



Responsibilities of a Co-op Family

A co-op is not like other preschools; it is made up of families who want to be actively involved in their child's education and are willing to commit their time and resources to make their child's first school experience a wonderful one.

At Colonial we have professional teachers and a professional part-time director, but we do not have many of the other staff that you might find at a more traditional preschool. There is no janitor, or secretary, or assistant teacher. The parents in a co-op work to fill these roles. This allows parents the opportunity to be an active part of their child's school and allows the co-op to offer lower tuition costs and to provide exceptional materials and resources to the children.

It is important for any family to understand the responsibilities and benefits that come with being a part of a cooperative preschool. Please read through this document to familiarize yourself with some of the expectations of a co-op family. A cooperative preschool isn't for everyone but for those who do choose to join a co-op it is a wonderful experience, not only to be a part of their child's education but to also be a part of a larger community that is committed to making these early years truly exceptional. Below is an explanation of some of the roles of a co-op family.

Acting as the Teacher's Assistant

This is the primary job of a co-opping parent and the primary reason most people choose to put their child in a cooperative preschool. Each month the room parent will make out a schedule of who will be the helping parent on which day. The number of times a parent will co-op is dependent on the number of days a week the class meets and the number of families in the class. Most families co-op 1-3 times a month.

It is expected that parents will make arrangements for someone else to watch other siblings while they co-op. Some parents manage this by making friends with other co-opping families and trading off babysitting duties on their co-opping days.

Responsibilities of the parent in the classroom would be:

- Arrive 15 minutes before class begins to help set up the classroom and welcome the students into the room.
- Ensure all cleaning and snack supplies necessary for the day are available
- During class, interact with children, be an extra helping adult, take kids to the bathroom, clean up after messy activities.
- Provide a healthy snack for the class (more guidelines below)
- After school is over, remain for approximately 30-45 minutes to clean the classroom and bathroom in accordance with the cleaning checklist to prepare for the next day.

Snacks

The co-oping parent will provide snack for the class on the day they are co-oping. Some helpful tips for snacks are:

- Each child will bring their own water bottle for the day
- Snacks should be as healthy as possible and typically include a fruit/vegetable and something crunchy
 - Apples, bananas, berries, clementines, grapes, carrot sticks
 - Graham crackers, goldfish, pretzels, crackers, Pirate's Booty, veggie sticks, Nilla wafers
 - No choking hazards (popcorn in the 2s)
 - Please limit sweets to special occasions (birthdays or class parties)
- We are a NUT-FREE school. Please do not bring nuts in any form - peanut butter, baked goods, etc.
- Your room parents will inform your class of any food allergies or sensitivities. Please do not bring foods that fall into these categories.
- The school provides reusable plates for snack. If you need something else to serve your snack (bowls, spoons, cups), please check ahead of time or bring it yourself.

School Work Days

Several times a year we gather as a co-op to do a large scale jobs around the school that go beyond the regular daily upkeep. This might be a thorough cleaning of the classrooms or an afternoon spreading mulch on the playground. Each family is asked to contribute 10 hours of work t. There are multiple opportunities to do this throughout the year. A \$100 cleaning deposit is assessed as part of your annual tuition. This is given back to you at the end of the year as long as you participate in one of the cleanings.

General Membership Meetings

There are four general membership meetings a year that all families are asked to attend. Only one parent needs to attend each meeting, but we ask that children not attend the meetings. The dates are on the school calendar at the beginning of the year so that you have ample time to plan ahead.

Jobs

All families of children in the three and four year old classes are asked to take a job at the preschool to support the co-op. While a list of jobs is attached, this is not a comprehensive list since the needs of the co-op and the talents of the parents may affect what jobs are needed. Every attempt is made to match families with the job that will best suit them but not every family will get the job they most want. Families of children in the two-year-old classes are encouraged to take jobs within the school but are not required.

Health and Safety Forms

Because we are a co-op, we have parents acting as teachers' assistants and working directly with children. As a result, there are certain requirements that the state has for both children and their parents. No child will be allowed to attend class at Colonial until ALL of the required forms for both parents and child have been submitted. The complete list of forms is available at registration and most of them are simple forms that can be filled out at your leisure. There are several forms, however, that you may not be anticipating or that require signatures from a doctor or notary. The adult forms are ONLY required of those parents who will be co-oping in the classroom:

- A child health form which must be signed by a doctor and include an immunization chart
- An adult health form which must be signed by a doctor.
- An adult Release of Information form which must be notarized.
- All co-oping adults must be fingerprinted at their own expense. This is a relatively new state requirement and costs approximately \$55.

What to expect on your co-oping days

Interacting with a child

- Get down on their level
- Speak quietly
- Touch them, hold them on your lap
- Speak positively with an expressive voice
- Use humor
- Ok if the child or classroom gets messy
- Biting is not ok, but it not abnormal
- Spread out and interact with all the kids when possible
- Let them do their own work

Discipline

- Redirect
- Correct with kindness
- Sit closer to any children struggling to pay attention
- Teachers will handle any difficult discipline issues

Confidentiality

- Speak with the teacher only in regards to other children
- Speak in generalities when at all possible
- Remember, little ears can still hear