

Beecher Preschool Cooperative

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Parent's Handbook



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I. PURPOSE OF THE BEECHER PRESCHOOL COOPERATIVE

The Beecher Preschool Cooperative provides a safe and stimulating environment in which the child can develop a positive self-image with a feeling of security in activities away from home.

The curriculum is designed to meet each child's needs in social, emotional, educational and physical areas of development, while gently stimulating him/her toward the next stage of maturity. While allowing for individuality, the program provides experiences in which the child must learn to respect the rights of others and develop a sense of responsibility.

The role of the preschool is to give children ideas and ideals on which to build growth while fostering a feeling of success and self-confidence. Early childhood experiences lay the groundwork for later attitudes, the school will provide an atmosphere for developing a creative interest and joy in learning. The daily class schedule is flexible, but generally follows this schedule (these are approximate times):

30 minutes of free play
30 minutes of circle time
Bathroom break
20 minutes of snack time
20 minutes of small motor skills
20 minutes of art projects
30 minutes of large motor skills

II. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

The number of children admitted to the school is determined by the Board of Directors of the Cooperative, according to state requirements for preschools. Children must be 4 years old before September 1st of the school year to be eligible for the 4-year-old classes. To be accepted in the 3-year-old classes, the child must be 3 years old before September 1st of the school year. All children must be toilet trained before entering school.

Application for enrollment must be made in writing to the Vice President/Chairperson of Membership. First priority is given to the past and present Cooperative members and to members of St. Luke United Church of Christ.

The first month of school attendance is considered a probationary period. The parents or the Board of Directors of the Cooperative may have the child withdrawn from school if either believes it is in the best interest of the child. After the beginning of the school year, parents having completed an application will be notified when there is an opening for their child.

III. COOPERATIVE PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A Cooperative preschool is best defined in the meaning of cooperative: "To work or act together jointly: unite in producing an effect". All parents cooperate in assuming the responsibilities of maintaining and operating the school. Thus, the Cooperative is only as good as the efforts put forth by its collective members.

A. HELPING PARENT DUTIES

All parents will participate in daily classroom activities on a rotating basis. We believe this can be a healthy and rewarding experience for you as well as the children. Any talents or interests you may be willing to share with the class are encouraged for the enrichment of all. You are there as an aide in helping the children learn new skills and to encourage independence.

A parent/adult who has completed and been approved through the volunteer application/background check must be present with the teacher during class time. If you cannot be there at your scheduled time, it is your responsibility to find a replacement. If a parent is unable to find a replacement, he/she will still be responsible for providing the snack/drink for that day and will be charged a \$15 fee per class missed. If a parent is permanently unable to participate in the classroom, he/she may arrange for a substitute with the Board's permission (please see By-Laws Article IV, Section 2e).

The room representative will create the helping the parent schedule for the entire school year and pass out at the start of school.

The helping parent should be familiar with the following duties, but please keep in mind the needs of the children always come first:

1. Provide cups, napkins, snacks and drinks for your scheduled day. A healthy, pre-packaged snack and 100% fruit juice or pasteurized milk is required. Some suggestions are: cheese and crackers, raisins, apples and peanut butter, popcorn, celery and cream cheese, pretzels, fruit, apple sauce, pudding, yogurt, granola bars, fun fruits, milk, orange juice, grape juice or apple juice. Since the children enjoy celebrating birthdays, you may bring a special treat for the class to enjoy on that day. Any bakery item must be store bought.
2. Be at school 15 minutes before class time on your scheduled day. Be prepared to stay after class to clean up.
3. Consult and sign worksheets for duties required to maintain facilities for that day.
4. Assist children to and from the bathroom facilities.
5. Help teacher prepare classroom materials for the day.
6. Assist children with coats and wraps for outdoor playtime and before going home.
7. At the conclusion of each class, write a funny, cute or interesting paragraph about something the children did or said that made your day.
8. Assist with putting out prepackaged snacks with your child and encourage children to clean up their area.
9. For insurance purposes and with respect for the class and teacher, no other siblings will be allowed in class.
10. The teacher is the authority and you will generally defer to her. It is easier for the children to accept the teacher as the final authority.

B. HOSPITALITY AND EVENTS

Aside from working as a helping parent in the classroom, each parent is required to fulfill two (2) maintenance duties and one class clean. Parents will sign up for maintenance duties and the class clean during fall orientation. Contact the Hospitality board member with any questions regarding your specific maintenance and/or class clean. Failure to fulfill your maintenance agreement will result in a fine of \$50 per responsibility.

A parent is also required to help plan at least one class party. Two participating parents are needed and scheduled on those party days. Parties will be held for Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter and there will be an end of the year picnic. Parents will sign up for a class party during fall orientation.

C. GENERAL COOPERATIVE MEETINGS

You are welcome to attend general Cooperative meetings and contribute any ideas and/or comments on behalf of the school. Attendance is required by at least one parent/legal guardian at the fall orientation meeting and the spring board election meeting at graduation.

IV. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. CLASS TIMES, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Class sessions will be three hours long. The 3 year old program meets Tuesday and Thursday. The 4 year old program meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The morning session is from 8:15 - 11:15 and the afternoon session is held 12:15 - 3:15. Children should arrive no more than ten minutes early and should be picked up promptly at the end of class. Parents or accompanying adults must escort the child to and from the classroom including signing the child in and out.

B. LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Children should be promptly picked up at the end of class. If a child remains after 10 minutes, the Parent/Guardian will be charged a babysitting fee of \$5.00 plus an additional \$5.00 for each 5 minutes that the child is not picked up. Unless other arrangements have been made by the teacher/director. After the first 15 minutes, the Director of the Preschool will attempt to call the Parents/Guardians 2 times. After the second attempt, the Director of the Preschool will begin calling each of the names provided on the Emergency Contact List 1 time each. If after 30 minutes the Director of the Preschool is unable to reach the Parent/Guardian or someone listed on the Emergency Contact List, the Director of the Preschool will call either the police and/or the DCFS child abuse/neglect hotline.

It is imperative that Parents/Guardians keep the emergency contact list up-to-date.

The Preschool is responsible for the protection and well being of the child until the Parent/Guardian, police and/or DCFS has picked up the child. The Preschool understands that the child is not responsible for the situation. Therefore, any conversations related to the situation will only be discussed with the Parent/Guardian, never the child.

C. CLOTHING, OUTDOOR WEAR, BACKPACKS

All clothing should be comfortable, durable and washable. Outdoor garments should be suitable for the weather, as children will be outdoors as much as possible. If your child cannot go outside, it is preferable that they remain at home, or you come to school and assume responsibility for him/her during outside playtime. All personal belongings should be labeled. Each child should have a tote bag or backpack. An extra outfit and underwear should be kept in the tote bag at all times.

D. SCHOOL CALENDAR AND CLOSINGS

Vacation and holiday schedules will be the same as Beecher School District 200-U. During bad weather or for any reason the teacher is absent and a substitute teacher/director is not available, school will be canceled; parents will be notified by their classroom representative.

E. FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may include: fire station, police station, post office, library, apple orchard, pumpkin patch, nature walk, farm, Exploration Station or Disney on Ice. We hope to take at least one trip per month. Parents will be notified at least one week in advance and will be asked to sign a permission slip. Any field trip other than the walking field trips, a parent/guardian must attend with the student. If a bus is required for the field trip, a bus from the Beecher Community School District will be utilized.

F. CAR POOLS

The Beecher Preschool Cooperative assumes no responsibility for car pools. Transportation of children to and from school is up to the parents. The parents should also inform the teacher of the car pools.

G. INSURANCE

The Preschool carries the following insurance: Regular liability insurance up to \$500,000 and worker's compensation insurance.

H. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

1. Thanksgiving prayer before snack: "Thank-you for the world so sweet; thank-you for the food we eat; thank you for the birds that sing; thank-you God for everything. Amen."
2. Religious practices may be mentioned and discussed during holiday observances.

I. STUDENT FILES AND RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Student records are confidential and are only available to the professional staff and the child's parents, if requested. A release form must be completed to release any information to any other person or institution.

V. DISCIPLINE POLICY

A. PHILOSOPHY

The Beecher Preschool Cooperative believes that each child should be treated with respect. The experiences of children help to form the adults they will become. The Beecher Preschool Cooperative uses disciplinary methods, which encourage children to make their own choices within set boundaries, thereby helping each child to take responsibility for their own behaviors. The goal of discipline is to teach children self-discipline. Through utilizing natural and logical consequences with children, they learn to make choices, to problem solve and to take responsibility.

B. GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

Children enrolled in the Beecher Preschool Cooperative must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Absolutely no running in the school
2. No pushing or hitting other children
3. Be respectful of others
4. Only use "inside voices" when inside the school

Limits and consequences will be discussed with the child before any disciplinary action is taken. In the event that the child chooses to continue to not follow the rules, that child will be removed from the group by asking them to sit on a time-out chair for a period of time not to exceed one minute per year of age. The purpose of the "time-out" is to help the child gain control. The adult implementing this disciplinary method must do so in a calm and respectful manner, thereby role-modeling appropriate behavior.

C. CHILD INVOLVEMENT

Each child participates in the discipline process by the child first being informed about what the possible consequence might be for a particular misbehavior and then allowing the child to choose. By setting the limits and then allowing the child to make their own choices within those limits, each child automatically becomes involved in the discipline process.

D. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

In the event that a child's behavior becomes continually disruptive during class, the school and family may develop a behavior management plan. Each behavior management plan will be individualized and will include goals set by the teacher and family, a schedule of parent-teacher conference, and a behavior modification outline to be utilized with the child by both the teacher at school and the parent at home.

E. NON ENROLLMENT OF STUDENT

In the event that the Beecher Preschool Cooperative believes it is in the best interest of the child displaying behavior difficulties, as well as the other children in the class, to release the child from school, the following must precede said unenrollment:

1. The Beecher Preschool Cooperative and the family need to have developed a behavior management plan and have implemented said plan for a minimum of 2 months with no visible sign of improvement **or**
2. In the event that the child's family refuses to participate in the development of a behavior management plan, written documentation stating that fact will be placed in the child's file and a copy mailed to the family.
3. Therapeutic intervention by an LCSW or LCPC has been sought by the family for a minimum of 2 months with no visible sign of improvement* **or**
4. In the event that the family refuses to participate in outside therapeutic services, written documentation stating that fact will be placed in the child's file and a copy mailed to the family.

* When outside therapeutic intervention is sought by the child's family, a release of information form will be signed by the child and parent allowing the Beecher Preschool Cooperative and the therapist to discuss the child's school performance and the child's progress in counseling.

Once the decision to end enrollment has been made, a letter documenting the date of release, reason for the decision, and steps that were taken to rectify the behavior must be put in the child's file and a copy mailed to the family.

At no time will the school verbally or nonverbally imply to the child being released that he/she is a "bad child". The Beecher Preschool Cooperative will take every possible measure to ensure that the child's emotional well-being is handled with care and respect. Upon release, the Beecher Preschool Cooperative will provide the family with a list of therapeutic referrals, as well as assist in transitioning the student to another facility.

F. STAFF GUIDELINES

1. Children shall not be disciplined for toilet accidents.
2. The following behaviors are prohibited in all child care settings:
 - Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
 - Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest or use of the bathroom;
 - Abusive or profane language;
 - Any form of public humiliation, including threats of physical punishment; and
 - Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.
3. Preschool and school age children shall have reasonable opportunity to resolve their own conflicts.
4. When there is a specific plan for responding to a child's pattern of unacceptable behavior, all staff that affects the child shall be aware of the plan and cooperate in its implementation.

VI. HEALTH REGULATIONS

The following documents must be on file before the child's first day of school:

1. Child's application
2. Child's health form
3. Participating parent's TB test, appropriate immunization, and physical

Physical health forms, proof of TB test, and appropriate immunization are required upon entering the preschool. A new physical is needed every two years for returning members. If someone other than a parent is to assist the teacher, that person must also have a TB test, appropriate immunization and physical on file.

You are asked not to send children to school if any of the following signs of illness are present:

1. Skin rash or eruptions
2. Fever and/or vomiting within the last 24 hours
3. Runny nose - first 3 days and/or until the child can care for his/her own nose.
4. Elimination disturbances
5. Sore throat, earache, headache or other suspicious signs of illness.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent will be notified immediately and the child will be provided a safe, comfortable spot while awaiting pick-up.

When a child will be absent from school, please notify your teacher before school begins. Whenever a child contracts a contagious disease, the parent is asked to notify the teacher so that the other parents may be informed that their child has been exposed.

The only first aid measures taken at the preschool are:

1. Bump or bruise: Apply ice.
2. Cut or scratch: Wash with soap and water, then apply a bandage.
3. Splinter: Remove if exposed.
4. Nose bleed: Apply cold compress and/or pressure.

Parents will be notified if any of the above actions were taken.

In case of serious injury, the parent will be notified immediately. Emergency services (911) will be contacted if deemed necessary.

If a child requires medication to be dispensed while at school, including but not limited to: a rescue inhaler for asthma, or an Epi-pen for severe allergies, a plan will be developed between the teacher/director, parent of the child, and the Cooperative Board, regarding the steps to be taken if medication is necessary. The parent will immediately be notified that dispensation of medication was necessary.

If a child is exempt from medical services based on religious grounds, a plan for care will be developed between the teacher/director, parent of the child, and the Cooperative Board.