

# Cooperative Play Program



## 2017-2018 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 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 play environment allows children to develop a positive identity and demonstrate increased abilities associated with knowledge and skills.

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

#### **I. Role of the 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 monthly with the 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 seminars offered by DPR throughout the year. Families will be notified via email of those dates.

## The Role of the Facilitator:

- ❖ DPR Staff member that is responsible for leading or coordinating the work of the Co-op group
- ❖ Provides an overview of the days goals and activities
- ❖ Ensures that mission of the program is executed professionally and meets desired objectives
- ❖ Enthusiastic with a strong sense of presence and patience to command the attention of the group
- ❖ 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:

- ❖ Banneker, Chevy Chase Community Center (Lions), Columbia Heights (Caterpillars), Raymond, Rose Park, Turkey Thicket and Volta Park (Bunnies) programs:
  - *Children must be 18 months old by September 30<sup>th</sup>*
- ❖ Chevy Chase Recreation (Cubs), Columbia Heights (Butterflies), Friendship, Guy Mason, Kennedy, Mitchell Park and Volta Park (Rabbits) programs:
  - *Children must be 2 ½ years old by September 30<sup>th</sup>*

All parents/guardians must show proof of the child's age by showing a copy of the child's birth certificate. ***All children must be of age by September 30<sup>th</sup>.*** In addition, all parents/guardians must show proof of residency by providing two of the following documents listed on *pages 24-25*.

## Potty Training and Bathroom Duties

The 18 to 29 months 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 pull-ups) before beginning the program in September. **No child will be accepted into the 2 ½ -4 year old group still wearing diapers.** All duty day parents and guardians are expected to assist with bathroom duties.

## Health Certificate

All children must have a current DC 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 prior to the first day of participation. Forms can be found on our website at [DPR.dc.gov](http://DPR.dc.gov).

## 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 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: my child had the chicken pox; my child didn't receive the vaccine and state why; or have doctor complete date of vaccination on form.

## 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 \$384.00 must be paid by July 1<sup>st</sup>. For your convenience, you have the option of either paying the full amount of \$384.00 (*\$512.00 for non-residents*) by July 1<sup>st</sup> or splitting the payments into two payments of \$192.00 (*\$256.00 for non-residents*), due July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup>. This amount will be subtracted from the total program fee and your remaining balance will be \$1,536.00 for residents and \$2,048.00 for non-residents. Seats deposits are **non-refundable**. Payments can be made online via credit or debit card or in person via credit or debit card, cashier's check or money order payable to DC Treasurer.

### Fees can be paid three ways:

- ❖ Online through your DPR account
- ❖ Via phone with a Co-op Team Member at 202-671-0421
- ❖ In-person at 1480 Girard St NW 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Washington, DC 20010

### For residents' convenience, you are able to remit payment two ways:

- ❖ Pay the annual amount at once, \$1,536 (Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>)
- ❖ Pay monthly \$192.00 (Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>)

### For non-residents convenience, you are able to remit payment two ways:

- ❖ Pay the annual amount at once, \$2,048 (Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>)
- ❖ Pay monthly \$256.00 (Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup>)

## Payment Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>Non-Residents</u>
July 1 <sup>st</sup> (seat deposit #1)	\$192.00	\$256.00
August 1 <sup>st</sup> (seat deposit #2)	\$192.00	\$256.00
September 1 <sup>st</sup>		
October 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00
November 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00
December 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00
January 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00
February 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00
March 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00
April 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$192.00	\$256.00

***\*\*Please note, for those that enrolled into the program BEFORE July 1st and both seat deposits has been paid, there will be no payment due in September. Payments will resume in October. For those that enrolled into the program AFTER July 1st, your seat deposits are due August 1st and September 1<sup>st</sup>.\*\****

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

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 may be dismissed from the program if payment has not been received by the 10<sup>th</sup> 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 reduce rate fee for qualifying families. For more information please contact the Co-op office.

## Co-op Calendar

The Co-op program will begin on Tuesday, September 5, 2017, and will end on Friday, May 25, 2018. The Co-op program will follow the DC Public School calendar. This calendar includes scheduled holidays, winter and spring breaks, and vacations with the exception of Professional

Development days. Co-op facilitators will attend DPR Professional Developments trainings, dates and times are TBD. **Please see the Program Calendar.**

## 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 a location must close for any other reason, the Facilitator or Co-op Coordinator will notify all of the Parent President by phone/email. In addition, the Co-op Coordinator 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
- Other adverse conditions that affect the ability to deliver a quality program

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



# Co-op Closures, Events, and Important Dates 2017-2018

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

CLOSINGS	EVENTS / IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>September</b> Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> (Fri) – Prof. Development</li> <li><b>October</b> Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> (Mon) – Columbus Day</li> <li><b>November</b> Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> (Fri) – Veteran’s Day Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 24<sup>th</sup> (Thurs &amp; Fri) Thanksgiving Break</li> <li><b>December - January</b> Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> (Fri) – Prof. Development Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> thru Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> (Fri – Tues) Winter Break</li> <li><b>January</b> Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> (Mon) – MLK Jr. Holiday</li> <li><b>February</b> Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> (Fri) – Prof. Development Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> (Mon) – President’s Day</li> <li><b>March</b> Mar. 26<sup>th</sup> thru Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> (Mon – Fri) Spring Break</li> <li><b>April</b> Apr. 16<sup>th</sup> (Mon) – Emancipation Day</li> <li><b>May</b> No Closings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>September</b> Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> (Tues) – First Day of Co-op!</li> <li><b>October</b> Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> (Wed) – PAB Meeting 10am</li> <li><b>November</b> Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> (Wed) – My School DC Information Session Raymond 10am</li> <li><b>December</b> No Events Scheduled</li> <li><b>January</b> Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> (Wed) – PAB Meeting 10am</li> <li><b>February</b> Submit Re-enrollment preferences</li> <li><b>March</b> No Events Scheduled</li> <li><b>April</b> Apr. 25<sup>th</sup> (Wed) – PAB Meeting 10am</li> <li><b>May</b> May 11<sup>th</sup> (Fri) – Carnival May 25<sup>th</sup> (Fri) - Last Day of Co-op</li> </ul>

**Co-op will also be closed** under the following circumstances:

- If DCPS 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:

- If DCPS has a 1-hour delay due to inclement weather, Co-op will open on time
- Parent Teacher Conference Days

## Program Registration

### Registration

Program registration and movement including switching locations, new enrollments and waitlist placement will close December 31, 2017. However the **final decision**, made by the Seasonal Programs Manager, will be decided on a case-by-case scenario.

### Waitlist

In the event that a Co-op site is full, parents may request placement on a waiting list. If your child(ren) is currently enrolled in at a site, our child can be placed on a maximum of 2 waitlist list. If your child(ren) is not currently enrolled in a program, you can be placed on a maximum of 3 waiting list. Any waitlist list action, including switching locations must occur by December 31, 2017. If necessary, the Early Childhood Programs Manager will make the final decision on a case-by-case basis.

### Withdrawal

In the event that a family withdraws from the program and they have paid the program fee in full (\$1,920 *residents* and \$2,560 *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 \$1,344 for the months of non-participation, November-May. Please note there is a 10% refund processing fee. 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 volunteering that day should not be dropped off until the session begins at 9:00 am. Children should be picked up 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.

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.

### 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 families participating are required to have one duty parent volunteer at least once weekly. All persons in a family that will be serving duty days, maximum of 2 per family, are required to complete a Department of Parks and Recreation volunteer application form and a Criminal Background Check before serving duty days. All parents or caretakers who will be volunteering for duty days must have Physical/TB test. 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. Duty parents are required to report at 8:45am to prepare the facility. 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 participants are required to follow the routine as outlined by the Facilitator with implementing daily routine, including but 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 under them after snack time.
- Tidy playroom.
- Assist in supervising outdoor play.
- Watch the children at all times. Never leave them unattended. Duty participants are responsible for supervising ALL the children, not just their own.
- 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.

## **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 participants 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 single-child family's work. 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.

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. In the event that 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 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.

## Daily Activities

All duty participants 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, the parents may be responsible for assisting with the decoration of the playroom and/or bulletin boards.

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

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

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

## 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](http://www.weatherbug.com) to make the determination whether or not to go outside.

## 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. Each parent group 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, Co-op is a peanut free program.

## Snack Ideas

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

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| ❖ Cheese and crackers      | ❖ Noodles tossed with cheese                    |
| ❖ Muffins                  | ❖ Smoothies - blend yogurt & fruit              |
| ❖ Goldfish Crackers        | ❖ Macaroni and cheese                           |
| ❖ Sandwiches               | ❖ Non-sugared breakfast cereals                 |
| ❖ Jell-O                   | ❖ Applesauce                                    |
| ❖ Pizza on English muffins | ❖ Yogurt  |
| ❖ Fresh Veggies            | ❖ 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 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.
- Parents and Facilitators should also wash their hands upon arrival.
- Parents will wear plastic gloves for serving snacks.
- Toys will be cleaned weekly

## 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 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.

## Medication

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

## 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 for the Co-op Safety Precautions and Emergency Action Plan*

## **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.

## **Local Parent Advisory Boards**

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.

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.

### **Parent Advisory Board Fees**

In addition to program fees, the local parents group will collect a supplemental fee which is used to fund class 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.

### **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." 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 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. DPR has the right to use discretion in dismissing children.

## Field Trips

Trips outside of the Cooperative play sites are planned to broaden the children’s environment into the community and enhance the overall experience for each child. The Co-op program will have field trips planned throughout the year, either by parents, or in conjunction with DPR. Only one of the two duty participants (who is cleared for duty days) per family 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 are as follows:

- 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 her to enter in into the online system within the required timeframes.

## Sibling Policy for Field Trips

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, 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 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 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 people 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 disruptive and/or inappropriate behavior (verbal or physically) by parent, guardian or designated drop-off and/or a pick-up person will result in termination immediately.

The process for correction will be 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). 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 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.*

## APPENDIX A: Cooperative Play Emergency Planning

### SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Children will 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 and the parent(s) or Facilitator are notified of to cover.
- Facilitators and parents will coordinate specific areas of supervision, or specific children to supervise, during recess.
- Facilitators will have an emergency phone list available at 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 up to date CPR and First/Aid certification. DPR Staff will schedule course opportunities. Duty parents are encouraged to take CPR and First Aid certifications programs also.
- Each Co-op site will have an emergency evacuation location in the event of an emergency at the site. These sites 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 Cooperative Play Program Coordinator.
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 Incident Report to parent (if requested) and Co-op Coordinator (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 request for replenishment of first aid supplies, if needed.

## Communication and Contact Information List Serves

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 serve (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.

## 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:

Co-op Primary Contact [Cooperative.Play@dc.gov](mailto:Cooperative.Play@dc.gov) (202)671-0421

Vanessa Gerideau [Vanessa.Gerideau@dc.gov](mailto:Vanessa.Gerideau@dc.gov) (202) 671-0397  
Seasonal Programs Manager

## DPR Co-op Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the duration of the program?**

The program runs from September-May, Monday-Friday from 9:00am-12:00pm.

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

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

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
10:30am – 11:00 am	Snack
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Activity
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?**

A.

Site	Address	Ward	Ages
Banneker	2500 Georgia Ave NW	1	<b>18-29 months</b>
Chevy Chase Community Center	5601 Conn Ave NW 20015	3	<b>2 ½-4 years</b>
Chevy Chase Playground	5500 41 <sup>st</sup> NW 20015	3	<b>18-29 months</b>
Columbia Heights <i>Caterpillars</i>	1480 Girard St NW 20010	1	<b>18-29 months</b>
Columbia Heights <i>Butterflies</i>	1480 Girard St NW 20010	1	<b>2 ½-4 years</b>
Friendship	4500 Van Ness St NW	3	<b>2 ½-4 years</b>
Guy Mason	3600 Calvert St NW 20001	3	<b>2 ½-4 years</b>
Kennedy	1401 7 <sup>th</sup> St NW 20001	6	<b>2 ½-4 years</b>
Mitchell Park	1801 23 <sup>rd</sup> St NW 20008	2	<b>2 ½-4 years</b>
Raymond	3725 10 <sup>th</sup> St NW 20010	2	<b>18-29 months</b>
Rose Park	2609 Dumbarton St NW 20007	5	<b>18-29 months</b>
Turkey Thicket	1100 Michigan Ave NE 20017	2	<b>18-29 months</b>
Volta Park <i>Bunnies</i>	1555 34 <sup>th</sup> St NW 20007	2	<b>18-29 months</b>
Volta Park <i>Rabbits</i>	1555 34 <sup>th</sup> St NW 20007	2	<b>2 ½-4 years</b>

**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 30<sup>th</sup>.

**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 30<sup>th</sup>. In this case, your child will be 2 ½ after September 30<sup>th</sup> 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 in 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. Any scheduled holidays, winter and spring breaks, and vacations (with the exception of Professional Development days) the Co-op program will be closed. Occasionally, Co-op facilitators will attend DPR Professional Developments 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. In the event that 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 \$384 (*residents*) or \$570 (*non-resident*) seat deposit are refundable.

**Q. Is the seat deposit due all at once?**

A. The deposit may be broken into two payments of \$192 (*residents*) or \$256 (*non-residents*) due July 1<sup>st</sup> and \$192 (*residents*) or \$256 (*non-residents*) due August 1<sup>st</sup>. **Seat deposits must be paid in full by August 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**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*), leaving \$1,492 (*residents*) or \$1,990 (*non-residents*) to remit from October - May. Due to the seat deposit payments, no payment is due for the month of September.

**Q. Is there a sibling discount?**

A. DPR does not offer a sibling discount. If you have two children, the total fees for both children are \$3,840 (*\$1,920 per child*) residents and \$5,120 (*\$2,560 per child*) non-residents.

**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. Program fees are due on the 1st of each month. There is a grace period given until the 10th of each month.

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

A. Payments can be made online via credit or debit card; or in person via credit or debit card, cashier's check or money order payable to "DC Treasurer." There are three (3) payment method options: online via your DPR account, via phone with a Co-op Team Member at 202-671-0421, or in-person at 1480 Girard St., NW - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor - Washington, DC 20010. In person payments are accepted Monday - Thursday from 11 am to 3 pm.



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

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

**Q. If I have paid the program fee in full and decide to withdraw from the program before May 2017, 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 decided to withdraw in November, DPR will provide a refund for the months of November - May. Please note, there is a 10% non-refundable processing fee.

**Q. Should I RSVP for the Open House?**

A. RSVP's 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 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**. Please do not bring children.

**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. However, parent's duty day(s) must be completed. 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 and will close December 31, 2017. However the **final decision**, made by the Early Childhood Program Manager, will be decided on a case-by-case scenario.

**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 becomes available for my child?**

A. You will be notified via phone and email if a waitlist 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. Yes. If you are registered and enrolled in one Co-op, you may be added to a maximum of **two waitlists/locations**. If you are not registered nor enrolled in a Co-op program, you may be on a maximum of **three waitlists/locations**.

**Q. How can I check my waitlist placement number?**

A. To check your child's waitlist placement number and status, please log onto your DPR account.

**Q. How quickly does the waitlist move?**

A. The waitlist movement is sporadic. It's 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. I hope this helps.

**Q. What is the role of the Duty Parent/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 parent 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/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. 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.)*

**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.

**Q. How many duty participants are allowed?**

A. There is no maximum number of duty participants. However, DPR will only compensate for three criminal background checks.

**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. Because 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 2015, Is it still valid?**

A. No, MPD background clearances are only valid for 2 years. *(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 parents/guardians, must go through DPR's Volunteers Department to schedule a MPD criminal background check.

**Q. Does each Co-op have a 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 play room.

**Q. Is there designated parking 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 parents. Please see the table below; however please note that parking availability is on a first come, first served basis.

<b>Sites w/ Parking Lot</b>	Banneker (formerly Harrison), Chevy Chase Community Center, Guy Mason, Kennedy, Raymond, Turkey Thicket, Volta Park
<b>Sites w/ Street Parking</b>	Chevy Chase Playground, Columbia Heights, Friendship, Mitchell Park, Rose Park

**Q. How often are the classroom and toys cleaned?**

A. The classroom and the toys should be cleaned daily. The facilitator, with the assistance of the online duty person, is responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the classroom and the toys daily. Many sites collect daily 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 ratio varies from site to site based on each individual programs capacity. For a group of 10, the ratio is 1:2 and for a group of 16, the ratio is 1:3.

## Parents' Statement of Understanding and Agreement

In consideration of my child being accepted in 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 to 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 Seasonal Programs Manager in person and follow up via email.
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 and Co-op Parent Advisory Board's decisions concerning Co-op policy.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(Print Name), 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

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Child/Children's Names

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Site

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Facilitator Signature

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Date

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