

THE COMMUNITY CO~OP

A RESOURCE FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES

HANDBOOK



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www.homeschoolcommunitycoop.org



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Welcome to The Community Co-op for Near West Homeschoolers. We are delighted you have chosen to join us in this exciting endeavor. While children enjoy a mix of activities together and parents fill various roles throughout the day, we are building connections.

We meet weekly to participate in art, PE, hands-on science, and creative writing. We also offer free play time for the youngest. There is something for everyone 6 weeks old through teens.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to create an environment for educational enrichment where homeschooling families can work co-operatively in an atmosphere of mutual respect, organized structure with flexibility, and interest driven exploration.

Not-for-Profit

We are a not-for-profit, 501 © 3 organization. Keeping costs low while offering interesting, well-run classes is a high priority.

Diverse Spectrum of Homeschoolers

The Community Co-op membership includes diverse homeschooling families in the Chicago area. We represent the full spectrum of those who would identify themselves as homeschoolers. A wide variety of homeschooling definitions, methodologies, and philosophies are represented. All are welcome. Members agree to be tolerant of one another.

Non-discrimination

The Community Co-op does not discriminate based upon race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, nor physical or mental disability unrelated to one's ability to work or enjoy the full benefits of our program or facilities.

Parent Attendance and Participation

Parents participate by volunteering in various roles throughout the day. This makes our low cost co-op possible and helps build our cooperative community. While remaining in the building, parents are also scheduled for "time off."

Priority Placement

Families with an oldest child who is 6 years old or older have priority placement in the co-op. (See page 6 "Ages of Participants" for important details.)

Membership Fees

The fee per session, per child is listed in the registration packet and on the website. (See also Membership Fees/Deposits, page 2.)

Web Address

<http://www.homeschoolcommunitycoop.org/> (please bookmark)

Yahoo Address

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/communitycoop/> (after invitation received, please bookmark)

Policies

Inclement Weather (Delayed Start/Cancellation)

The board will determine if co-op will be closed or delayed due to inclement weather. The decision will be made by 7:30 a.m., and parents will be notified by email through the Yahoo group. If there is a delay, co-op start time will be 10:00 a.m, and the class schedule will be adjusted accordingly. If one day must be cancelled, there will be no make-up day and no refund for that day. If two days must be cancelled, one make-up day will be added onto the end of the session, the other day will not be made up nor a refund given.

Calendar

A calendar of all scheduled vacations, holidays, session dates, special events and membership fee due dates is included in the registration packet and posted in the Yahoo group files. The calendar is subject to change with reasonable notice.

Membership Fees/Deposits

A non-refundable deposit, which is applied to your fall membership payment, will reserve your family's place at co-op for the fall session. See the website for reservation dates.

All children must be registered by and attend with their own parent or guardian. All children whom a parent will be bringing to the co-op must be registered. The number of registered children in each family determines the family's membership fee.

- All children 3 years old and up are charged full membership.
- Children who are 2 years old on or before the first meeting day of the new session and will be attending Tot Art and/or Tot PE are charged full membership.
- Children 2 years old who will be attending *neither* Tot Art *nor* Tot PE and babies 6 weeks old - 23 months old are charged a nominal Junior Membership fee which provides them unlimited access to the nursery when in attendance with their own parent or guardian, as needed.
- Parents receive free membership.

Membership payments may be made in full or in two payments for each session. The first membership payment is due in advance of each of the two annual sessions. See the registration packet for fee amounts and due dates. Please make checks payable to The Community Co-op.

Each member's prompt payment is vital as we run our co-op on a lean budget. .

Refund Policy

If, after you register, you determine that you will not be participating in the co-op, you may withdraw and receive a refund of your membership fees, minus \$50.00, by the Monday after the second class of each session. Contact the registrar no later than 8:00 p.m. If you are unable to reach the registrar directly, contact another board member. Withdrawals after this date of each session will not generate a refund. This refund is available only to new members during their first session of attendance.

Arrival / Signing in and out / Welcome Desk

We look forward to welcoming each family as they arrive together in the morning. Due to our insurance requirements, you must accompany your children, regardless of age, into the building and sign them in. Parents may not drop children off, even briefly.

The sign-in book is located at the welcome desk. Please sign in as a family when you arrive and out as a family when you leave.

Please arrive between 8:50 and 9:00, and keep your children with you until both co-leaders of your children's first classes are present in the classrooms.

Leaving the Premises

The co-op is designed and legally insured with the understanding that parents stay on the premises with their children. If you choose to step out briefly with one of your own children, you need to sign yourself and your child out and designate (through a private arrangement) another parent to be responsible for any of your children who remain in the building. In addition, the remaining children need to be in a designated area with at least two supervising adults (such as in class or the gym, according to that child's schedule). This cannot be a regular, ongoing arrangement. (See also Parent Agreement, pages 13-14.)

Shoes

Children and adults should wear soft soled shoes to protect the gym floor for PE and at lunchtime. Those participating in PE should wear non-black and/or non-marking soles.

Lunch

WE ARE A PEANUT FREE CO-OP. Due to some children in attendance who are highly allergic to even the smell of peanuts, NO ONE at the co-op may bring food with peanut butter nor made with peanut products into the building. Thank you for your compliance in this very important matter.

We also have some tree-nut allergies. You may bring food for your own family that has tree-nuts, however. The list of tree nuts is long, so if you bring food to share for a co-op sponsored party, just exclude all nuts.

Families need to bring their lunches (there isn't enough time to go out). Please bring covered drinking containers to reduce spills. Opened, disposable drinking containers such as juice boxes should be thrown away by the end of the lunch break.

Children may sit with their parents and/or with other children as they choose or as their parents prefer.

We ask that each person clean up their own lunch supplies and trash. "Lunch duty" is assigned to families on a rotating basis. This involves sweeping the floor, wiping tables, and checking the kitchen to see that everything is clean and back in its place. Please see the posted checklist in the kitchen for specifics.

All parents must directly supervise their children during the entire lunch break.

Birthday Celebrations

Due to time constraints, the number of children at co-op, allergy issues, and family preferences, we ask that families do not bring food or other treats to celebrate birthdays at co-op. For children who would enjoy it, we can sing happy birthday to them as a group at lunch. This might also be a nice time for your child to celebrate with us by giving a "reverse birthday gift" to the co-op such as a book or educational toy which he or she could unwrap in front of the group at lunch (totally optional). If you would like to invite children from co-op to a birthday celebration outside of co-op, please contact those children directly outside of co-op. Please don't pass out birthday invitations at co-op unless you are inviting every child.

Snacks/Water

Children in Quarks and older groups may bring a healthy snack to eat at their discretion. Please keep snacks to non-messy fruits, veggies, bite-sized crackers such as Goldfish, etc. (no peanuts or peanut butter). Snack will be provided by a parent volunteer for Nursery children.

Everyone should bring a water bottle with an attached lid for drinking throughout the day (water only for children, please). There is no drinking fountain at the church.

Health

If your child has a clear runny nose and isn't otherwise sick, feel free to bring him or her to the co-op. Your child should be fever, diarrhea, and vomiting-free for at least 24 hours before coming to co-op. Parents, please follow the same guidelines for yourselves. Thank you.

Sick Parent / Sick Child

In the case where you are sick or you must stay home yourself with a sick child, you may make a private arrangement with someone else who will be staying on the premises throughout the day to bring your other child(ren) who are in the Quarks or older groups. The adult who brings your child will be responsible for any diapering, toileting or minor medical needs (such as washing a cut and administering a band aid). No nursery children may come on co-op day without their own parent or legal guardian.

Remember to also arrange for substitutes as needed.

Injuries

The co-op provides band aids and ice-packs. If your child is injured and needs any type of medical attention (minor: band aid or ice-pack, or in the unlikely event of a more serious injury), you will be called upon to tend to these needs.

Safety

For the safety of our children and volunteers, all classrooms have at least two supervising adults in the room at all times.

If a child 3 years old or younger needs to leave the classroom (bathroom or other), two adults will accompany him or her or the parent will be called. In the case of bathroom use monitored by adults other than the child's parent, the adults will wait in the outer doorway of the bathroom, oriented to allow for the child's privacy, while the child uses the facilities. Whether children 4 and 5 years old may leave the

classroom for bathroom use independently will be based on the child's individual level of independence. It is best to send young children with clothing they can manage independently in the bathroom. For any child who requires assistance in the bathroom, the parent will be called to assist the child. The parent will also be called for diaper changes.

Older children may tend to such matters unaccompanied and return directly to their classrooms.

Anti-Harassment

The co-op is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from all forms of harassment by or towards adults or children. Harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, physical or mental disability or other legally protected characteristic is prohibited.

Harassment is defined as unwanted physical contact or sexual advances; use of epithets, inappropriate jokes, comments or innuendos; obscene or harassing telephone calls, emails, letters, other forms of communication; and any other conduct which is so severe that it interferes with an individual's performance or creates a hostile environment.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency fire evacuation and take cover tornado procedures are posted in each classroom. Staff will be trained in use of these procedures.

Parents' Room

We are all dedicated parents who love to spend time with our children. Parents volunteer throughout the day, interacting with their own and other children. However, the Parents' Room is an area set aside for parents only. If your child is sleeping in your arms (or in a carrier), you may bring him or her into the Parents' Room with you. However, if your awake child needs to be with you, please join him or her in the nursery or in class.

Grievance Procedures

Should anyone experience a disagreement within the co-op, please follow these steps for resolving the conflict. Please uphold confidentiality.

1. Go to the person with whom you have a disagreement at a time when you can have a private conversation. Hopefully, most issues can be resolved this way as both parties listen to each other. It may be very helpful to remember that we're all on a team, working together to make co-op the best experience possible for all involved.
2. If the conflict is not resolved, parties involved should meet with a board member.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved, it should be presented to the entire board. The board will make a final decision at their discretion.

Agreements

So that everyone understands our commitments, the co-op has written agreements for students, parents, classroom team members, and board members. These are located in this handbook beginning on page 13, and copies to sign are included in the registration packet.

Background Checks

Because each parent is a volunteer working directly with other people's children, our insurance requires that each parent has a formal background check. This is also becoming increasingly common among all volunteer organizations who work with children. The background check will include a Department of Children and Family Services child abuse and neglect report (free) and a state criminal background check (\$16.00 per last name ever used). The board will also monitor local molester lists provided by state police (free). The state police fee is separate from membership dues.

Second parent: Each parent who will likely attend the co-op more than 2 times per year must complete background check forms and receive safety training.

Written permission will be obtained from each participating parent and hired staff person (if any) before a background check is conducted. The information obtained in the background check will be kept in a secure location and strictly confidential, accessible only to board members assigned to conduct the background check process.

Safety Training

Adults: Each adult who will be attending co-op two or more times per year will have training in child protection procedures. The training will include the information in the Child Protection Handbook (required by insurance) including appropriate adult/child ratios, bathroom procedures, what to do if an incident of abuse were to occur, and fire and tornado procedures.

Youth Volunteers (Age 12-17) Safety Interview: Any youth volunteering as a youth assistant in classes with younger children will have an interview by a board member to determine that the youth understands the definitions, concepts, and procedures explained in the Child Protection Handbook as well as the youth's willingness to follow the procedures.

Confidentiality

In all matters regarding children or in matters regarding disagreements or other private matters among adults, we have an understanding of trust and confidentiality.

Ages of Participants

There is something for everyone ages 6 weeks old through teens. Children as young as 6 weeks old may be placed in the nursery for appropriate lengths of time. Teens who are as old as 18 in the fall may participate. Classes are broken into general age ranges. See "Age Range Explanation" in the registration packet for a detailed explanation of age ranges and where they are flexible.

Families whose oldest child is 6 on or before September 1 of the co-op year (i.e. "school year") have priority placement in the co-op. This policy is to ensure that families with children ages 6-18 who will be participating in our program are assured a place for siblings younger than 5. If your oldest child is younger than 6, you may ask to be placed on a waiting list.

Advancements

As with various scouting organizations, our groups are designed to create a year (or more) of connection to other kids in the group. Children ages 3 and up in the fall will stay in their original group placements throughout the co-op ("school") year.

Children who turn 2 on or before the new session's beginning date may have Tot Art and/or Tot PE added to their schedule for that new session. This does not represent a change in group as both the Atoms group and Protons group are based in the nursery together. This does represent a change in membership level from Junior Membership to Full Membership and the corresponding fee.

Being Green

We strive where possible to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Gentle Discipline

Purpose: We believe the best way for all to enjoy their time at The Community Co-op is for children to be engaged in inviting activities. So the best "discipline" is a well-run class. However, if a child needs assistance with his or her behavior, we have set these guidelines.

Guidelines: Leaders have a menu of options to try. They may try other similar ideas, as well, as long as they are in the same spirit of treating children with respect and guiding them gently towards their best behavior.

1. Leaders are asked to plan their classes well so children are busy (even when self-directed).
2. Leaders are asked to have predictable expectations for behavior and recognizable routines so children know things like when it's time to listen to someone else talk or when it's time to clean up and how to help.
3. If after expectations are explained, a child needs help following them, the child may be:
 - redirected to the appropriate activity.
 - asked directly to stop the inappropriate behavior.

We believe that in most cases, this is all that will be necessary.

4. However, if a child escalates the behavior to highly disruptive misbehavior after repeated attempts by the leader or assistants to redirect the child, including direct requests to stop the problematic behavior, the child's parent will be called to the room to address the behavior. The parent may need to

consider the option of removing the child for a brief time until he or she is ready to participate in class appropriately.

5. If parental intervention is repeatedly necessary, the parent may be asked to attend the class with the child (and participate as an engaged assistant for all the children).
6. If the child is not able to bring the behavior under control with a parent regularly in the room, the child may be asked to no longer attend the class.
7. If the child is having severe trouble bringing his or her behavior under control in several classes, he or she may be asked not to attend co-op.
8. If a child engages in bullying or any form of verbal abuse, physical fighting, brings a weapon to co-op, engages in theft, or willfully destroys property, the child will be subject to disciplinary action.

Unacceptable Corrective Methods: Yelling, humiliating, and physical punishment by any adult are unacceptable at The Community Co-op.

Conclusion: As children engage in activities that interest them, leaders set up well organized classes, and leaders and assistants use our gentle discipline guidelines if/ when necessary, we believe The Community Co-op is a pleasant place to learn, explore, and grow together.

Volunteer Positions and Responsibilities

Class Team Positions

***Class Co-leader:** Where possible, each class has two co-leaders who will share in the planning and implementing of the class. Planning outside of co-op time is needed. A co-leader should:

- be interested in the topic, even passionate.
- be willing to do the leg work- establish purpose, find materials, write general outline, etc.
- be well-prepared for each class, but willing to learn along with the kids.
- be willing to work with a co-leader.
- be willing to debrief with a co-leader, self-examine, and improve.
- not likely be needed elsewhere in the co-op to attend to his or her children on a regular basis.

***Small Group Leader:** A small group leader is part of the team but takes on responsibility primarily for a small group aspect of the class. Examples would include running a learning station or leading a small group discussion. Some outside planning time will be needed.

Class Assistant: The class assistants help the students and co-leaders as needed. If needed, class assistants are usually called upon to substitute for the class leader, following the leaders' plans. -No outside prep time.

***Teen Co-Advisor:** The teen advisors will work with the teens to plan and implement the teen program. This may include arranging for a specific class,

organizing student volunteer time in the co-op, and advising a student designed workshop. Outside planning time will be needed.

Teen Advisor Assistants: The teen assistants will help the teen co-advisors in the running and implementing of the teen program. No outside planning time will be needed.

***Nursery Coordinators:** Nursery coordinators lead the nursery, taking responsibility for running the nursery and providing a consistent presence throughout most of the day. They also monitor that it is appropriately staffed and supplied. They plan optional activities for the children sprinkled throughout the day (ex. story time, music time, etc.). The 2-3(4) year old children will be leaving the nursery space several times during the day to attend tot classes. Some outside planning time is needed.

Nursery Assistants: Nursery assistants care for and supervise children who are in the nursery. No outside planning time is needed.

***Quark Coordinators:** Quark coordinators are a consistent presence in the Quarks' room throughout much of the day. Coordinators see that the day runs smoothly and help create a connection between the various classes and leaders. Coordinators likely lead one or two of the Quark classes and assist in others.

***Class leader orientation provided in September.**

Other Volunteer Positions

Free-Play Room: Monitors are responsible for supervising the children in the specified room. No outside planning time is needed.

Committees

Fundraising & Event planning: This committee will design and implement "easy" fundraising efforts. Our primary method of fundraising will be passive fundraising such as "Shop 'N' Share." This committee will also plan non-fundraising events including holiday parties and our spring open house.

Sub Coordinator/Lunch Coordinator/Recycling Custodian: This position is for one person and involves 3 components described below.

Sub coordinator component: Especially for our newest members, the process of obtaining subs can be a little confusing because our roles and class circumstances change throughout the day. The sub coordinator is available to assist in this process and/or is the person to call with unforeseeable, last minute sub needs when a parent is absolutely unavailable to obtain their own subs. This person should live fairly close to co-op and should generally be available Wednesday evenings and early Thursday mornings to assist in last minute situations. Training will be provided for this position. All parents remain responsible for obtaining their own subs well in advance for foreseeable circumstances.

Lunch Coordination component: Create the lunch duty rotation (each family takes their turn wiping & sweeping up), watch the clock and announce to the kids when lunch play time begins and ends, and make sure the gym is put back in order (with kids' and adults' help).

Recycling component: Collect and dispose of recycling from classrooms.

Board of Directors

All board members: Guide and direct the co-op. Are active volunteers within the co-op. Uphold the standards of the co-op. Conduct themselves appropriately. Represent the co-op to the wider world. Perform other duties as assigned.

President

General: Ensures the effective action of the board in governing and supporting the co-op, and oversees board affairs. Acts as the representative of the board as a whole.

Community: Speaks to the media and the community on behalf of the co-op; represents the co-op in the community.

Meetings: Develops agendas for meetings in concert with other board members and committee chairs. Presides at board meetings. Determines whether executive committee meetings in addition to quarterly board meetings are necessary and convenes the committee accordingly.

Committees: Recommends to the board which committees are to be established. Seeks volunteers for committees and coordinates individual board member assignments. Makes sure each committee has a chairperson, and stays in touch with chairpersons to be sure that their work is carried out. Identifies committee recommendations that should be presented to the full board.

Secretary

General: Records, manages and distributes board meeting minutes. Manages general board correspondence. Is sufficiently familiar with legal documents (articles of incorporation, by-laws, etc.) to note their applicability during meetings. Creates and maintains periodic print materials such as co-op directory, calendar, and overall schedule.

Record-keeping: Maintains and manages all co-op and board records, including founding and legal documents, financial reports, minutes, and membership information.

Treasurer

General: Manages the board's review of, and action related to, the board's financial responsibilities. Acting as bookkeeper, develops and implements financial procedures and systems. May work with other volunteers in carrying out these duties.

Reports: Ensures that appropriate financial reports are made available to the board. Regularly reports to the board on key financial events, trends, concerns, and assessment of fiscal health.

Members at Large

The board of directors has two members at large.

General: Performs tasks as needed or assigned.

Special Responsibilities: Performs one or more of the “additional board duties” involving an outside co-op meeting day commitment (volunteer coordinator, registrar, webmaster/contact person, orientation and training coordinator, blog coordinator, or class support person).

Additional Board Duties

Volunteer Coordinator: Matches potential volunteers with volunteer positions. Addresses substitute needs where a class leader or assistant has a last minute extreme emergency and is unable to find a substitute.

Registrar: Develops and implements registration procedures and systems. May work with other volunteers in carrying out these duties.

Webmaster/Contact Person: Maintains up to date information on the co-op website. Corresponds with those inquiring about the co-op through the website or email.

Blog Coordinator: Writes periodic blog posts to include a variety of information from co-op specific stories or news, helpful hints for homeschoolers, resources for parents and homeschoolers, and other topics of interest from a balanced perspective to homeschoolers in general; encourages co-op members to participate by writing brief articles, reviews, and other appropriate pieces.

Orientation and Training Coordinator: Provides leader orientation for new co-op leaders and coordinates the sexual abuse prevention training program (as is required by insurance).

Class Support Person: Is available for a class or cluster of classes to give advice or help address issues that may arise.

What is team-leading?

Simply put, it is an all-around supportive style of running a class.

A team is made up of the following:

- two co-leaders (where possible)
- small group leaders, in some cases
- assistants

The number of adults needed beyond the two co-leaders is based on the size of the class, the structure of the class, and what the co-leaders need to run their class well.

Benefits:

- Children benefit from two leaders and assistants and the various strengths each brings.

- Children get a better ratio of adults to children.
- In the rare case where one leader must be absent, the class still has continuity with the other leader.
- Leaders share the work load in preparation and in class.
- Working with other adults provides an opportunity for mutually supportive feedback, creative brainstorming together, and a greater pool of resources.

“Wouldn't it just be more efficient for me to lead a class alone? I already know what I want to do.”

In the beginning, yes, it would be more efficient. But after the initial planning phase with your co-leader, you will find that the work load really is reduced throughout the session. By dividing your class up into segments, each leader can be responsible for certain segments. This cuts the prep about in half.

Here's an example:

Opening activity: Jill
 Mini-lesson: Karen
 Main activity based on mini lesson: Jill
 Sharing time: Karen

“I might like to be a leader, but I've never done this before.”

We anticipate that several of our leaders will be new to leading/teaching. Co-leading is a great way to get your feet wet. Because you are working with another leader, you can develop your skills in the context of a team. Also, we provide leader orientation which includes training in the basics of planning and running a class and includes smart tips and helps. We think leading is very rewarding!

“What if working with my co-leader doesn't work out very well?”

We hope that our teams will work out very well. But we're all human; personalities and styles may clash every now and then. One of the benefits of co-leading will also help you avoid these kinds of clashes. By dividing up the work, you can each focus on your part. So while in situations where a team really clicks, there may be a lot of sharing of ideas and mutual support, in the case where a team doesn't click as well, co-leaders can still focus on their own parts and the class can still be very well-run. If in the unlikely event that a significant problem with your team arises that can't be resolved, we would ask that you talk to the board member who is the support person for your class.

On the other hand, you will hopefully develop a great connection with your co-leader and find that this all around supportive style of leading is really fun! Where possible, we set up co-leaders who know each other and would like to work together. In some cases, co-leaders may not know each other in advance but hopefully will enjoy this opportunity to have a great co-worker and new friend.

Agreements

We have written agreements for co-op participants in their various roles as students, parents, class team members, and board members. Following are the items listed in the agreements. Copies to sign are in the registration packet.

Also note, class leader orientation and sexual abuse prevention training for adults (as required by our insurance) will be provided in September (see calendar).

Student Agreement

Purpose: So that we understand and agree to the same general expectations to help ensure the best experience for us all,

I agree:

- to be honest, courteous and patient with others. I will use respectful and polite language.
- to honor the time and effort of the class leaders and my fellow class members by giving them my attention and respect.
- to treat our meeting place with respect at all times.
- to help clean up in class, after class, and after lunch.
- to remain with my class, unless I obtain permission from my leader to leave, and to be in the appropriate areas at all times- not roaming the building or property.
- that if I pack my own lunch or snack, not to bring any food that contains peanuts or peanut butter (due to some children at co-op having severe allergies).
- not to bring electronic devices of any kind to co-op (music, game boys, etc.) except where such devices relate to a class activity.
- never to bring weapons, including pocketknives, onto the property.

I understand that the following conduct will not be allowed while participating in The Community Co-op and is subject to disciplinary action:

- 1) theft or destruction of public or private property
- 2) physical fighting or other acts of violence
- 3) any form of bullying or verbal abuse

I understand that the purpose of this agreement is to help ensure the best experience for us all at The Community Co-op.

Parent Agreement

Purpose: So that we understand and agree to the same general expectations to help ensure the best experience for us all,

I agree:

- to treat all children with kindness.
- to directly supervise my children during lunch and to participate with my family in the clean-up duty rotation.
- to strive to regularly attend co-op. I understand that if we sign up for co-op, we are taking a slot for the classes being offered. I understand that the class leaders have planned for my child with time and in some cases materials and intend to honor their efforts.
- to honor my volunteer commitments. If I must be absent, I will arrange for a substitute for my duties. I agree not to overburden parents by getting substitutes too often. If a long term situation arises, I will talk to the volunteer coordinator to have my duties temporarily or permanently reassigned.
- to consider the distraction of cell phone use while attending to children.
- not to bring snacks or lunches which contain peanuts or peanut butter for me or my family (due to severe peanut allergies of several co-op children).
- that whenever my children are in the building, I must remain in the building the entire time classes are in session and be responsible for my children regardless of their age. However, in a *special circumstance*, I may
 - a) send my child(ren) to co-op with another adult who will remain in the building and be responsible for my child(ren).
 - b) sign out one or more of my children and designate another adult who has agreed to be responsible for any remaining children. This is only if the *child(ren)* need(s) time away from the building.
- Neither option can be a regular, ongoing arrangement.
- that I am fully liable for my child's safety, well being, and behavior.
- that because I am also a volunteer, to participate in sexual abuse prevention training, as is required by our insurance.
- that if my child's other parent will be participating more than two times throughout the co-op year, to have him or her read and sign a parent agreement, participate in sexual abuse prevention training, and have a background check as part of our registration process.
- that I have read and agree with the information in The Community Co-op Handbook and registration packet including the refund policy, gentle discipline policy, payment schedule, and parking designations (no drop-off in alley or elsewhere).

Volunteer Class Team Agreement

For All Adults Participating in the Co-op

All participating adults are class assistants. Most are also class leaders or small group leaders. Note the items which apply to your various roles.

Purpose: So that class volunteers have a sense of mutual agreement and to help ensure that classes are well-run,

I agree:

- (leaders & small group leaders) to fulfill the aspects of preparing for and running the class to which I have agreed.
- (all) to actively engage in the team-leading model during class time, participating in the class fully as assistant, small group leader, or class leader; mixing with the students or in another engaged role (team-leading to be explained during leader orientation).
- (all) to use the gentle discipline policy when/if needed.
- (all) to make sure the co-op space where I work is left in excellent condition, cleaning up and returning items to their original places or as designated by the church. Where possible, to have children participate in this duty.
- (leaders & small group leaders) to provide to parents (and older students) a general written plan developed with my co-leader(s) for the class we will run.
- (leaders & small group leaders) to communicate with my co-leader(s) about spending for materials and to turn in receipts for reimbursement which are within our class budget on a timely basis.
- (all) to prepare a plan for the event of my absence before the session begins. If my absence would leave the class with only one adult, this would include finding a substitute so there are two adults present. If I am a class leader or small group leader, I will provide my sub with my plans and needed materials.
- (all) to strive to call on substitutes as little as possible so as not to place an undue burden on other parents.
- (all) to complete sexual abuse prevention training, as is required by our insurance.
- (leaders & small group leaders) to attend the leader orientation.

An Additional Note for Class Team Members

We highly recommend that leaders and assistants communicate openly and honestly with each other about issues that may arise in making their classes work well for everyone. We encourage you to be open to feedback from each other and actively ask for it. With an atmosphere of mutual encouragement, constructive criticism, and positive problem solving, we believe team-leading can be a wonderful experience for the adults and the students involved.

Board Member Agreement

Purpose: So that all board members have a sense of mutual agreement and to help ensure that the board and co-op function well,

I agree:

- to enthusiastically support and advocate the mission of The Community Co-op.
- to help guide and direct the co-op.
- to be an active volunteer within the co-op.
- to uphold the standards of the co-op.
- to conduct myself appropriately.
- to represent the co-op to the wider world.
- to honor the time and effort of the other board members by attending all board meetings and coming prepared.
- to perform the duties of my office, including those in my job description as well as other duties which might arise throughout the course of my term.
- that in all groups, this board included, conflicts will arise. I agree to address conflicts with the group openly and honestly. In the case where a conflict arises with a single other board member, to address that issue privately and honestly with that person. In the case where I need advice in how to handle a situation, that I will seek advice privately from another board member with the understanding that this communication is for the sole purpose of problem solving with integrity.
- to be open to input from others, seeking it regularly.
- to consider my commitment to this board before taking on additional projects and responsibilities elsewhere.
- that if a time comes before the end of my term where I can no longer perform my duties well, that I will notify the board so that the board can work with me to find the best solution.
- to participate in sexual abuse prevention training, as is required by our insurance.
- to facilitate and/or participate in class leader orientation.

Additional Information

Helping Your Child Separate from You When the Time Is Right

Purpose: We believe that it is wise for each parent to determine what is best for his or her children. If you believe it would be best for your child to spend some time away from you during co-op but he or she needs an adjustment period, below are some suggestions that might help your child make this transition.

Scheduling Parent: If you believe that it is likely this transition will be very gradual, taking more than a few weeks, please schedule your volunteer time for the same classes your child will be taking. We will consider you an "extra" volunteer, so that if/when your child is ready for you to leave, you can freely leave the class and later be rescheduled elsewhere. However, while you are in the class, please fully engage with your child in the activities of the class and/or gradually move on to engage with other children. If you are a volunteer in the class (even an extra one) we want/need your help with the class activities.

If you anticipate that a transition period will be fairly brief, please volunteer elsewhere in the co-op. Notify us that you do anticipate a brief transition period so that we can schedule you in a flexible position which will allow for you to arrive late for your volunteer job or only after several Thursdays. We schedule all parents for a period off in the Parents' Room. We will likely schedule your period off for the first class period, which might be the more significant transition time.

Come a few minutes early to co-op: Come early enough to allow for some time for you to be in the first class with your child before it begins. This is important for conveying a relaxed feeling to your child. We hope to have at least one team leader ready before class who can greet children who arrive a few minutes early, can welcome them warmly and begin to engage them. We believe this calm, relaxed time can be a key transition time. Please be sure adults are present before you leave.

Show that you really like the leaders: Our leaders will be expecting some very warm greetings from parents. They will understand that this is your way of showing your child that you very much like the leaders (it's OK if you don't already know each other well). When your face lights up and your voice sounds warm, this helps your child know that this leader is OK with you.

Stay in the room as long as you need to: When your child is engaged in the class activities and you are ready to try a little space between the two of you, spend some time across the room. Unless you are an "extra" volunteer (see above), take the time you and your child need to be apart from each other but with you still in the room. You can just watch the class.

Say goodbye: Whether you think your child is ready for you to leave after a few minutes the first day or it takes several Thursdays, do say goodbye when you go. You may want to leave for 10 minutes and then come back (gradually increasing your time away each week), or you may feel confident he or she is ready for you to leave the class until the end of the period. *Either way, say goodbye, telling your child when you will be back.* This helps build trust in the process for your child. If your child gets upset after you go, the leaders or assistants will attempt to engage your child in the activity and help him or her calm down. If he or she isn't able to calm down shortly, they will come get you from the Parents' Room.

Become an extra volunteer: After several attempts to separate over several Thursdays, if you decide you will need to spend time with your child in his or her classes on a regular basis, please see the volunteer coordinator to schedule you as a regular volunteer in those classes. In this case, plan to assist the leaders and be fully engaged in the class activities.

Reschedule Yourself after Transition Period: If you are a parent not scheduled elsewhere in the co-op in order to allow for an adjustment period for a child, once the child is adjusted and you can leave him or her regularly, please see the volunteer coordinator so you can be scheduled as a volunteer elsewhere in the co-op. This will include an hour off in the Parents' Room if you so desire.

With these tips, your own awareness of what works best with your child, and the help and understanding of the leaders and assistants, we believe you and your child can make a gentle transition to time away from you if and when the time is right.

Welcome to the Nursery and Nursery School

Ages: 6 weeks old through 3(4) years old

We are delighted to have your young one join us in the nursery. So that you may volunteer in co-op classes and enjoy a period off in the Parents' Room (if you so desire), our nursery volunteers will lovingly care for your young child. Please feel free to ask our staff any questions.

Snacks/drinks: A snack will be provided for nursery children by a volunteer snack coordinator. Please do not send additional snacks with your nursery child. Please do send several non-sticky drink servings in bottles or sippy cups labeled with your child's name.

Naps: You are welcome to try having your child take a nap in the nursery. One who sleeps easily around noise is more likely to be successful. If this is not the case, you may want to make other arrangements outside of co-op. You are always welcome to come into the nursery and help your child fall asleep.

Parent staying in nursery: If you do not plan to separate from your nursery child, you should volunteer in the nursery and help with all the children. If you so desire, you may want to use your scheduled "time off" as a time to try short periods away.

Scheduling: If you anticipate your child needing a significant adjustment period for being in the nursery without you (if this is your intention), please do not schedule yourself elsewhere in the co-op. Once your child is adjusted and you can leave for longer periods of time, please contact the volunteer coordinator so you can be scheduled for volunteer duty elsewhere in the co-op.

Adjusting to the nursery: If you do plan to leave your child in the nursery, he or she will likely need an adjustment period. Depending on the age of the child and many other factors, it is not unusual for a baby or child to cry when a parent leaves the nursery, especially if this is new. During an adjustment period, if your child is unable to calm down after a reasonable amount of time (about 10 minutes), we'll ask you to come help your child calm down. If you'd like to try to leave again after he or she is calm, you are welcome to do so.

Two goals for this transition time are for your child to become familiar with the nursery and staff and to learn that you do come back at the end of your activities. After a number of Thursdays, if your child is still crying a lot, we may need to modify our adjustment-to-the-nursery plan with you. You should discuss this with the nursery staff so everyone is clear and working together. This can take any number of Thursdays, and we want to work with you to make this transition as smooth as possible. See the list of ideas below for other ways to help your child transition to our nursery.

Staying with parent outside of nursery: If your quiet child in a car seat or carrier needs to stay with you, he or she is welcome to join you as you volunteer in another class. If your child becomes disruptive or is not in a carrier, he or she will need to be in the nursery. If this is likely an issue, it might be best for you to sign up for nursery duty.

Below are some suggestions that might help your child transition more smoothly to the nursery.

- Consider your child's sleep habits when deciding whether the nursery will work.
- Come early enough to allow time for you to play with your child in the nursery before you leave. Show your child that you very much like the nursery worker who is greeting you both (even if you just met).
- Bring along a blanket or other comforting item from home.
- If your child is engaged in play and is comfortable, spend a little time across the room.
- When you leave, do say goodbye. Say in a cheery voice that you'll be back soon. Then go. We will come get you if your child cries and doesn't calm down soon.
- While your child is adjusting, leaving for a shorter time is better.

If there is anything we can do to help make you and your child's experience with the nursery better, please let us know.

"Where does my money go?"

The board of The Community Co-op works to ensure that your dollar stretches far. For a low cost, you're getting a full day of enrichment and fun! But specifically, where does it go? The list includes:

- building rental
- insurance
- class materials