



Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool

Handbook

Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool
1333 Jamestown Road
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WHY A C O - O P ?

Cooperative preschools form because parents want involvement in their young child's first school activities. Unlike traditional preschools, which consist of teachers and children, cooperative preschools include parents in the classroom and in the organization and administration of the school.

Parents, teachers and children benefit by this structure. Parents observe much while working in the classroom. A mother watches her son building a block garage with two classmates. A father can note how his daughter asks the teacher for help on a clay project, or relax at home after discovering that his son seems no more inclined to say "Please pass the juice" than his fellow classmates. Parents learn new ways of diverting arguments between their children after watching the teacher suggest that one child in school "be the firefighter" and the other "direct traffic." New friendships form among parents at work and in the classroom. Adult education occurs as parents attend schoolwide meetings on child development, hear book reviews, read weekly newsletters and discuss their childrearing ideas with professionally trained classroom teachers.

Teachers in cooperative preschool are very brave. How would you like to be observed by your employer every minute of the working day? But co-op teachers submit to this scrutiny because they believe that parents enrich and enliven the classroom. "I have a story that will be great for the week we study seeds," says one mother. This is the kind of enrichment teachers want – and the kind that parents can provide.

The child in a co-op has fun. He has a warm, accepting teacher qualified to work with young children, the companionship of classmates, and the guidance, enrichment and friendship of participating parents. The transition from home to school can be easier with one of his parents in the classroom occasionally. In addition, he learns the difficult art of sharing mother or dad's attention with other classmates.

THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

The Child and the Curriculum

Classroom Philosophy

When children play, they are learning . . . exploring, testing out, trying to make something work the way they want it to, discovering things they have never seen before. Our classrooms are designed for this kind of learning . . . for touching, smelling, feeling and experimenting through the child's use of her own body; for sharing the talking with other children and the adults present; for exploring the environment to the fullest possibilities within the bounds of common sense, safety and mutual respect among peers and adults.

The children learn when their spontaneous reactions to their experiences can be extended and guided by the teacher and parents. The teacher functions as a sympathetic and alert guide, aware of the child's needs as he demonstrates them through play. In this environment the child can explore in a way which helps her to come into control of her emotional, cognitive and social development.

Naturally, the way each child reacts to the co-op will differ depending on his individual personality and developmental age. A child may be age four but have the emotional reactions of a three-and-a-half-year-old while being able to use art tools like a late four or early five. A child articulate with adults may not be able to yet play with children the same age. A child who demonstrates precocious sports ability may need help in controlling himself and taking turns during circle games or group activities. Children come in all varying degrees of intellectual growth, personality, body development and sociability. The classroom allows for these differences. Children are encouraged to grow and learn when they are ready.

The following pages describe highlights of different kinds of activities to be found in our co-op classrooms. Whether or not they are introduced, when they are introduced, for how long they are introduced and how they are experienced depends on the developmental readiness of each group.

The Classroom Program

FREE PLAY

This is a time for children to pursue their own interests alone or with companions. Individual skills are developed, curiosity and self-confidence encouraged, the imagination stimulated and learning how to get along with others helpfully guided by adults.

WATER PLAY

Provides a relaxed and calming setting where children can learn about and explore such concepts as depth, weight, suction, force, color, sound and beauty as well as share experiences of discovery with friends.

EASEL PAINTING

Provides a daily opportunity to discover line, space, color and texture on a two-dimensional surface. Children develop in their own time from random experimenting with paints and brushes through various stages of discovered -- then studied -- blobs, shapes and common designs. Toward five they begin to paint deliberate pictures intermingled with continued experiments with design, shape and color.

DIFFERENT ART ACTIVITIES

Offer daily experimentation with shapes, textures, design, color and space in both two and three dimensions. Children develop awareness of beauty through sense contact with materials; confidence in their ability to explore materials in their own unique random way; pride in adult acceptance of their product; and skill in eye-hand coordination.

SCIENCE TABLE AND DISPLAY

Provide nature materials for sharing with adults to increase sense of curiosity, beauty, discovery and familiarity with the living world around the child. Objects from the physical world can be manipulated and principles of physical science can be discovered through use rather than adult explanations. Children can contribute their objects from home to share and can use mechanical objects during dramatic play to increase understanding of their function.

BOOK CORNER

A quiet place with a soft rug and inviting picture books. Illustrations are large enough to see clearly with good color and subjects of interest to the lives and feelings of young children. A place to rest and be alone for a while or with a good friend. Pleasure with books is an early step on the path to reading readiness.

BLOCK CORNER

A place to discover size and shape relationships and to explore balance and design. Through their own experimenting, children can create patterns of different complexity according to their own development, moving from simple experiments with the blocks to eventual purposeful building...all the while discovering design in the dimensions. Additions of moving vehicles, wooden people and animals extend the imaginative possibilities of blocks into dramatic play uses.

DRAMATIC PLAY

In the HOUSEKEEPING AREA (family rooms and dress-ups) and children move around freely trying out feelings about themselves or their home, reliving experiences out in the community as they have understood them, finding out how to relate to others by taking “roles” (like policeman or robber or sister) and developing a healthy imagination through play. What the children do may reflect how they feel, how they understand what goes on around them, what they imagine but do not actually do in “real” life, how they have perceived situations they have been in, how they might work out solutions to situations or just PLAIN PRETENDING. Props are used from all over the room...either realistically, like pennies for money, or symbolically, like a block used as a penny. Dramatic play develops a healthy mind which feels confident in coping with life and is flexible in receiving new ideas. It extends ability to get along with others of the same age. Dramatic play is “trying out and integrating life.”

TABLE TOYS

Challenging small games which provide coordination activities to help the child become self-sufficient; construction activities which help the child feel in control of materials, process and product; reconstruction activities or self-correcting materials which can be taken apart and reassembled appropriately to help the child take pleasure in accomplishment; classification activities...matching, patterning, grouping, numbering, etc. to develop skills related to math and reading readiness.

CIRCLE TIME

Everyone is focused on one activity rather than pursuing individual interests as in free play. Again, when and how often circle time is introduced varies with readiness of the group. All children are helped, according to their personalities, to become aware of the focus of the group and to cooperate in listening. From the toddler who learns just to “Look!” to the older child who learns to raise a hand, circle encourages group social behavior. There is joy in listening to a friend talk; in the glorious waiting your turn to explode into the center of attention. Circle requires teacher skill in keeping attention and creating controlled enthusiasm. What happens varies from day to day. Circle is rarely perfect with young children but often joyful.

READING BOOKS

A book is a feeling, a thought, a recreated experience, a funny sound to play with, a reassurance for a worry, a beautiful splashing color. Through skilled reading the child participates in the pictured and written world of experiences he knows. Children learn to listen and also be drawn in...to react to a story by discussion afterwards or just a good feeling. The teacher may choose books because discussing this subject is relevant to a group interest, a child’s need or just because it is fun. Picture books lead children to reading readiness, but awareness of picture discrimination, left to right writing or the symbolic representation of printing is secondary to the experience of loving books for themselves. Children start with simple clear picture books, naming and pointing when there is no text. They move up to short stories about animals and family to books about people doing things and real-world items and events which interest them. The subject must suit the age and the attention span.

SHOW AND TELL

A time to feel very important telling something brought from home. Gradual confidence is developed about being the center of attention and the child learns to wait her turn and be aware of others. Very often, a show and tell subject may be related to other activities that day.

FINGER PLAYS, RHYMES AND SONGS

This increases the child’s imagination, deal with common experiences of childhood, encourage exuberant responses to living, encourage a child-adult bond, and create feelings of pride in mastery and repetition. Rhythm, pitch, sound, rhyme, language and emotional response create ear-alertness which makes for later joy in the contents of reading material. Songs and rhymes can be original as well as learned.

JUST TALKING

Happens a lot in circle, when somebody cares enough to really open up discussion about a question a child brings up...death, birth, sky, loving things, mommies and daddies, scary things, good-feeling things. The teacher sees a need to “talk” and adults become aware of the young child’s thinking processes.

DEMONSTRATIONS

The teacher or a visitor demonstrates an idea which may relate to the present interest of the children. Children must have the opportunity to participate as much as possible (such as blowing their OWN bubble or trying on the policeman’s hat) but can be helped to respect visitors and focus on the topic at hand. The visitor can be helped to understand the children’s need for physical participation rather than wordy explanations.

Fun in Groups

CIRCLE GAMES

For very little children a quick “ring around the rosy” is as much cooperation as can be expected, but as children develop, they enjoy singing and action games in a hand-holding circle. Subjects concern their daily activities or dramatic play in song and movement which everybody learns together. Some are sitting games of simple skill in which cooperation and taking turns while learning simple rules are important and can be handled by older children whose attention span and patience have developed.

FREE MOVEMENT

Together with the teacher, the children may try locomotor skill such as walking, running, hopping, jumping, leaping and sometimes skipping; or non-locomotor skills such as pushing-pulling, bending, swinging, shaking, etc. These can be experimented with at different levels and speeds and children can try their own ideas to a suggested “task” by the teacher. Musical accompaniment or tapes may be used.

ANIMAL OR FAMILIAR MOVEMENTS

The children decide to be animals or plants or machines they know and each tries his own way, thinking about how it feels and sounds. Sometimes music accompanies the mood.

ACTING OUT STORIES, PUPPETRY, OR RHYMES AND SONGS

After becoming familiar with a story or puppet theme, the children participate more and more in playing the roles. Examples include “Three Billy Goats Gruff” with a board as a bridge prop or “Three Little Pigs” with hand puppets.

FIELD TRIPS

When children are old enough to foray outside the classroom, trips are specially organized relating to themes in the room at that time or activities concerning nature or how things operate or are made. Children need to experience field trips by doing, not listening, and need help to have things pointed out to them and see properly from their own vantage point. Preparation beforehand, both at home and at school, and follow-up activities at school help increase understanding of the experience, particularly for the older children.

SNACK TIME

A time to come together, sit and talk in a personable way, recall experiences of the day, verbalize feelings, look at interesting items or play occasional guessing games. The tummy is filled with calming and sometimes interesting new food and, as children become able, they may get a chance to pour or help out. Sometimes children eat snacks they have prepared in class.

SPONTANEOUS GATHERINGS

Something happens at school or someone drops in with an interesting distraction. The teacher leads in suggesting a suspension of routine (total group participation or just lets the activity blend in with the day). The children are helped to see what is interesting.

OUTDOOR PLAY

A transition time, often early morning or end of day, when large muscle challenges can be tested with slides, climbing, swinging, heaving, hauling, jumping, crawling, balancing, rolling and occasional chasing.

The playground is also a place for quiet play and for dramatic play. As an “outdoor classroom” it provides quiet corners to play house with sand, water, or leaves, grass and bits of nature from the area and sand toys for digging, tunneling, raking, hauling, and reproducing construction activities.

On the playground children test their skills separately or together, play dramatic organized games, participate in dramatic play, create and experiment in sand and water or art activities. Equipment is meant to be moveable and versatile so that the child can create her own environment for the spontaneous active or quiet games at hand. It can also be arranged and rearranged so that it challenges the children’s prowess and imagination.

THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

The Parent in the Classroom

General Guidelines

Whenever you cannot work on your assigned day due to sickness or other commitments, you are responsible for finding your own replacement and then changing your position on the teacher's schedule in the classroom.

To focus on the children and their needs during class time, conversations between adults should be minimal, and limited to carrying out classroom goals. Please refrain from cell phone use while working in the classroom.

Working with Your Own Child

On that very first day of school, you are asked to stay with your child only as long as necessary for his or her sense of security. For most children a few moments should do. If a longer stay is necessary, remain on the sideline, seated if possible, and let the teacher and working parents draw him out as appropriate.

Expect that it may take some time for your child to join in and play with the other children regardless of how outgoing she usually is. Many children sit on the sidelines and observe or play alone for some time before feeling free to join in any group.

Will your child turn into an absolute monster on the day you work? Well...it may sometimes seem that way. It's a hard adjustment for a preschooler to see his own, particular, private PARENT making him/herself available to all so indiscriminately! Let your child be a special, important person to you while you cater to the needs of the other children. Things are likely to work themselves out after you've participated in the classroom a few times. Keep in mind, too, that most people have the same problem on their workday, when your child's behavior is perfectly normal.

On returning home from school, some children like to describe everything they have done, while others report almost nothing. If your child wants to talk about school, listen with interest, but never make him feel compelled to tell the family about school.

Working with the Other Children

The primary watchwords for the parent helper are: common sense, a soft touch, and FLEXIBILITY! Throughout the classroom day, circulate around the room and try to observe and be alert to the children's various moods or imaginary states. Observe how the children respond to what the teacher says and does.

Avoid “taking over” a child’s activity, or interrupting it, unless it is time for a regularly scheduled group activity. Try to allow sufficient time for children to finish what they’ve started and encourage them to do so.

Allow the child to do what he can for himself.

In general, SPEAKING with children is most effective when you speak calmly, quietly, and clearly. Go to her, rather than shout across the room, and, if possible, sit or lean to her eye-contact level.

Accept and respect children’s feelings (including negative ones, such as sadness, anger, hatred) and when a child misbehaves, try to understand why.

When it is necessary to direct a child toward, or away from an activity, make positive suggestions whenever possible, and try to cooperate with his mental world of the moment. (“Firemen, put that hose away so that it will be ready for the next fire!” instead of “Put that rope away.”)

Use the word “DON’T” only when a clear-cut command is necessary to stop harmful or dangerous action quickly. Always try to redirect in a positive way, but safety first. Say “no” or “stop” if necessary.

DO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR PHYSICAL HAZARDS!

Overall, try to accentuate the positive, being honest and encouraging in your praise. This will be especially important when helping the children with CREATIVE ARTS. Other guidelines in this area include:

- Leave the child free to express his own personality, feelings, and relationship to his environment through his work.
- Avoid “patterned” activities such as coloring books, tracing, etc.
- Encourage the child to use new materials, and to develop and experiment with her own techniques.
- Value, and encourage the children to value their own and others work for their own sake. Be just as concerned with the process of creating as with the product.
- Try to instill respect for tools and materials. Help the children clean up, but do not do it for them. Make clean-up fun.
- Avoid creating contests or making comparisons between children’s works and do not expect that a child’s product will always be pleasing or look “right.” Very often, “wrong” proportions express an experience.
- Don’t feel that you have to praise, or even comment on, everything a child does.

Working with the Teacher and Other Parents

In the classroom, the teacher is leader. She will set the standards for classroom behavior. Parents should be sure that they understand the standards and should try to be consistent with them, and with the emotional tone the teacher sets for the classroom day.

Within this framework, parent helpers should feel free to be themselves, contribute and share their ideas, feelings, activities, projects, and interesting experiences, and to be enthusiastic when they feel is appropriate.

Remember, too, that the classroom is likely to be different everyday due to the unique interplay of everything, from the personalities of different assisting parents, through the changing abilities of the children, to the weather!

Naturally, misunderstanding and differences of opinion are bound to arise occasionally between parents, or teacher and parent. That's all right. Make a mental note about any time or any situation in which you felt uncomfortable during class hours. Then after class, bring out concerns for mutual discussion. Specific problems with your own or other children should be brought to the teacher's attention in her "off-duty" hours, never in front of the child.

Things Parents Need to Know

Field Trips

1. All field trips are to be approved by the Board.
2. Parents are expected to take turns participating in field trips, either driving or assisting; schedules will be made in conjunction with the person in charge of Field Trips.
3. A general field trip permission form will be passed out with your information packet and should be returned with other forms.
4. Parents will be informed of upcoming field trips by email or by individual notes sent home with the children a few days prior to each trip.
5. Children will meet at the school and be picked up there at regular school closing hours, unless the parents are informed otherwise.
6. Field trips are to be postponed if the driving conditions are questionable.

Driving Rules for Field Trips

1. The ratio of adults to children in each car will be left to the discretion of the teacher.
2. Make sure your car is in good operating condition on the day that you drive.
3. Seat belts must be used.
4. Children should be assigned to seats and remain seated while the car is in motion.
5. No other children except those in the school will go on field trips. Occasional exceptions may be made where appropriate for younger siblings.
6. Always pick up and unload children from the curbside of the car. Look out for traffic as you pull away from the curb.
7. It is the adult's responsibility to open, close and lock car doors.
8. Do not smoke while driving.
9. Never leave a child until you are sure that he is in the hands of the teacher. Obey all traffic laws.

Accidents

1. Co-op has made careful provision for accident liability coverage for children, teachers and parents during the school day and on field trips.
2. In case of an accident, it is the school's policy to call parents or parent-authorized persons immediately. Their directions are followed, or if they are not available, the child's doctor is called and his orders followed.
3. Emergency treatment will be sought at the nearest hospital facility by the school personnel if the situation requires attention.
4. An "Authorization for Emergency treatment" form is distributed to parents with their information packet and is kept by each classroom teacher for use during emergencies.

Health Rules

Healthy living includes good nutrition, sound sleep habits, exercise, prevention of illness, and safety measures. Health is a way of life, not a set of rules. Physical, emotional and mental health are inseparable and all equally vital. The following pertain to specific problem areas applicable to a school situation.

1. A child showing signs of illness must not be sent to school.
2. Small children are very susceptible to infections. The common cold is the biggest health problem in any school. The cold and its complications are not only menaces in themselves, but cold symptoms may be the forerunners of a more serious disease. If your child has a fever, heavy nasal discharge, severe or constant cough, or a sore throat, keep him at home until the danger or infection is over. It is left to the discretion and responsibility of the parent to protect not only his own child but also the other children in the school. A child will be sent home from school at the teacher's discretion if any illness is apparent.
3. If your child contracts a communicable disease (see "Communicable Diseases" chart in the Appendix) you are required to contact the Director as soon as possible, notifying her of the disease and date of its onset. She will be responsible for contacting each parent so he may take preventive measures if necessary.
4. All working parents are required to have a TB screening form signed by a doctor, according to state law. Our teachers have a TB screening once every two years and are certified by their doctors to be in general good health.
5. The teacher or participating parent who feels he has a cold or other infection should remain away from the group during the period of infection. The parent must trade his duty day with another parent.
6. If your child is going to be absent from school, it is helpful (but not necessary) to let the teacher know.

Dressing Your Child and Yourself

1. All removable clothing, including boots, is to be clearly marked with the child's name.
2. Dress your child in washable play clothes. Rubber-soled shoes that do not slip on the floor are advisable. Clothing for indoor and outdoor play is necessary. It is a good idea to send extra indoor and outdoor clothing in a bag marked with the child's name in case of accidents or unexpected weather changes.
3. If possible, winter clothing should come off and go on easily enough for the child himself to manipulate. Mittens are easier than gloves.
4. Parents should be dressed to participate inside the classroom and outside on the playground.

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Structure of the School

In the Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool, the “Co-op” responsibility is shared by the parents, the teachers, the Director, and the representative body of these three groups, the Board of Directors. A detailed description of the co-op structure can be found at the end of this section. Briefly, the school operates by dividing assignments in the following ways:

PARENTS

Assist in the child’s classroom at regular intervals. They contribute to the class or all-school operation by making one major commitment such as class or school-wide job or helping with activities. In addition, they attend parent education meetings.

TEACHERS

Are hired by the Board to organize the curriculum and teach the children, assure the smooth running of schedules and field trips, help parents assist in the classroom, and share mutual understanding of the children. The teachers help plan parent education, guide the equipment and supply purchases and serve on committees. They attend Board meetings and are voting members of the Board. Teachers have a vote at Business Meetings. Parents share with teachers any concerns relating to the child’s classroom experience.

THE DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Are hired by the Board to coordinate the whole school program. They are voting members of the Board with whom they work cooperatively and to whom they report regularly. They handle registration, staff coordination, licensure, supply orders and equipment recommendations, appointment of school-wide jobs, church relations, the handbook and school calendar, and community relations and publicity. Parents go to them with questions concerning any of these areas. The Director and Assistant Director are also teachers.

THE BOARD

Is composed of elected parents, teachers, the Director and Assistant Director, and appointed advisory members. With the Director and Assistant Director, it is responsible for the operating of the school: providing premises, managing the budget, obtaining licenses, negotiating contracts, appointing committees and encouraging community awareness of the needs of young children.

The Board includes:

- The President (convenes meetings, oversees and appoints committees and signs contracts)
- The Vice-President (chairs the Personnel Policy Committee and signs contracts)
- The Treasurer, a paid position, who maintains and disperses all school funds.
- The Secretary (takes Board minutes, handles some correspondence, and distributes Board notices and minutes to all members Three Parent Class Representatives

- 1 At-Large Member
- Teacher-Director
- Assistant Director
- Teachers

Financial Obligations

Financial obligations are met through registration fee and tuition payments. These cover teachers' and director's salaries, building use fee, taxes, classroom supplies, insurance policies, license, professional enrichment and capital expenditures such as permanent classroom and playground equipment and office machinery.

Major Commitment List and Job Descriptions

As part of the Co-op membership, each FAMILY agrees to fulfill one "Major Commitment" for the year in addition to helping on a regular basis in the classrooms. Any other jobs done for the school are volunteer.

Beyond the "major commitment," a myriad of opportunities lie open to parents who may wish to share in their children's activities on a volunteer basis. Your classroom teacher has many suggestions for classroom involvement which will bring you closer to your child's experience. Or you may enjoy volunteering your interests and talents or working alongside other parents to help with school-wide activities.

Following is a list of major commitments approved by the Board with brief job descriptions:

- Art Assistant
- Board Member
- Class Scheduler
- End-of-Year Clean-up
- FISH Coordinator
- Fundraising Chair
- Fundraising Committee
- Garden Coordinator
- Health Chair
- Playground and Equipment Committee
- Recycling Coordinator
- Scholastic Book Clubs Chair
- Visitation Coordinator

ART ASSISTANT

- Assists the teacher in preparing play dough and other materials for arts and crafts activities.
- Makes monthly nametags for coat hooks.
- Makes nametags for circle time.

BOARD MEMBER

- Represents your class (brings their ideas, comments, etc.) at monthly board meetings.
- Sends email to class with updates after each board meeting.
- Serves as liaison between the parents and the classroom teacher.
- Assists with picture day for your class.
- Attend and support school-sponsored events.
- At-Large Members serve on Nominating Committee in March.

CLASS SCHEDULER

- One person from each class who schedules helping parents in the classroom. Arranges schedule equally, considering frequency of work and snack days.
- Talks with parents at orientation to determine preferences for working days; makes note of child's birthday.
- Distributes schedule electronically to parents and teacher.

END-OF-YEAR CLEAN-UP COMMITTEE

- Two days are set aside for clean up at the end of the school year (usually Wednesday and Thursday after Memorial Day). Each family on the committee works one full day or two half days. (This is an adults-only activity.)

FISH COORDINATOR

- In charge of organizing a FALL canned food and clothing drive for FISH.
- Collects donations and delivers them to FISH.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

- Organizes fundraising efforts including the major fundraiser for the school.
- Manages sale of Co-op merchandise at school events throughout school year.

GARDEN COORDINATOR

- Works with teachers to create a planting schedule for the year.
- Organizes parent volunteers to help with garden maintenance and watering during summer.

HEALTH CHAIR

- Collects parent/child health forms; verifies form completion.
- Tracks missing forms and contacts parents.
- Informs teachers in writing of special allergies and medical or dietary needs as indicated on health forms.
- Stocks classroom first aid kits in late August and quarterly.

PLAYGROUND AND EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE

- Keep playground equipment and toys in good repair.
- Checks for natural hazards (e.g., poison ivy, poison berries); trims and prunes as necessary.
- Organizes and recruits team to prepare playground before start of school (spread sand, weed, grease swings, etc.).

RECYCLING COORDINATOR

- Clears recycling bins every week.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB CHAIR

- Distributes order forms through classes.
- Organizes system for receiving orders and money.
- Orders books.
- Sorts individual orders in bags with names for distribution.

Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool By-Laws

(As of June 1, 2016)

Article I. Name

The name of this school shall be the Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool.

Article II. Affiliation

The school shall be affiliated with the Virginia Cooperative Preschool Council (VCPC).

Article III. Object

The purpose of this school shall be:

- A. To offer an early education experience which:
 - 1. encourages acceptance of each child to develop his individual capacities at his own rate of progress.
 - 2. provides a supervised atmosphere with freedom to develop imagination and curiosity within limits beneficial to the welfare of each child.
 - 3. provides a child-sized world in which children can explore, share, play and communicate with each other.
 - 4. provides a non-sectarian education experience.
- B. To offer parental insight into child behavior through parent participation and a parent education program.
- C. To offer a three-way sharing experience in which child, parent and teacher facilitate the children's adjustment to their first school experience.
- D. To promote community appreciation of the increasing need for parent and preschool education.

Article IV. Membership

- A. Eligibility
 - 1. Membership is open to parents of preschool children, regardless of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, or military status.
 - 2. Children shall be admitted to classes according to age. Birth date cut-offs for classes limited to three-year-olds or four-year-olds shall be consistent with those of the Williamsburg-James City County Public Elementary Schools. The Board of Directors, after consultation with the Director and teachers, may set the birth date cut-offs for classes of two-year olds and for multi-age classes.
 - 3. In considering the admission of children in special cases, any exceptions to the age limitations must be determined by the Board, considering the recommendation of the Director and teachers.
 - 4. The order of preference for membership shall be:
 - a. current members in good financial standing re-enrolling a child for the next consecutive year; and any children or current or former members who were excluded from membership the previous year because of age. Arrangements will be made to accommodate any child currently enrolled who might be excluded because numbers exceed available class spaces.
 - b. current members enrolling another child and former members of good standing enrolling a new child.
 - c. others.

5. The child must meet the health requirements as listed on the school health form. The child may not enter the school until this form is submitted. The Director shall refuse admittance to any child whose form has not been received.
6. Membership shall commence from the date of acceptance of the completed enrollment form and payment of the registration fee.
7. Membership shall terminate on the last day of the month in which the school year ends.
8. Registration for the following school year shall open as soon as possible after February 1. The registration should be open to the community by mid-February.

B. Obligations and Responsibilities of Members

The school is a parent participation school. Its philosophy maintains that the more the parents become involved in their child's activities, the more enriching is the parent-child-teacher relationship.

1. Parents are expected to assume the following responsibilities:
 - a. Parents assist as scheduled in the classroom, on a regular rotating basis. They also assist as scheduled on field trips. They arrive early and remain after class to help complete daily set-up and clean up. On certain days, parents can expect to spend additional time cleaning up in order to fulfill the school's agreement with the landlord and to prepare the rooms for different age levels.
 - b. Parents enrolling more than one child shall assist the teachers according to a formula agreed upon by the Board, upon the recommendation of the classroom teacher(s) involved.
 - c. Parents assisting in the classroom shall submit the results of chest X-ray or skin test and a TB screening form signed by a doctor.
 - d. Parents take turns providing snacks for their child's class on the days they assist.
 - e. Parents are expected to attend orientation, other parent education meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and other school-sponsored events.
 - f. Parents are to assume one major commitment per family annually, such as preparing for the opening or closing of school, organizing a fund-raising activity, serving on the Board, etc.
 - g. Parents must meet their financial obligations to the school as specified in Article V.
2. Parents interested in further participation are encouraged to aid in the enrichment of the program.

C. Cancellation of Membership

1. Failure to fulfill one's obligation and responsibilities as stated in the By-Laws will be regarded as sufficient reason for a request by the Board for a member's withdrawal.
2. When, after a fair time for adjustment, it is felt by the classroom teacher that a child is unable to adjust to the class situation and the teacher has utilized all of her resources, it is recommended that:
 - a. the classroom teacher and Director discuss the child's behavior with the parents of the child.
 - b. the teacher and Director ask permission of the parents for the child to be observed in the classroom, and by mutual agreement, a qualified professional able to evaluate early childhood behavior is consulted. The Parents and the

- Director must attend the observation. The Director shall inform the President, who shall inform the Board that this is being done.
- c. the classroom teacher, the Director, and the observer must meet with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and possible solutions.
 - d. If no solution is reached and the child cannot be transferred to another class, the Board may request that the child be withdrawn.
3. Consistent non-payment of fees shall be grounds for cancellation of membership, by a decision of the Board.
 4. All notification of withdrawal must be written, dated, and submitted to the Director.

Article V. Fees and Finances

- A. The Treasurer and/or the President are empowered to sign checks. Credit cards are issued to the Treasurer, Director and Assistant Director.
- B. Tuition and Registration Fee
 1. A registration fee must be paid at the time of registration. The registration fee will not be refunded once the child has been enrolled.
 2. Tuition is payable in nine equal installments, due September 1, continuing the first of each month thereafter through May. Alternatively, it may be paid in advance and by any method the member chooses, i.e., in two payments or in full.
 3. Should the parent withdraw the child after giving one-month's notice to the Director, prepaid tuition will be refunded on a pro-rated basis. One month's fee shall be forfeited if such notice is not given.
 4. If a child is withdrawn during the last two months of the school year, no refund in tuition fees will be made.
 5. Non-payment of the first tuition payment by September 1 may result in the forfeiture of the space. Should the child be withdrawn before the start of the school year, the first tuition payment may be refunded if the space is immediately filled from the waiting list.
 6. Registration or tuition fees may be changed during the current school year only with the majority agreement of those present at a business meeting. All members must be given one month's notice of the proposed change of fees prior to this business meeting.
 7. Tuition fees for the subsequent school year shall be determined by the Board based on a projected budget.
- C. The Treasurer's books shall be audited before August 1 by an auditor designated by the Board.
- D. The Treasurer's records shall be available to the Board at Business meetings.

Article VI. Organization

- A. The school is governed by the members on a democratic, cooperative basis. All members in good standing and all teachers shall have a vote at business meetings. Each family unit shall have one vote per child currently enrolled in the school. Fractional votes may be cast.
- B. The Board of Directors, by authority vested in its members by their election, is responsible for the operation of the school.

- C. The Board delegates administrative responsibility to the Teacher-Director and Assistant Director, as stated in Article XIII, Section E.
- D. Membership of the Board of Directors
 - 1. The following members of the Board of Directors shall be elected at a spring business meeting:
 - a. The President, Vice-President and Secretary shall, if possible, serve two-year terms, except during the initial transition period. The Treasurer is an ongoing, paid position.
 - i. Ideally, returning members should be nominated for those offices; particularly the President and Vice-President should have had experience in the school.
 - ii. They should be members of the school during their term of office.
 - b. Six parents, one representing each class, shall serve one-year terms as class representatives.
 - 2. The Director, Assistant Director, and the Teachers are voting members of the Board.
 - 3. At-large members of the Board:
 - The Board may appoint up to three at-large members.
- E. Committees of the Board
 - 1. Grievance Committees shall be appointed as stated in Article XVI, Section C.
 - 2. The President with the approval of the Board may appoint the following committees:
 - a. The Finance Committee shall be chaired by the Treasurer and shall include the Director and additional representatives from the membership.
 - b. The Nominating Committee may be composed of all members of the teaching staff. It shall be chaired by a Board member.
 - c. Hiring Committees shall be composed of the President, Vice-President, Director, Assistant Director, and additional representatives from the membership and the teaching staff.
 - d. The Personnel Policies Committee shall be composed of the Vice-President, the Director (except in cases where the Director is directly involved), and additional representatives from the Board.
 - e. Ad Hoc Committees composed of the teaching staff and representatives from the various age levels from the membership.
 - 3. Committees will submit written reports to the Board if requested.

Article VII. Nomination and Election of Board Members

- A. The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee as stated in Article VI, E.3.b. no later than March 1.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall draw up a slate of new Board members with their consent and shall report this slate to the Board. They shall present the slate at a spring business meeting.
- C. Further nominations may be made from the floor at said business meeting, provided permission has been obtained in advance from the member nominated.
- D. If more than one member is nominated for any office, a separate election shall be held for that office.

- E. In the event that no nominations are received from the floor, the original slate will be elected.
- F. Should Board vacancies exist after the election, the President with the approval of the Board shall fill the vacancy from the membership.
- G. In the case of the President's incapacity, the Board has the power to appoint an acting or a new President. The Vice-President shall take charge of the proceedings.

Article VIII. Assumption of Office

- A. Newly elected Board members shall assume responsibility for the direction of the school's affairs effective August 1.
- B. Between the election of Board members and the first meeting of the new Board, each outgoing Board member shall turn over to his successor all information and records pertaining to his position.

Article IX. Meetings

- A. Board Meetings
 - 1. The Board meets regularly to deal with matters concerning the successful operation of the school.
 - 2. At the discretion of the President, executive sessions may be held by the Board when personnel or grievance matters are to be discussed. Members of the teaching staff will not be present during final discussions of salaries and contracts.
 - 3. Each member of the Board is entitled to one vote. A simple majority of those present will carry a motion.
 - 4. All Board members must be notified at least two days in advance of any meeting.
 - 5. Members of the school and of the teaching staff are encouraged to attend Board meetings.
 - 6. The President will exercise his right to vote only in the event of a tie.
- B. Parent Education Meetings and Classes
 Parent Education is a vital part of adult participation in the school. In addition to classroom participation, parents are required to attend Parent Education meetings. At least four will be offered each year, including orientation, class meetings, and large group meetings.
- C. Business Meetings of the Membership
 - 1. Business meetings shall be held at least once a year upon one month's written notice. Those present and voting will constitute a quorum and a majority will carry a motion except as provided under Articles XVII A and XVIII.
 - 2. At business meetings:
 - a. By-Laws may be adopted and amended,
 - b. Board members will be elected,
 - c. Any recommendation of the Board shall be voted on,
 - d. And, the President, Director, Assistant Director, and Treasurer shall submit brief reports.
 - 3. At all business meetings the opportunity will be provided for members to present for discussion business matters concerning the school.

Article X. Responsibilities of the Board

- A. It is the responsibility of the Board, in connection with the Director and Assistant Director, as appropriate, to:
1. Uphold the educational philosophy of the school
 2. Work with the teachers and Director to assure a smooth operation of the school's program.
 3. Work with the teachers and Director to insure a relevant and enriching Parent Education program.
 4. Promote community growth in recognizing and meeting the needs of young children.
 5. Hire the Director and Assistant Director according to the recommendations of a Hiring Committee.
 6. Appoint an acting Director or qualified acting director from within the teaching staff or membership to handle administrative duties in the event of the Director's incapacity. In the case of a prolonged leave of absence or the resignation of a Director, hiring procedures should begin immediately.
 7. Hire teachers and assistant teachers according to the recommendations of a Hiring Committee chaired by the Vice-President.
 8. Encourage and subsidize whenever possible the continuing education of the teaching staff through workshops, conferences, and courses in early childhood education.
 9. Approve salaries and working agreements for other salaried personnel.
 10. Provide adequate yearly premises for the school.
 11. Maintain adequate insurance for the protection of the school, the children, and staff and property.
 12. Control the finances of the school.
 13. Adopt the annual budget before June 30, utilizing the recommendations of the Finance Committee.
 14. Approve monthly financial statements submitted in writing by the Treasurer.
 15. Approve field trips as indicated in Article XIII, E.
 16. Approve major expenditures for repairs and new equipment.
 17. Approve yearly plans for class offerings and enrollment according to the recommendations of the Director and teachers.
 18. Approve appointments and establish such positions as appropriate.
 19. Carry out school personnel policies.
 20. Act as the final level in school grievance procedures.
 21. Assure smooth turnover of responsibilities and orientation of new Board members and new teaching staff, in cooperation with the Director.
 22. Maintain and carry over from year to year all files pertaining to the functions of the Board and its committees.
 23. Engage in long-range planning for the school.
 24. Transact all business relating to the entire school not delegated elsewhere and make recommendations for the membership's vote at business meetings.
- B. The Board is prohibited from borrowing funds unless approval is obtained from the membership at a business meeting.

Article XI. Responsibilities of Board Members

- A. It is the responsibility of the President to:
 - 1. Call business and Board meetings, conducting them according to Robert's Rules of Order.
 - 2. Establish regular dates for business and Board meetings.
 - 3. Appoint, with the approval of the Board, members of committees and non-elected office holders.
 - 4. Appoint, with the approval of the Board, persons to fill Board vacancies.
 - 5. Sign contracts and premise agreements.
 - 6. Be a member (ex-officio) of all committees outlined in Article VI, E.
 - 7. Work with the Director in carrying out school program and policies.
 - 8. Insure an adequate orientation for new Board members.
- B. It is the responsibility of the Vice-President to:
 - 1. Sign contracts with the teaching staff.
 - 2. Chair the Hiring Committee for a Director, Assistant Director, or teachers.
 - 3. Assume temporary leadership in case of the President's incapacity.
 - 4. Assist the President and the Director in carrying out school program and policies.
- C. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to:
 - 1. Take and maintain files of minutes of Board and business meetings.
 - 2. Send Board notices and minutes to the membership.
 - 3. Maintain files of nominating and ad hoc committees.
 - 4. Notify Board members of Board meetings.
- D. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to:
 - 1. Chair the Finance Committee, which develops the budget and helps to set financial policies.
 - 2. Prepare written monthly financial statements for the Board, and present financial reports to the Board and to the membership at business meetings.
 - 3. Maintain accurate ledger accounts of all income and expenses.
 - 4. Pay all bills on time, including taxes, salaries, rent and supplies.
 - 5. Maintain insurance policies and pay the business license fee.
 - 6. File all federal and state forms, working with paid professional help as necessary.
 - 7. Collect registration and tuition checks from Director.
 - 8. Deposit checks into checking account and inform treasurer of those deposits.
 - 9. May do dunning as agreed by Treasurer and Director.
- E. It is the responsibility of each class representative to serve as liaison between the membership and the Board.
- F. It is the responsibility of the Member-at-Large to chair the nominating committee meeting.
- G. It is the responsibility of the Director to report to the Board on all aspects of school administration delegated in Article XIII, E.

Article XII. Teacher Hiring

- A. It is the responsibility of the Director, on its own initiative or upon request of the Board, to:

1. Carry out personnel policies approved by the Board and, after consultation with the teaching staff, make recommendations to the Board for changes when it is deemed necessary.
 2. Recommend an equitable salary structure and review that structure from time to time, in cooperation with the Finance Committee.
- B. **Teacher Hiring**
1. The Hiring Committee shall include the Director, Assistant Director, President and Vice President. The Vice-President shall chair the Hiring committee for a Director, Assistant Director, or teachers.
 2. Hiring Committees shall present dossiers and recommendations on two or three candidates to the Board for its consideration. These candidates should be suitably qualified to maintain the high standards of the school.

Article XIII. Teaching Staff

- A. A staff consisting of a Director, Assistant Director, teacher(s), and as necessary assistant teachers, shall be hired by the Board, who shall determine their salaries and other benefits. Members of the teaching staff hired by the Board shall sign an employee contract.
- B. The Board, at its discretion, may encourage members of the teaching staff to take appropriate courses and to attend workshops and conferences; the Board shall assist financially when possible.
- C. A member of the teaching staff may be dismissed after a hearing by the Board, meeting in Executive Session, during which final recommendations submitted by a Grievance Committee have been considered. In cases where the teacher is, in the opinion of the Board, guilty of actions harmful to the children or the school, immediate dismissal may take place. In all other cases, a minimum of one month's written notice shall be given.
- D. The teaching staff shall work together at all levels to maintain the high standards and the spirit of cooperation of the school. In matters concerning the teaching staff, the Director shall consult with the teachers before presenting final recommendations to the Board or its committees.
- E. It is the responsibility of the Director to:
 1. Be responsible to the Board for the implementation of the educational philosophy and coordination of the program for the whole school.
 2. Orient new teaching staff and members.
 3. Represent the total teaching staff, when other staff members are not present, at committee meetings, Board meetings, and meetings with the President and landlords.
 4. Be a voting member of the Board.
 5. Serve on Hiring Committee for teachers and assistant teachers, in accordance with school hiring policies.
 6. Serve as liaison between school and landlord. Hire and train non-teaching staff, whose salary and benefits shall be set by the Board.
 7. Be a member of the Nominating Committee.
 8. Serve on the Finance Committee.
 9. Arrange for substitute teachers when emergencies or prolonged teacher absence makes it necessary.

10. Supervise maintenance of up-to-date files and records, including membership, health, yearly inventory, registration, committee procedures and minutes, purchasing plans and orders, and employees' current files.
11. Handle grievances in accordance with school policy.
12. Delegate responsibility for maintenance of premises and equipment.
13. With Assistant Director, see that all local, state, and federal health and safety standards are adhered to and that the Board obtains necessary licenses.
14. Assume responsibility for registration, including getting parents to help with the process. Present to the Board for final approval, plans for the coming year, including calendar, class offerings and class sizes.
15. Serve as the primary contact with outside organizations and oversee the Publicity Chairperson for publicity concerning the school.
16. Coordinate beginning- and end-of-the-year set-up, inventory, and clean up.
17. Delegate responsibility for the Handbook and a regular Newsletter for the membership.
18. Pick up and distribute mail.
19. See that teachers submit in advance for the Board's approval, the list of field trips proposed for each class. Use judgment in approving a trip, when special circumstances make prior Board approval impossible, and notify the President of the decision.
20. Cancel school in cases of emergency, after first notifying the President.
21. Contact individual members whose participation has been reported to be unsatisfactory.
22. Carry out the responsibilities of a classroom teacher for her own class (es).
23. Call regular meetings of the teaching staff.
24. Hold cumulative personnel files in accordance with school policies and state and federal law.
 - a. Any teacher's file shall be made available to said teacher upon request.
 - b. In addition to the current year's file, an incumbent Personnel Policies Committee may have access to records of the previous year only, including the updated vita and record of leave.
 - c. A teacher's cumulative personnel file may be reviewed by the President, Vice-President and Director.
 - d. No other person may review the teacher's cumulative file, except as indicated by state or federal law, unless it is requested by the teacher.

F. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Director to:

1. Coordinate and place orders for supplies and equipment in accordance with budget appropriations, submitting bills to Treasurer of the Board for payment.
2. With the Director, see that all local, state, and federal health and safety standards are adhered to and that the Board obtains necessary licenses.
3. Assist in the enrollment and registration process, helping to formulate and fill classes.
4. Assist in filling major commitments not managed by the Nominating Committee.
5. Work with the Director to coordinate calendar.
6. Serve on Executive, Hiring, Nominating, and other committees as necessary.

- G. It is the responsibility of each classroom teacher to:
1. Be responsible for the curriculum for the children in her own classes, according to school philosophy and policy.
 2. Interpret the principles of good preschool education to the parents and consult them regarding their child's development.
 3. Plan fall orientation in cooperation with the Director.
 4. Arrange for notifying parents in advance of participation schedules, field trip information, Parent Education announcements, and relevant activities.
 5. Attend regular meetings of the teaching staff.
 6. Attend Board meetings as a voting member of the Board.
 7. Be a member of the Nominating Committee.
 8. Advise the Director in matters concerning maintenance and purchase of equipment and supplies.
 9. Hold three parent-teacher conferences during the year, one before classes begin and the remaining two during the school year.
 10. Assure that participating parents and children in each class are familiar with safety, fire, and emergency regulations and procedures.
 11. Maintain up-to-date classroom records, including emergency release forms, emergency phone numbers, and interest survey forms.
 12. Be responsible for classroom preparation and maintenance including the housekeeping and doll corners, paints, hand toys, laundry, and library.
 13. Submit in advance a schedule of field trips for the Director's approval.
 14. Supervise beginning- and end-of-week set-up and clean up in her classroom; cooperate with the Director in carrying out beginning- and end-of-the-year set-up, inventory, and storing.
- H. The teaching staff shall fulfill health requirements established by the Board in accordance with local, state and federal regulations.

Article XIV. Contracts

- A. All Contracts must be signed by the President and the Vice-President to be binding on the school.

Article XV. Attendance

- A. School attendance is not compulsory, but, in order to insure an optimum experience for the child, prompt regular attendance is expected.
- B. Parents are responsible for conducting their children to and from the classrooms and having them arrive and leave on time.
- C. The teachers have the responsibility to send home any child they consider unwell.
- D. The school term shall begin in September and end during the month of May. The exact dates shall be set by the Board.
- E. School holidays shall generally comply with the calendar of the Williamsburg-James City County Public Elementary Schools.
- F. The school may be closed for any emergency period, i.e. sickness, weather conditions or other, at the discretion of the Director.

Article XVI. Grievance Procedure

- A. An aggrieved parent or teacher should meet with other persons involved in the grievance and attempt to solve the problem informally.
- B. If the problem cannot be solved at the informal level and if one or both parties wish to pursue the issue, the grievance must be presented in writing to the Director.
- C. The Director and the Vice-President shall appoint an impartial grievance committee.
 - 1. The committee shall be chaired by the Director. When the Director is personally involved, it shall be chaired by the President or Vice-President. If both are personally involved, the Board will designate another of its members to chair the committee.
 - 2. Additional committee members shall be:
 - a. an elected Board member (preferably the President or the Vice-President).
 - b. parent(s) for the class(es) involved.
 - c. a teacher.
 - 3. This committee shall attempt to help the involved parties state and resolve differences at all points in the process, striving toward immediate reconciliation.
- D. If a solution cannot be found, the Grievance Committee shall make a written report to the Board that will include:
 - 1. A statement defining the grievance,
 - 2. An outline of steps taken to find a solution, and
 - 3. A recommendation for action with the rationale for that suggested course of action.
- E. The Board will act on the recommendation of the Grievance Committee and resolve the issue as it deems appropriate.

Article XVII. Dissolution

- A. The operation of the school may be discontinued by vote of 2/3 of the members present and voting after discussion at two successive business meetings. Written notice of the date and purpose of each meeting must be given each member at least one week in advance.
- B. In case of dissolution, pre-paid tuition will be returned on a pro-rata basis. At the discretion of the Board, the residual property and assets of the school shall be contributed to one or more local cooperative, public, or other non-profit organizations for the promotion of worthy civic or educational purposes.

Article XVIII. Amendments

The membership shall have the sole power to amend the By-Laws of this school. After the Secretary has given written notice one month in advance, and after the text of the proposed changes has been in the hands of the members at least one week, the By-Laws may be amended by a vote of 2/3 of the members present and voting at said business meeting. Amendments to the By-Laws may be initiated through the Board.

Appendix



INDIVIDUAL AGE DIFFERENCES

In reading the following descriptions of two-, three- and four-year-olds, remember that such “chronological” ages give general descriptions of how many children behave at that age. The “developmental” age...WHERE your child may be in various phases of her thinking, emotional or physical development...may fluctuate all around these descriptions or not fit them in places. The important thing to remember is that each child passes gradually from one stage of growth to another and that each group of children is composed of many individuals each “marching to his or her own drummer.”

Two Years Old

Two is a very BIG year. Time to grow rapidly. Time to learn to talk. Time to start being in control of those muscles which will let you please the beloved parents in that special room of the house...the bathroom. Time to find out that you are somebody separate from Mommy and to test your wings and try to do things for yourself.

Starting to be two is easy. You have more control over moving around and fall less and you can tell more what you want and you don't care much about having your own way. You like to try things out over and over again. You can't share very well so you play better alongside other children with toys for each separately. You may have become aware of the world around you enough to be afraid of trains, trucks, thunder, flushing toilets, vacuum cleaners, dark colors, large objects, masks, hats, moved toys or crib, moving to a new house, things going down the drain, mother leaving, bedtime separation, rain, wind or whatever you have chosen. You like things to be “just so” (the way you know them) and changes can be frightening.

Becoming TWO AND A HALF is not so easy. You have realized you are a SEPARATE PERSON and you try to break away from mom by asserting your “I WANT” powers, “DO IT MYSELF” attempts, and “I CONTROL EVERYTHING AS QUEEN” attitude. But you are really afraid of “going it on your own” (like adolescence) and you keep running back to Mom's skirts, demanding her total presence, rejecting her when you feel confident, changing your mind, getting stubborn and rigid because you can't afford to admit that you are really very little after all. You will try to take over the family by being bossy but have difficulty making even little choices so that a parent needs to give you simple ones all your own; you will sometimes have trouble letting your parent go, but when she has gone you will forget it and have fun because you aren't a “baby” anymore. You need tolerant people around you who give you little rights and privileges of your very own but also make big decisions for you without taxing your new young decision-making powers. You need them to “go around you” to help you go the way that's right for you and distract and divert you to what is good, like routines of sleep, mealtime and toileting. You need them to be patient enough to let you grow in your own special way but to choose firmly for you when you are all mixed up and falling to pieces of confusion in a tantrum.

You have a grand sense of humor and love surprises, and the unexpected and jumping and figuring out how to use your body. You love the parents you are trying to grow up and away from deeply and loyally. You like high places, nooks, and crannies, pushing, pulling, lifting, putting things into new places, making noise with feet and mouth, songs about yourself and real pictures.

You have a grand time at school and then object to going home, ready to let out all your safe feelings with a parent coming to pick you up after having exercised admirable control all morning working on social skills. You also sometimes like to not leave Mom or Dad at the school door, as you like to try and exercise your newfound powers of persuasion. Both coming and going, decisions are best made by cool-minded parent and teacher who both know that once you are where they choose you to go, you will have a wonderful time.

Three Years Old

As you turn away from confused Two, suddenly you get along with your friends at school and talk to them and laugh joyfully with them and start to give and share and do together. You like “dress up” since you are no longer afraid of putting on strange clothes on your body and you can imagine with the others that you are on a train or at a picnic together.

You like home, family and people. You are a real person on your own and needn’t have rituals and rules and indecision all the time. You can use your body so it works and you don’t get frustrated. You can talk now...very, very well. You chatter along and enjoy sharing conversations and you can be very entertaining with words. “New,” “different,” “surprise,” “secret,” all suggest awareness of new horizons. “Help,” “might,” “could,” “guess,” are words adults use to get you interested.

You feel good about yourself and you like to cooperate. You want to be loved by the family so you conform. Your own possessions are still important to you and even though you are ready to socialize with friends, letting go of home at the nursery door may be hard. You like safe cubbyholes to hide your sensitivity in.

This is the time for you to PLAY and IMAGINE, to learn through your senses, to let off steam, to master the world, to understand and to become YOU through trial and error. You learn to “pretend” as a substitute for real and have to do it over and over again. You find yourself pretty much the most important person. Occasionally “we” can be understood in sharing and doing with friends. You need others to learn how to get along. It is a good time for nursery school.

As you move toward four, about three and a half, you may get more sensitive, lose motor control, stutter, stumble, fall, be afraid of things, cling and whine. “Do you love me?” “You don’t love me!” Demands may be made on adults for attention. You feel a lot of pressure to be good and get along with others, and sometimes it’s too much and you lose body control or accumulate temporary ticks. You need a lot of warmth and cuddling and reassurance that you are important. Your parents can give you extra love knowing that you will soon be an exuberant, difficult four who has decided to “leave home” behind. They can tell you about when you were a baby and how you are growing and how they love you even though they go away sometimes. Even if you have to cope, and wait, and get along with parents and siblings and cooperate with friends, you are still loved and nobody expects you to be too big...YET.

Four Years Old

Now you are FOUR! You are SOMEBODY! You know who your FAMILY is! Now you are ready to blast out into the GREAT BIG WORLD and find out what it means to be a GROWN UP. You know you will be grown up someday; you know there is lots to find out about being a mother or daddy or IMPORTANT-PERSON-DOING-THINGS. Sometimes it frightens you that you can't do all the big people things and you start getting pushy to mommy or daddy to check and see if it's still OK to be little and helpless. If they love and guide you and teach you a few nice things about being big...like how to set a table or help cook or help hammer a nail...then you know they understand and it's all right to not be able to do like they can do, but you can still learn. At school you need a lot of things to play with...like phones and machines and clothes...to be all the things big people are.

You are so busy learning and seeing that you are easily distracted and you have such a drive to DO that people have to help you find LIMITS. You always seem to go out of bounds and need help stopping before you get too excited and collapse in overexcitement or tears. You seem interested in everything but you need to do it by trying, not by being told, and you need to be protected from overloading with information.

You love numbers and sizes and letters and lines but don't understand them very well. You are beginning to distinguish between "pretend" and "real" but you are so strong in your imagination that you get carried away. What you call "real" can just be your wonderful imagination and ought not to be tampered with by well-meaning adults.

You love excursions, holidays, finding out about the rest of the world, trying it out. You are talkative and interested in simple group discussions but find it hard to share the spotlight or listen to others for any length of time. You get easily frustrated and need a large variety of play materials to explore and positive guidance to keep your plan constructive.

You are sociable but you experiment with politeness and bossing, quarrelling, bragging and calling names. You like to be the biggest and strongest and best. You can lose yourself in total giggles over silly words and expressions, especially in the company of friends or shocked adults.

As you approach five, you have learned to play fairly well with just one friend, needing to exclude a third sometimes, and you are almost ready to play with a little group all cooperating together without arguing and taunting. You can also now spend longer time at tasks, know the difference between real and pretend, and try to draw or make "real" objects. After a tormentuous year of four: testing limits, trying parents, extending all possibilities with bravado and terror of failure underneath...you have reached good-natured five, and are ready to settle down and compromise with the world again.

BASIC BOOKLIST FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

In specialized areas, i.e. illness, divorce, music for children, adoption, the Co-op teachers can recommend titles. The Public Library has a good collection of books for parents. Many of the titles listed below are available in the Co-op library or in the teacher's personal libraries. Many are in paperback and can be ordered from local bookstores.

Ames and Ilg	<i>Your Two Year Old – Terrible and Tender</i>
Ames and Ilg	<i>Your Three Year Old – Friend and Foe</i>
Ames and Ilg	<i>Your Four Year Old – Wild and Wonderful</i>
Brazelton, T. Berry	<i>Touchpoints</i>
	<i>Touchpoints Three to Six</i>
Calkins, Lucy	<i>Raising Lifelong Learners</i>
Dreikers, Rudolf	<i>Children the Challenge</i>
Glenn and Nelsen	<i>Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World</i>
Grosshans, Beth	<i>Beyond Time Out</i>
Ilg and Ames	<i>Child Behavior: From Birth to Ten</i>
Ilg and Ames	<i>The Gesell Institute's Child Behavior</i>
Seigel and Bryson	<i>The Whole-Brain Child</i>
Swift, Madelyn	<i>Getting it Right with Children</i>
Trelease, Jim	<i>The Read Aloud Handbook</i>
Tsabary, Shefali	<i>The Conscious Parent</i>

To help make the Co-op an educational experience for all of us, please share articles on early childhood which you find particularly interesting and helpful.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

CHICKENPOX (VARICELLA)

Sudden onset with slight fever and itchy eruptions which become vesicular (small blisters) within a few hours. Lesions commonly occur in successive crops, with several stages of maturity present at the same time. Communicable for as long as 5 days (usually 1-2 days) before eruption of vesicles and until all lesions are crusted (usually 5 days). Communicability may be prolonged in immunocompromised people.

CONJUNCTIVITIS, ACUTE BACTERIAL (PINK EYE)

Pink or red eyeball with swelling of the eyelids and eye discharge. Eyelids may be matted shut after sleep. May involve one or both eyes.

DIARRHEAL DISEASES (CAMPYLOBACTERIOSIS, E. COLI 0157:H7, GIARDIASIS, SALMONELLOSIS, SHIGELLOSIS, ETC.)

Ranges from sudden onset of fever, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, and sometimes vomiting in salmonellosis, to cramps and bloody stools in severe cases of shigellosis and E. coli O157:H7. Dangerous dehydration may occur in younger children. In giardiasis, persons may be asymptomatic or have decreased appetite and weight loss.

FIFTH DISEASE (ERYTHEMA INFECTIONOSUM)

Rash characterized by vivid reddening of the skin, especially of the face, which fades and recurs; classically, described as “slapped face appearance.” Mild symptoms of fever, body aches, and headache may occur 7-10 days before rash.

HEPATITIS A

Fever, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort and weakness followed by jaundice. Many unrecognized mild cases without jaundice occur, especially in children. Communicability greatest from 7 days before to several days after onset of jaundice.

HEPATITIS B

Only a small proportion of acute infections have clinical symptoms. They are similar to those of Hepatitis A.

HIV INFECTION AND AIDS

A broad range of disease manifestations affecting multiple organ systems. Many children remain asymptomatic.

INFLUENZA

Sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, malaise, and nonproductive cough. Subsequently, respiratory tract signs including sore throat, nasal congestion, rhinitis, and cough become more prominent.

MEASLES (RUBEOLA, RED MEASLES)

Prodrome characterized by fever followed by reddened eyes, runny nose, and cough. Dusky-red blotchy rash appears on day 3 or 4 and lasts 4 to 7 days. Communicable from 4 days before to 4 days after the appearance of the rash.

MENINGITIS, BACTERIAL (H. INFLUENZA, MENINGOCOCCAL, PNEUMOCOCCAL)

Sudden onset of fever, headache, nausea, stiff neck, and photophobia. Rash may occur in cases of meningococcal disease.

MUMPS

Fever with swelling and tenderness of one or both parotid glands located below and in front of the ears. Unrecognized mild cases without swelling may occur. Communicable from 3 days before swelling until 5 days after.

NOROVIRUS

Sudden onset of vomiting and/or diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and nausea.

PEDICULOSIS (HEAD LICE)

Severe itching and scratching, often with secondary infection. Eggs of head lice (nits) attach to hair as small, round, gray lumps.

PERTUSSIS

The initial stage begins with upper respiratory symptoms and increasingly irritating cough. The paroxysmal stage usually follows within 1 to 2 weeks, and lasts 1 to 2 months. Paroxysmal stage is characterized by repeated episodes of violent cough broken by a high-pitched inspiratory whoop and vomiting. Older children may not have whoop. Convalescence may require many weeks.

RINGWORM OF THE BODY (TINEA CORPORIS)

Circular well-demarcated lesion that can involve face, trunk, or limbs. Itching is common.

RUBELLA (GERMAN MEASELS)

Mild symptoms, slight fever, rash of variable character lasting about 3 days; enlarged head and neck lymph glands common. Joint pain may occur, especially in older children and adults. Communicable for 7 days before onset of rash and at least 7 days thereafter.

SCABIES

Begins as itchy raised areas around finger webs, wrists, elbows, armpits, belt-line, and/or genitalia. Extensive scratching often results in secondary infection.

STREPTOCOCCAL DISEASES (INCLUDING IMPETIGO, SCARLET FEVER, AND "STREP" THROAT)

Impetigo: Multiple skin lesions usually of exposed area (e.g., elbows, legs, and knees), but may involve any area. Lesions vary in size and shape, and begin as blisters, which rapidly mature into brown crusts on a reddening base. Healing from center outward produces circular areas, which may resemble ringworm.

Scarlet Fever: fever, sore throat, exudative tonsillitis or pharyngitis. Sandpaper-like rash appears most often on neck, chest, skin folds of arms, elbows, groin, and inner aspect of thighs.

Strep throat: sudden onset of fever, sore throat, exudative tonsillitis or pharyngitis, and enlarged lymph nodes. Symptoms may be absent in some cases.

Revised:
May 16, 2016/mhg