up.

Duty Participants

Duty participants are an integral part of our Cooperative Play Program, as well as being an essential component of maintaining the proper adult-child ratio. All participating families are required to have one duty parent volunteer at least once weekly, minimum. All persons who will be serving duty days are required to complete an online Department of Parks and Recreation

volunteer application form and a Criminal Background Check before serving duty days. All volunteers who will take part in duty days must have a Physical/TB test.

Each Duty day parents should be scheduled to volunteer an equal amount of days. Duty day calendars should be distributed via e-mail on a monthly basis by the Local Parent Advisory Board Scheduler or designee, and a copy should be posted on the playgroup bulletin board. Since each situation may vary when enrolling in the Co-Op program, all families should plan on minimum one duty day per child per week. Duty parents are required to report at 8:45 am to prepare for the daily activities. If a parent is unable to complete their duty day, they must make arrangements as soon as possible for another parent to cover. Parents are allowed up to three unexcused absences before being considered for dismissal from program.

Duty day participants are required to follow the routine as outlined by the Facilitator with implementing daily routine, including but not limited to:

- Assist with the daily activity, preparing and leading the activity as assigned.
- Interact and assist in supervising all children.
- Assist with hand washing.
- Share responsibility with other parents for toilet usage or diaper changes.
- Prepare snack.
- Clean tables and sweep during designated times or as needed.
- Tidy playroom.
- Assist in supervising outdoor play.
- Supervise all children at all times. Never leave them unattended. Duty participants are responsible for supervising and engaging ALL children, not just their own.
- Interact with the children at eye level, participate in activities, songs, etc. along with being seated at tables or on the carpet.
- Show a genuine, encouraging interest in the children and their activities. Let them be independent. However, we ask that you engage if situations or activities become hazardous, frustrating, or negative behaviors arise. Assist in redirection in solo play and social situations if this occurs.
- Cell phones should not be in use during supervision of children, unless an emergency arises.

Nanny/ Duty Participant 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 participant duties. All caregivers must complete a background check through the DC Department of Parks and Recreation prior to serving duty days.

Sibling 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, whether that parent will be required to work twice the number of duty days as a single-child family. 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 perspective of the Facilitator.

Duty participants are NOT allowed to bring non-enrolled siblings, including infants, to the program and are expected to provide alternate childcare arrangements for all siblings not enrolled in the program while on duty. If alternate childcare cannot be arranged, the duty participant can exchange their duty day with another duty participant. Such an occurrence should not happen on a 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.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE & ACTIVITIES

Daily Activities

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

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

Sample Daily Routine

TIME	ACTIVITY
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Free Play & Welcome
9:30 am – 9:45 am	Clean up Time
9:45 am – 10:15 am	Circle Time
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Potty Break
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Activity
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Snack
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Outside/Free Play/Story Time

*(** Daily schedule may vary by center**)*

Outdoor Play

In the winter months, when the temperature falls below freezing (32 degrees), outdoor play will be at the discretion of the facilitator. We will use the temperature as indicated by www.weatherbug.com to make the determination whether to go outside.

SNACKS

Each day, children collectively have a snack provided by the parents on a rotating basis or parents provide snacks for their individual child . The frequency of snack duty varies by center. Each parent group and facilitator will determine the best snack procedure for their Co-Op.

Peanut Policy

Due to the potentially fatal nature of peanuts for children or adults with allergies, DPR is a peanut-free agency, and Co-Op is a peanut-free program.

Snack Ideas

The Co-Op program promotes healthy eating, listed below are some suggestions:

- Cheese and crackers
- Muffins
- Goldfish Crackers
- Sandwiches
- Bread
- Smoothies - blended yogurt & fruit
- Unsweetened breakfast cereals
- Applesauce

- Yogurt
- Fresh Fruit or fruit cups (sliced or cut appropriately)
- Fresh Veggies (sliced or cut appropriately)

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 every day. The snack will be eaten at the same time as the group snack, should not be overly complex or require strenuous preparation by the parents on duty, and must abide by the peanut policy.

Healthy Habits

In order to both 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.
- Use of hand sanitizer is encouraged multiple times throughout the program time frame.
- Duty Participants and Facilitators should also wash their hands upon arrival.
- Duty Participants will wear plastic gloves for serving snacks and diapering.
- Toys will be cleaned weekly and daily (if heavily soiled).

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
- 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

A medical exemption may be 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 may be 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.

Medication

No medication will be administered at any Co-Op site by any DPR staff. A child's parent is the only person authorized to administer medication to their own child. If your child has a prescribed Epi-Pen, our staff are trained in administration. Please be sure to provide explicit instructions, along with a copy of the prescription.

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 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 Risk Management.

SEE: APPENDIX A: Cooperative Play Emergency Plan

PARENT ADVISORY BOARDS (PAB)

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

- 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 the Facilitator and as needed, the Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager.

At each center, the parent group should elect officers to assist with the smooth running of the Co-Op. Each center may determine their own position, with the list below 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 the entire base sees the need to meet more frequently.

- I. **President** - Preside at all board meetings; oversee all board members to ensure jobs are being done and the business of the Co-Op is running smoothly; sign Co-Op local parent fund checks as necessary; meet with parents and Facilitator as necessary to help resolve issues; and for regularly.
- II. **Secretary** - Keep minutes of board meetings; receive money; 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 the financial condition of Co-Op and report to the 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 participants. Identify the 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 the 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.

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). In cases involving a vote to the Co-Op Advisory Board, each site will be entitled to one vote.

Parent Advisory Board Fees

In addition to program fees, the local parent group will collect a supplemental fee, which is used to fund class activities, field trips, and parties. The fees will not exceed \$50 per program year per child. Supplemental fees are due to the Co-Op Treasurer on the day chosen by that site's Parent Board. DPR staff will NEVER accept money for any Co-Op-related activities.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

One of the key objectives of the Co-Op program is the development of social skills in toddler-age children. Challenging behavior typically starts being visible at this age and can be applied as teachable opportunity for the program. Therefore, it will sometimes be necessary for parents and Facilitators to intervene when children are exhibiting challenging behavior. In such cases, the following guidelines will apply:

Corrective actions 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. and "Use your inside voice." instead of "Stop shouting." Language is a valuable outlet for feelings, and we encourage children to use words to make their needs known instead of pushing or hitting.

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 can be humiliating to a child and can produce a mental block, which can hinder the development of a good self-image and inhibit the ability to pay attention and learn.

The use of solo reflection time will be at the discretion of the Facilitator; redirection of a child is encouraged to reduce problematic 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 a challenge, and an action plan will be developed in coordination with the Facilitator and the PAB President. To the extent an improvement is not noticeable, 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. DPR has the right to use discretion in dismissing children.

FIELD TRIPS

Trips outside of the Cooperative Play sites may be planned to broaden the children's environment into the community and enhance the overall experience for each child. The Co-Op program may have field trips planned throughout the year, coordinated between Facilitators and parents, in conjunction with DPR. Each child must have their own chaperone for each field trip.

A cleared Duty Participant is required to attend each field trip. No other parent or caregiver will be allowed to attend field trips. Field Trip Organizers can arrange trips. Co-Op Facilitator must submit the request to the DPR Service Request Center (electronic). Requests should be submitted to the Cooperative Play Facilitator, who will enter the pertinent information into the online DPR Service Request Center. Required information includes:

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

Timing guidelines for submitting field trip requests

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

Please be sure to deliver the required information to the Facilitator in sufficient time for entry into the online system within the required timeframes.

Sibling Policy for Field Trips

Siblings who are not enrolled in Co-Op may participate in field trips; however, they cannot ride on DPR Transportation. Parents/caregivers must remain cognizant of their roles as chaperones for the entire group, not just for their own children.

ATTIRE

In order to foster a clean and safe environment, the Co-Op program requires that all duty participants and children are properly dressed for the program every day. Some suggested items of clothing are:

- T-Shirts
- Athletic shorts (No pockets or belt loops)
- Sweatpants or Wind Pants
- Sweatshirt without strings or pockets
- Socks
- Sneakers with laces or Velcro (No open-toe shoes, sandals, flip-flops, heels, or wedges)

WHAT TO BRING/NOT TO BRING TO CO-OP

Children should not bring money, candy, baby bottles, or pacifiers 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 every day with hats, heavy coats and mittens in cold weather, snow boots in 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, or excessive spilling of water, etc.

TERMINATION

Rarely, there are occasions when the Cooperative Play program may not be fitting for some families. 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 required fees are not paid (to the district or local parent fund).
- When a child exhibits continuous severe behavior challenges.
- When a parent does not follow the procedures outlined in this manual.
- When disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior (verbal or physically) by parent, guardian or designated drop-off and/or pick-up person will result in termination immediately.

The process for correction will be as follows:

- The Facilitator or a PAB President will identify the challenge.

- PAB President will communicate the challenge in writing to the respective family, being sure to copy the Facilitator for situational awareness.
- A written action plan outlining goals and timelines will be developed with the family.
- If established goals are not achieved within the specified timeframe, the KCC Manager will determine the family's continuation or termination, upon review of factual evidence from Facilitator and Parent Board.

Appeals

If a family feels that the action plan or termination decision has been made in error, the case could be referred to the Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager. In such 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 decision of the Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager will be final and binding.

COMMUNICATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Communication among families within each Co-Op is imperative. For this reason, each Co-Op site should establish an e-mail group, group chat, or listserv (platforms such as WhatsApp, GroupMe, Google, Yahoo or another non-cost service). A shared electronic calendar should also be made available on the same platform to keep up with duty days and important Co-Op events.

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:

- Shanay Teeter shanay.teeter@dc.gov (202) 671-0421 (office)
KCC Program Support Specialist
- Aminah Alisha aminah.alisha@dc.gov (202)671-0372 (office)
Kids, Camps, and Cooperative Play Manager
- Natasha C. Herring natasha.herring@dc.gov (202) 671-0335 (office)
Deputy Chief, Community Programs

APPENDIX A: COOPERATIVE PLAY EMERGENCY PLAN

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Children must be supervised at all times.
- On rainy days or snowy days, children should not be allowed to play on playground structures.
- The Parents group should determine whether any portion of the playground is unsafe for their children to play and set boundaries as to where children can play.
- Children should 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 Participants should not use cell phones during the program, unless there is an emergency.
- Facilitators and Duty Participants will coordinate supervision by assigning specific areas and/or children to supervise while serving duty days.
- Co-Op volunteers are required to be actively engaged in the supervision of all children while serving duty days.
- Facilitators should have an emergency phone list available at the site.
- Facilitators should monitor first aid supplies and request additional supplies as needed.
- Facilitators should have up-to-date CPR and First/Aid certification. Duty Participants are encouraged to take CPR and First Aid certification programs also.
- Each Co-Op site will have an emergency evacuation location identified at the site in the event of an emergency. These locations will be provided prior to the start of each year.

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 decide how to proceed.
6. Call the Cooperative Play Program Support Specialist.
7. If first aid was applied or a head injury occurred, complete an Incident Report Form that includes all details of the incident.
8. Facilitator will provide a copy of the Incident Report to the parent (if requested) and Co-Op Program Support Assistant (who will notify the Risk Management Office and submit a copy of the report). The Facilitator will retain a copy in the program files.
9. Place a request for replenishment of first aid supplies, if needed

APPENDIX B: DPR CO-OP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the duration of the program?

A: The program runs from Tuesday, September 8th, 2026– Friday, May 21st, 2027, Monday-Friday from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.

Q. How is a typical day structured for the program?

*A. Sample Daily Routine (** Daily schedule may vary by center**)*

TIME	ACTIVITY
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Free Play & Welcome
9:30 am – 9:45 am	Clean up Time
9:45 am – 10:15 am	Circle Time
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Potty Break
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Activity
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Snack
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Outside/Free Play/Story Time

Q. Where are the Co-Op groups located, and which location serves my child's age group?

Site	Address	Ward	Ages
Chevy Chase Comm. Ctr.	5601 Conn Ave NW 20015	3	18-29 months
Chevy Chase Rec. Ctr.	5500 41 st NW 20015	3	18-29 months
Columbia Heights <i>Caterpillars</i>	1480 Girard St NW 20009	1	18-29 months
Columbia Heights <i>Butterflies</i>	1480 Girard St NW 20009	1	2 ½-4 years
Friendship	4500 Van Ness St NW	3	18-29 months
North Michigan Park	1333 Emerson St NW 20017	5	2 ½-4 years
Raymond	3725 10 th St NW 20010	4	18-29 months
Ridge Road	830 Ridge Road SE 20019	7	18-29 months
Ridge Road	830 Ridge Road SE 20019	7	2 ½-4 years
Turkey Thicket	1100 Michigan Ave NE 20017	5	18-29 months
Volta Park <i>Bunnies</i>	1555 34 th St NW 20007	2	18-29 months
Volta Park <i>Rabbits</i>	1555 34 th ST NW	2	2 ½-4 years

Q. Are naps required?

A. Due to the half day program schedule, children do not take naps.

Q. What age must my child be to participate in the program?

A. To participate in the program, all children must be between 18 months and 4 years old, by September 30th.

Q. My child turns 2 ½ in November, should I sign him/her up for the 2 ½ - 4-year-old group?

A. No, all children must be of age by September 30th. In this case, your child will be 2 ½ after September 30th and therefore should be enrolled in the 18-29 months old group and you have the option to waitlist him for one of the older sites. If/When a space becomes available in that desired older group, we will extend the invitation to have your child join the group.

Q. If my child ages out of the 18 - 29 months group during the program year, will they be transferred to the older group?

A. No, your child will remain in their current age group until the end of the program in May.

Q. What credentials/trainings are there for the facilitators?

A. Co-Op is a recreation program and not an educational program; therefore, DPR refers to staff as facilitators and not teachers. Due to the fact that this is not an educational program, DPR does not require any special certifications; however, it is required that all facilitators have a significant amount of experience working in an early childhood environment.

Q. I know that some facilitators speak Spanish; can I sign my child up for their site to learn Spanish?

A. DPR is an equal opportunity employer, and we do employ facilitators of Latin and Hispanic descent; however, the children are not taught Spanish, nor is Spanish a part of the Cooperative Play curriculum.

Q. What are the policies regarding Co-Op closures?

A. The Cooperative Play program follows the DC Public School (DCPS) calendar and closures. During scheduled holidays, winter and spring breaks, and vacations (except Professional Development days), the Co-Op program will be closed. Occasionally, Co-Op facilitators will attend DPR Professional Development trainings; when this happens, dates and times will be communicated in advance. In the case of snow delays or closings, Co-Op follows DCPS' policy (not DPR). If DCPS closes or has a two-hour delayed opening due to inclement weather, the Co-Op program will be closed for the day. If a site has to close due to heat or a maintenance issue, the Co-Op will most likely be relocated to another site. In the event of relocation, parents will be notified by the Co-Op office.

Q. Are the registration and/or seat deposit refundable?

A. No, neither the \$75 registration fee nor the \$192 (resident) or \$256 (non-resident) seat deposit are refundable.

Q. Is the seat deposit due all at once?

A. The deposit of \$192 (residents) or \$256 (non-residents) is typically invoiced in August. Seat deposits must be paid in full prior to starting the program (typically August 1).

Q. Is the seat deposit deducted from the program fee?

A. The seat deposit amount is subtracted from the annual program fee amount of \$1,920 (residents) or \$2,560 (non-residents). However, families that joined the program after September 1st are not required to pay the seat deposit.

Q. Is there a sibling discount?

A. DPR does not offer a sibling discount.

Q. I am unable to register my child for another DPR program because I still have an unpaid balance on my account; however, I withdrew from the program mid-year. What should I do?

A. Please contact the Cooperative Play office, and we will contact DPR's finance department to review and adjust the program fee on your account. (Please note that if there is an outstanding balance from another program or permit, that balance must first be paid.)

Q. When are the payments due?

A. Monthly payments are due the 1st of each month; invoices are sent a few days prior. There is a grace period until the 5th of each month.

Q. How (by what payment methods) can I make my monthly payment?

A. Payments can be made online via your WebTrac account using a credit or debit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express)

Q. Will the program fee be prorated if a child is enrolled after the start date?

A. Yes, the FULL program fee will be prorated based on the month your child is enrolled in the program. You will not be required to pay the full \$1,920 (residents) or \$2,560 (non-residents) program fee if your child enrolls in the program after September.

Q. If I have paid the program fee in full and decide to withdraw from the program before May 2027, am I eligible to receive a refund?

A. Yes, you are eligible to receive a refund for the months of the program that your child does not participate, if you have paid the program fee in full. For example, if you decide to withdraw before December, DPR will provide a refund for the months of December - May. Please note, there is a 10% non-refundable processing fee.

NOTE: Withdrawal requests MUST be made in writing (kidscampsandcoop@dc.gov) before the 26th of the upcoming month.

Q. Should I RSVP for the Open House?

A. RSVPs are not needed to attend during the Open House period. When parents/guardians arrive, the facilitator and duty participants will be there to answer any pertinent questions regarding the program. Open House drop-ins are for adults only and should be limited to 20 minutes.

Q. I cannot make any of the Open Houses. Is there another time available to do a site visit?

A. Yes, please call or email the Cooperative Play office to schedule a meeting day and time. However, it is highly encouraged that parents/guardians make every effort to visit the site during the Open House Dates.

Q. Can I bring my child with me to the Open House to see how they interact with the other children?

A. No. Open House is for ADULTS ONLY.

Q. What forms are required for enrollment?

A. The required forms for children are the Universal Health Certificate, Dental Assessment (only for children 3 years and older), and age verification (Birth Certificate or Passport). All duty participants must complete a Staff Health Certificate and a MPD criminal and background check. In addition, all families must show proof of residency by providing two of the following documents:

- i. Valid DC-government-issued photo ID*
- ii. Pay stubs (issued within the last 45 days)*
- iii. Utility bill (gas, electric, or water within the past 2 months)*
- iv. Valid DC motor vehicle registration*
- v. Valid lease or rental agreement*
- vi. A notarized letter signed by the person(s) with whom you reside. The letter must include your name, your child(ren), and address. Also, two pieces of mail with your current name, address, and date, must accompany the notarized letter valid DC-government issued photo ID, pay stubs (issued within the last 45 days), Utility bill (gas, electric, or water within the past 2 months), Valid DC motor vehicle registration, Valid lease or rental agreement, and a notarized letter signed by the person(s) with whom you reside. The letter must include your name, your child(ren), and address. Also, two pieces of mail with your current name, address, and date, must accompany the notarized letter.*

Q. Am I obligated to send my child(ren) every day?

A. No, parents are not required to send your child(ren) to the program every day, as we understand that this program may be the first time that many toddlers are away from their parents/guardians. Please note that DPR will not pro-rate the monthly fee based on the

number of days your child attends the program. It is highly suggested that you communicate your decision with your facilitator; however, please note that the fees will not be adjusted, and duty day(s) must be completed.

Q. I am only planning to send my child on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Can my neighbor to send their child, in place of my child, on Wednesdays and Fridays?

A. No, each child must individually be enrolled into the program. Multiple children cannot share one enrollment space.

Q. When does enrollment and the waitlist close?

A. ALL movement, including switching locations, new enrollments, and waitlist placement, will close December 31, 2026. However, the final decision, made by the Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager, will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Q. My family and I will be relocating in December, is it okay if my friend's child takes my child's place in the program?

A. No, in this circumstance, DPR adheres strictly to the Co-Op waitlist. If you withdraw your child from the program, DPR will offer the space to the next family on the waitlist. If you know someone that's interested in the program, please encourage them to create a DPR account, enroll and select the desired sites waitlist(s); or they can contact the Cooperative Play office to enroll on the desired waitlist.

Q. I'm on the waitlist, how will I know if a space has become available for my child?

A. You will be notified via phone and email if a space has become available. Please note, parents/applicants must respond to the voicemail/email within 24 hours of receiving it.

Q. Is it possible to sign up for more than one Co-Op location?

A. It is not possible to enroll at more than one location at a time. However, if you are registered and enrolled in a Co-Op, you may be added to a maximum of three waitlists/locations. If you are not registered nor enrolled in a Co-Op program, you may be on a maximum of four waitlists/locations.

Q. How can I check my waitlist placement number?

A. Please contact the Co-Op Office at 202-671-0421 or kidscampsandcoop@dc.gov.

Q. How quickly does the waitlist move?

A. The waitlist movement is sporadic. It's an unpredictable movement that happens due to many factors, including but not limited to job relocation, moving, transferring between sites, family's change of hearts etc. There is no direct answer on how long it will take a child to get called off the waitlist.

Q. What is the role of the Duty Participant?

A. Duty parents/participants are an integral part of DPR's Cooperative Play Program, as well as an essential component of maintaining the proper adult-to-child ratio. All participating families are required to have one duty participant volunteer at least one day a week, per child.

Q. In the event that I cannot complete my duty day, can another family member, caregiver, or nanny complete my days for me?

A. In an effort to make Co-Op available to all families, DPR's policy is to allow nannies or other primary caregivers (such as grandparents) to perform Co-Op participant duties. However, all caregivers must complete a DPR volunteer application form and pass the DPR-administered DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) criminal and background check before serving duty days. (Please note that DPR must initiate the process for the MPD background/criminal check. Duty participants should not attempt to secure a background/criminal check on their own.) Further, there is a 2-Duty Participant maximum for each family.

Q. What are the requirements for being a Duty Participant?

A. All persons in a family that will be serving duty days are required to complete a DPR volunteer application form and a MPD criminal and background check before serving duty days. All parents or caretakers who will be volunteering for duty days must also submit a current Staff Health Certificate, complete a Physical Exam and have current tuberculosis shot. A new requirement is for each DP to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Q. How many duty participants are allowed?

A. There is a maximum of two Duty Participants/family.

Q. How often will I be required to perform duty days?

A. Please check with your facilitator, as duty days tend to vary from site to site; however, it is typically between one to four times per month, per child. Please note that the schedule will be created between the elected Scheduler and the other duty participants.

Q. If I have twins, how many duty days will I have to complete?

A. Since schedules vary from site to site, please discuss this with the site facilitator and the Scheduler.

Q. While I'm on duty, can I bring my other, non-enrolled child with me?

A. No. Duty Participants are NOT allowed to bring non-enrolled siblings, infants, relatives or any other child to the program on duty day. Duty Participants are expected to provide alternate childcare arrangements for all siblings/children not enrolled in the program.

Q. I have a MPD clearance from 2023, Is it still valid?

A. No, MPD background clearances are only valid for 2 years. Further, after the suspension of Duty Participants during the height of the pandemic (2020), it is prudent that everyone undergo a full clearance process. (Please note that DPR must initiate the process for the MPD background/criminal check. Duty participants should not attempt to secure a background/criminal check on their own.)

Q. I obtained a criminal and background clearance from my job, can I provide DPR with a copy of it?

A. No. All DPR volunteers, including Co-Op Duty Participants, must go through DPR's Volunteer Department to schedule a MPD criminal background check.

Q. Does each Co-Op have a Parent Advisory Board President (PAB President)?

A. Each Co-Op has a Parent Advisory Board with members that are representatives of their group including but limited to President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Scheduler, Bulletin Board Coordinator and Field Trip Coordinator.

Q. My child uses a stroller. Is there a place for my stroller while my child is in the program?

A. Yes. You may park your child's stroller inside of the recreation center near the Co-Op playroom or just outside the front door.

Q. Is there a designated parking space for duty participants?

A. While some DPR locations do have parking lots, other locations only have street parking; however, there is no designated parking for Co-Op Duty Participants. Please see below. Please note that parking availability is on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Parking Lot: Chevy Chase Community Center, Guy Mason, North Michigan Park, Raymond (shared with DCPS), Ridge Road, Turkey Thicket, Volta Park (small)*
- Street Parking: Chevy Chase Playground, Columbia Heights, Friendship, Rose Park*

Q. How often are the classroom and toys cleaned?

A. The classroom and the toys are cleaned daily. The Facilitator is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the classroom and the toys daily. Many sites collect donations of cleaning wipes and supplies for the cleaning of the toys, changing areas, tables, etc., to prevent the spread of germs and to keep the area clean.

Q. What is the child-to-facilitator ratio?

A. The ideal is 1 adult to 4 children.

APPENDIX C: PARENTS' STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

In consideration of my child being accepted into the DC DPR Cooperative Play Program, I agree to:

1. Pay Co-Op fees, in the form of tuition to DC DPR and Parent Advisory Board (PAB) assessments, 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 provide a snack in accordance with the schedule.
4. Complete a Criminal Background Check.
5. Arrange for an approved substitute or another enrolled criminally background cleared parent to attend in my place when I am unable to attend on a scheduled duty day.
6. Bring problems concerning the operations of the Co-Op to the notice of the Parent Board or to voice them at monthly site or quarterly PAB meetings.
7. Bring problems concerning the program itself to the notice of the Facilitator and/or Kids, Camps & Co-Op Manager in person and follow up via email.
8. Attend regularly scheduled Parent 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 all items outlined in the Parent Handbook and Co-Op Parent Advisory Board's decisions concerning Co-Op policy.

I, _____, agree to abide by these and all other regulations as outlined in the Parent Handbook. I understand that my failure to abide by any or all of these may be grounds for dismissal from the program, in accordance with the termination process outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Signature _____

Child/Children's Names _____

Site _____

Facilitator Signature _____

Date _____