

Officer's Leadership Handbook

Parent Education Program

North Seattle College

Updated July 2021

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INTRODUCTION

PAC Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee

Vision Statement

North Seattle College Parent Cooperative Preschools value and celebrate diversity in all of its forms and are committed to providing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for all children, adults, and families. We strive to be welcoming and accessible to all families and reflect the diverse community of North Seattle.

We are committed to taking action against practices, attitudes and behaviors that promote discrimination and exclusion of any type or variation. We are committed to ensure to the best of our ability through policies and procedures that our cooperative preschool settings provide an environment of respect, inclusion, tolerance and acceptance of all children, adults, and families.

North Seattle Parent Cooperative Preschools strive to prepare our children for a diverse and multi-cultural world in which they will be caring, compassionate and productive citizens.

Congratulations on being elected an officer

Your acceptance of a leadership role is greatly appreciated by your coop program. This coming year can be an exciting journey for you and your group. This handbook has been created to help make your position easier. You will find information about group process, individual roles in the coop, the relationship of your group with the Parent Education Program at North Seattle College (NSC), and some historical background about the Coop Programs.

The Parent Education model for the Coop Program was established in 1938 and housed in the Seattle Public Schools. It is built around a laboratory approach with parents and children participating in a learning experience together. In the late sixties, the Washington State community college system assumed responsibility for the program as a part of adult education.

The Coop program is an unusual combination of parent education and Coop child development laboratory. It provides learning experiences for both the parent and child. The Parent Education Program is funded by state funds and individual tuition. This relationship between the parent coops and the college's Parent Education Program is unique in combining resources from the public and private sectors. The program tuition is referred to as a "tuition equivalent". The state funds come because you are a student and fill out the college registration form; those funds are used to pay your instructor's salary and to offer you the benefit of the college.

The coop functions as a four way partnership among the board, the parent group, the children's teacher, and the parent education instructor from NSC. Coop officers are responsible for the overall *business* functions of the group. The children's teacher, in addition to creating a developmentally appropriate learning environment for the children, acts as an advocate for the operational aspects of the classroom program at board and parent meetings. Individual parents, in addition to filling the role of assistant teacher and group member, are responsible for expressing concerns to board members. The parent instructor, in addition to providing the parent education component facilitates group development and makes sure the overall program meets current professional standards.

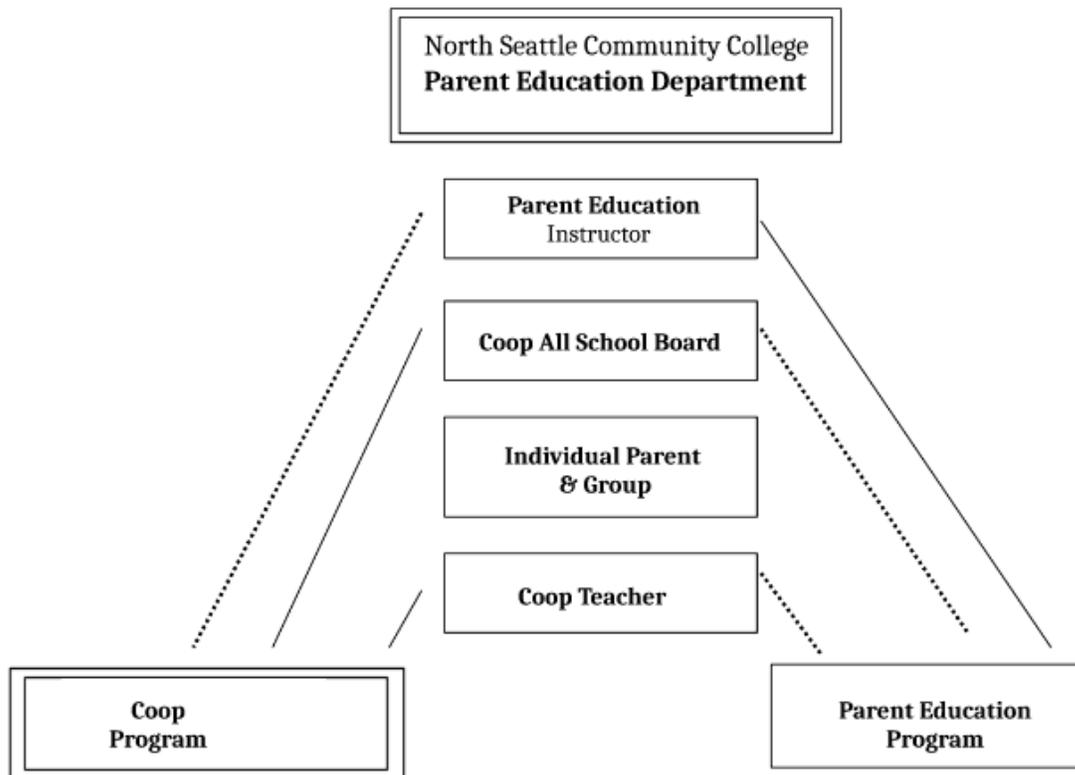
More information about specific officer roles and those of others will be presented later. First we will look at the stages all groups go through and how each individual board member can work together to make the coop run smoothly.

PARENT COOP PROGRAMS

Leadership for the coop program comes from North Seattle College (via the instructor), the coop teacher, and parents through the board. The board provides the leadership and models for the school the values of compassion, inclusion, and equity in building a supportive learning community for children and families. Our partnership and this handbook provide a framework for anti-bias, anti-racism resources to work together in building a community where all families feel welcomed.

How the Pieces Fit Together

The relationship between the parents and the program is diagrammed below. Solid lines indicate direct responsibility. The dotted lines indicate advisory responsibility. A description of each of the positions follows the diagram.



Roles and Responsibilities in the Cooperative Preschool

Instructor's Role

The parent education faculty believe that parenting is one of the most important careers in an individual's life. And, as with any vocation, preparation and continuing education are necessary for success. The goal of our program is to provide parents information and skills which enable them to act more confidently and competently in their own families, to make informed family decisions, and to be an active participant in this educational process.

Parent Education Model:

The Parent Education model for the Coop Program was established in 1938 and housed in the Seattle Public Schools. It is built around a laboratory approach with parents and children participating in a learning experience together. In the late sixties, the community college assumed responsibility for the program as a part of adult education.

Our program has been adapted to serve parents of infants, toddlers, and pre-three children and as well preschool aged children. At North Seattle College, the model includes three major curriculum components.

An *Early Childhood laboratory* setting where parents participate in a variety of roles as teacher. Parents observe the social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative development of their children and others of a similar age. Parents practice positive guidance techniques and the presentation of age appropriate, culturally relevant & anti-bias activities.

Adult education sessions and group discussions offer skills and information for use in the laboratory setting. The parent education classes also focus on parenting concerns and interests appropriate for the diverse community of parents in the coop.

A *leadership and business management* component offers skills which empower parents and (hopefully) increase self-esteem and personal competence. Group members learn the process of collaboration, decision making, and problem solving while they operate their child's early childhood laboratory. The program at North Seattle Community College serves over 400 coop programs annually.

Instructor's role in the college:

Your Parent Education instructor is a faculty member of the Workforce Instruction Division. The instructor is assigned to a Coop, which is officially a "Parent/Child Study Laboratory class". Instructors have knowledge and skills in the area of child development, early childhood education, adult learning, parenting issues, and building supportive, equitable, diverse & inclusive communities. The instructor attends faculty meetings at the college and is involved in continuing education.

Instructor's role in the coop:

Although parent-student's needs are different in each coop (Child Study Laboratory class), the instructor's overall responsibilities are the same: to provide parent education, serve as a consultant for the coop teacher, act as an advisor for the board, and be a resource for individual parents. Each of these aspects is more fully described below.

1. **Provide parent education** at the parent meetings and/ or discussion sessions. College instructors select a curriculum from the following student objectives established by the State Board for Community College Education:

- To develop realistic age-related expectations from knowledge of stages of childhood behavior and growth within a multicultural framework.
- To clarify child rearing values, attitudes, and methods of child guidance within a societal context recognizing the impact of bias and oppression on impacted families.
- To learn about the physical needs of family members: nutrition, safety, first aid, childhood illness, exercise, and stress management.
- To experience and understand the role of parent involvement in maintaining a quality learning environment for children.
- To develop skills and practices in teaching young children in the following areas: art, science, concept development, language, music, motor skills, and cooperative play.
- To share support, consultation, and resource information concerning childrearing and family life within a multicultural context.
- To gain knowledge of contemporary family concerns such as child abuse, divorce, sexual assault, illness and death, and family resource management.
- To develop skills in group organization and leadership in building welcoming communities for all families.
- To develop and/or increase confidence in managing the demanding role of the parent in a changing society.
- To strengthen family communication and relationships.

2. **Serve as a consultant** or resource to the coop teacher to insure a developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant & anti-bias/anti-racist program for the children.

The instructor will provide information, make recommendations, and present ideas as needed to the children's laboratory teacher. This will vary from laboratory to laboratory and depend on the skill and experience of the teacher. It may consist of advice on a guidance problem, observations on a child of concern, material to enrich the environment, or suggestions for providing direction to the parent-student assistants.

3. **Act as an advisor to the coop board.** The instructor conveys general information from the college on matters such as insurance, health and safety issues, or general announcements about business matters. They also provide information and insight for special problems and group process as needed. For example, the instructor provides direction when the preschool needs to hire a new teacher or find a new school location. The instructor's role with the board will vary depending on the experience and expertise of the board.

4. **Be a resource to individual parents.** The instructor is aware of college and community resources available to individuals. Referrals to other agencies may be made if the matter is outside the areas of expertise or the role of the instructor.

The instructor must be flexible to meet the responsibilities of the college program. The role varies from a one-day group to a four-day group. Therefore, the instructor must devise their own schedule to meet monthly meetings, parent education sessions, times in the coop laboratory, and availability as a resource.

Coop Teacher's Role

The coop teacher acts as head teacher and manages the group experience with the parents assisting and the college instructor supporting. The smooth and successful functioning of the

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coop program depends, however, on the teacher. The teacher is hired by the coop's hiring committee and the teacher's salary is determined by the group.

General coop responsibilities:

- Plan and organize developmentally age-appropriate curriculum.
- Involve parents in the program and help them to assume the assistant teacher roles.
- Attend monthly board and parent meetings.
- Follow the health and safety guidelines included in the OPEP (Organization of Parent Ed Programs in WA state community colleges) Risk Management Manual.
- Participate in professional development.

Teaching responsibilities:

The prime responsibility of the teacher is to set up a **developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant & anti-bias program** for young children. In doing this, the teacher works to establish routines and activities that will be most effective on promoting social, physical, cognitive, emotional, and creative growth for each child. The teacher and instructor work with parents individually to assure each child's success at school. Each teacher has their own style and strengths in working with young children and their parents.

The coop teacher **interacts with the children** in the classroom and evaluates their progress in order to determine what developmentally appropriate materials and activities will be presented. The schedule they provide is very important to the security of the young child. The teacher knows that young children learn best by first hand experience and through play; therefore, the environment is set up to promote these activities. The teacher always keeps in mind the necessity to support children to preserve creativity, develop inner controls, feel supported/connected to their family culture/identity, learn respect for others' cultures and identities, and encourage problem solving.

The teacher **plans the curriculum** and informs the parents of this plan. However they maintain the flexibility to change this curriculum when another activity appears to suit the children better. The teacher explains all parts of the program so that the parents will understand the reason for and the benefits of an activity.

Most coop teachers have an uncanny ability to anticipate and prevent difficulties when working with a group of spontaneous children. Also, they know how to alert parents to ways of working and getting involved with children in their coop setting.

A good teacher is constantly seeking new ways to become more effective through **continuing education**. They work hard to develop realistic expectations. The day by day delights of working with children make the teacher's efforts well worthwhile.

Role of the Board

The Board discusses the needs and concerns of the group. It handles topics that cover anything from mouse traps to what to do when the entire group has been exposed to chickenpox! The officers of the Board are special supporters of the coop and keep attuned to areas that might need improvement or situations that might be brewing discontent. This way any problem can be handled quickly and resolved, and the coop can move on in a positive way. Each school has an All School Board, or ASB, which has official responsibility to oversee the financial and basic

responsibilities of the school. The ASB must have a Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Composition in addition to those roles varies with the school's practices.

Composition: The coop elects the ASB officers for their group to serve approximately one year. In addition to the ASB, selected officers/leadership for each class includes:

- a chair – facilitates class meetings
- a treasurer – works with ASB treasurer to collect tuition
- a secretary – takes notes at class meetings
- a parent coordinator or registrar – person who handles registration and orientation
- a PAC representative
- a health and safety officer

The elected ASB officers, the coop teacher, and the Parent Education instructor constitute the Board. The teacher and instructor are ex-officio or non-voting members. Initially, this Board will assume a major role of leadership in the group. The aim, however, is to involve all group members in the planning and execution of the group program.

Frequency of meetings: The Board meets monthly with meetings open to any member. The meeting may be scheduled right after school, afternoons, or evenings depending on the convenience of the members and parent instructor availability. The time and place of meetings should be posted and all members informed. Class leadership teams/boards will meet as determined by their schools "Standing Rules."

Role: The Board functions primarily in an advisory capacity and only makes decisions for the group in accordance with the by-laws and Standing Rules. For example, the Board may be expected to obtain group approval determining registration and tuition fees and approval of the annual budget. In addition, the Board serves as clearing house for ideas, reports, and concerns which any officers or individual member may have. Minutes are kept of all board meetings and they should be available to all interested members.

The Coop Board's duties include:

Fiscal:

- reviewing a monthly budget report from the Treasurer and assuming responsibility for financial solvency.
- paying teachers.
- supporting fundraising activities.
- taking initiative in the purchase of new equipment and taking responsibility for equipment insurance decisions.

Communication:

- working as a team and modeling a positive, inclusive, and cooperative attitude.
- informing non-board members of the activities of the Board.
- accepting suggestions from members and working with the Teacher and Instructor to resolve conflicts with an inclusive, equitable approach.

Leadership:

- facilitating all co-op business and making recommendations to the group members for approval.
- supporting the Parent Advisory Council of the North Seattle College Parent Education Program.
- planning parent orientation and regular meetings.
- planning for an easy transition period from year to year.

Operations:

- maintaining workable policies and standing rules, which set forth rules and regulations for the co-op and developing and proposing standing rules revisions as needed.
- keeping records of all board activities.
- maintaining current inventory of equipment owned by the cooperative and keeping the property insurance amount current.
- overseeing building and safety maintenance as needed.
- assuring compliance with the Risk Management Manual/insurance guidelines.
- staying in compliance with North Seattle College Parent Education Program's guidelines.

Human Resources:

- reviewing the position of the Children's teacher and renewing the working agreement or recommending hiring procedures for a new Teacher in the spring for the following school year.
- facilitating yearly evaluations of the preschool program and children's teacher.
- Best practice is to set up a Personnel Committee to carry out these functions, and work with teachers to review feedback and plan for professional development actions annually, to be reported on at board meetings by the teacher when they complete such activities.

In addition to the work of the Board, each elected officer has a certain role and specific tasks to be performed in the group. It is recommended that each officer keep a notebook/online records to be passed on to incoming officers. Such a notebook or online resources should include:

- Materials from North Seattle College's Parent Education Program which are relevant to the specific office
- Materials relating to the current functioning of the group
- Recommendations for future policies
- Helpful hints to pass on to future officers

Role of the Parent

As a participating parent, you have several responsibilities to the on-going coop program, the teacher, the instructor, and the coop board. The first step in becoming familiar with the coop is to attend orientation *and then decide in which role your talents and interests will be most effective and volunteer for that position.* You will also need to provide a record of current immunizations for your child as required by Washington State Health Regulations.

On-going school responsibilities:

1. Work as an assistant teacher approximately one school session per week.
2. Attend monthly parent meetings which include coop business and parent education class.
3. Sign up for a job for the cooperative functioning of the group. For example, you might choose to do scheduling, obtaining library books, etc.

Responsibilities to the teacher:

1. **To become familiar** with general classroom procedures. These include the schedule of the day, the routines involved, and the general guidelines of the class.
2. **To be aware of the curriculum planned.** To bring in materials as requested by the teacher (buttons, egg cartons, old greeting cards, etc.)
3. **To prepare and lead small group activities when these are organized by the teacher** in pre-three and age 3-5 groups. This is an opportunity for parents to share their talents. The most rewarding experience you will have when working in school will come from the children: getting to know them, helping them learn, and recognizing the individual personalities that emerge.

Other responsibilities:

1. **To the instructor.** Attend and participate in weekly and/or monthly parent meetings. And, work in the classroom, practicing material learned in parent meetings.
2. **To the coop board.** Share your concerns and give your opinions in a timely fashion. You may be asked to assist the board by supporting a fundraising project, helping with spring clean-up, or by helping with general maintenance.
3. **To your child.** Help your child become comfortable at school. You will have the support of the teacher and the instructor in doing this.

A few helpful hints to secure your success at school:

- Be on time to work.
- Arrange for a substitute when you are unable to work on your assigned day.
- Direct questions about the coop to the parent coordinator, board chairperson, teacher, or instructor.
- Focus your attention on the children and their activities. Save adult conversations for later.
- Cell phone usage is prohibited in the classroom.
- Remember to have a good time!

Individual Board Officers

Chair

■ Responsibilities:

The chair coordinates the coop business.

Specific duties include:

1. Represent the coop

- Attend parent coop training
- Co-sign with treasurer on all checks
- Sign the agreement with NSC

2. Oversee smooth functioning of the coop

- Arrange monthly board meetings and others as needed
- Plan and post agenda for group and board meetings

-Set expectations for good communication ie. Email etiquette, board buddy system, and pathways for group process

- Preside at monthly group business and board meetings
- Oversee committees and their functioning
- Define issues and problems, and ask for help in solving them

3. Plan for the future

- Oversee teacher evaluation and rehiring process or establish a hiring committee
- Arrange for the selection of officers for the coming year
- Provide for the overall functioning of the group as outlined in the by-laws

4. Serve as a board member in a professional manner: see board duties

■ Tips and Hint

1. Read the section on starting and ending meetings.
2. Provide a copy of an agenda a week in advance for the meeting.
3. Include expected times for each segment at the parent meeting.
4. If needed, assign a “time keeper” to remind people of the allowed times in respectful ways.
5. Encourage each person to participate in discussions. Use non-verbal support for members who are hesitant to speak. Incorporate all ideas into the discussion.
6. Use consensus building tools to resolve differences of opinion.

■ Chair’s notebook/digital files may include:

- A copy of the duties of all officers as defined by the group
- A copy of current group policies and procedures
- A current list of coop committees and responsibilities of each job
- A copy of contracts or agreements which the coop has made and the name, address, and telephone number of the person who is agent for these agreements
- An agenda format used for business meetings
- A copy of the current contract with the coop teacher
- An up-to-date roster
- A calendar of typical yearly coop activities and events
- A personal listing of helpful hints, a summary of on-going business, and a guide to possible problem situations

Treasurer

■ Responsibilities:

The treasurer is the caretaker of funds for the group and is responsible for reporting the ongoing financial position of the school. The school is expected to have a paid bookkeeper (who is not a signer on the account) to work with the treasurer to complete their duties.

Specific duties include:

1. Caretaker of funds & financial records

- Maintain a complete set of books
- Maintain a bank account with another officer or 2 as co-signers
- Collect all fees and tuition
- File necessary tax, social security, and insurance forms
- Arrange for a financial review at the end of the school year and turn in the year end report to the college

2. Pay bills & complete paper work

- Write receipts for money received and obtained receipts for money spent
- Maintain payroll forms and records
- Attend treasurer workshops sponsored by the college or by PAC

3. Establish & review budget

- Make a written monthly financial report to the board and post where all members can view/share at monthly meetings
- Present a budget to the group for approval for the coming year
- Recommend an amount for tuition based on budget planning process

4. Complete the end-of-the-year Financial Review (by someone outside of the board) and Treasurer's Report. Submit to the college in a timely fashion.

5. Serve as a board member in a professional manner: see board duties

■ Tips and Hints:

1. Work closely with the bookkeeper to keep up to date on responsibilities.
2. Make sure all taxes and financial reports and obligations are submitted on time to avoid penalties.
3. Maintain a balanced budget and reserves in savings of a minimum of 3 months of funding for a "rainy day fund". Income comes from tuition and fund-raising activity. If expenses are not *covered* in these ways, the group must reduce expenses or increase income. It may increase income by assessment, additional fund raisers, an increase in tuition or other agreed upon means, such as increasing enrollment.
4. Maintain appropriate financial procedures. Particularly, record deposits and disbursements promptly. Mark checks "For Deposit Only". Have checks co-signed.
5. Reconcile bank statements when received.

■ Treasurer's notebook/digital files may include:

- a copy of the Treasurer's Handbook
- copies of budget and all pertinent material listed in the handbook
- copies of PAC's Scholarship Application form and guidelines

Secretary

■ Responsibilities: the secretary is the recorder for the group and the caretaker of records. The secretary's specific duties include:

1. Take minutes at parent and board meetings.

2. Distribute copies to the board promptly via email for review. Post in online record keeping place and provide a copy at school. Give a copy to (a) board members, (b) the teacher, and (c) instructor. Minutes from the past meeting are approved or corrected at the next meeting.

3. Maintain permanent place for all coop records.

- a notebook/online place containing minutes for meetings this year. ASB meeting minutes must be kept for the life of the school.
- attendance sheets for laboratory and parent education classes. The state requires these sheets to be kept for three years.

4. Communicate with members and instructor about missed meetings and make-up procedures.

5. Serve as a board member in a professional manner: see board duties

■ Tips and Hints:

1. Include both decisions and reasons for decisions in the minutes.
2. Write the minutes up as soon after meetings as possible.

■ Secretary's notebook/digital records should include:

- Board Meeting minutes
- Parent Meeting minutes
- Attendance records of parent meetings; child and adult laboratory attendance
- Current membership rosters
- Agreements (with teacher, with college, with landlord)
- Inventory of equipment (description and cost)
- By-laws and Standing Rules with all policies
- Financial records (shared responsibility with treasurer)

Registrar/Parent Coordinator

■ Responsibilities:

The parent coordinator (title may vary at some schools for this position) is a liaison between prospective members and the coop and is responsible for welcoming and orienting new members. The responsibilities vary somewhat during the year. Specific duties include:

1. Accepting registrations

- Respond to emails for information
- Arrange for parents to visit and observe the group
- Arrange for an orientation time for all new parents
- Assemble information for new parents
- Keep a current waiting list.
- Follow your coop's and PAC registration procedures.

2. Working with parents throughout the year

- Interpret the school program
- Help members become familiar with the operation of the school
- Help parents to work effectively with the teacher and other parents
- Act as a sounding board for member concerns

3. Updating enrollment status

- Keep an up-to-date roster and waiting list
- Inform PAC Webmaster of openings and changes in waiting list

3. Serve as a board member in a professional manner: see board duties

■ Tips and Hints:

The Parent Coordinator is usually the first contact a prospective member has with the school. Be aware of using an inclusive, welcoming approach with respect for each families cultural and individual diversity.

1. Realistically convey the philosophy of the coop and responsibilities of membership in a coop.
2. Arrange for prospective members to observe the group before enrollment. (The parent coordinator should be present to answer questions - another designated coop member may substitute.)
3. Arrange for an orientation with all new members, preferably in the space where the group meets. (The coop teacher can help the parent coordinator in welcoming new families and discussing how the adults work with the children.)

■ Parent Coordinators' notebook/digital records may include:

- A description of the Parent Coordinator's job as defined by the group
- Copies of registration forms, medical forms, and insurance forms
- A list of returning members and prospective members
- A copy of current group policies
- A sample of the folder of information to be given to new parents
- A personal summary of the job and any helpful hints

PAC Rep

About the Parent Advisory Council

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is composed of parents representing each coop program in the Parent Education Program at North Seattle College as well as a faculty representative from the Parent Education Program, Workforce Instruction Division.

PAC meets on a monthly basis and its major objectives are:

- To promote quality, affordable education for our diverse community of families and their young children by providing marketing support/website and a scholarship program for families needing tuition assistance.
- To offer parent information and opinions/advise for decision making by the Parent Education Program.
- To unify the coops throughout the system by providing a communication network for voicing needs and sharing ideas.
- To provide year-to-year continuity and a sense of history for a program made up of many diverse elements.

■ Responsibilities:

Each PAC Representative is their coop class representative to the Parent Advisory Council. The Parent Advisory Council votes on guidelines and makes recommendations on issues common to all coops; this is each coop's voice. Specific duties include:

- 1. To attend the monthly PAC meetings.** NSC affiliation requires each coop class to have an active PAC representative; with a minimum of one PAC rep per preschool when enrollment is low.
- 2. To participate on a PAC Committee.** The committees may vary depending on the interest of the PAC membership.
- 3. To act as a liaison between the coop and PAC**
 - To report as needed and possibly participate on the coop's executive board.
 - To report relevant information to the class via email and at the parent meeting.
 - To communicate with the coop regarding fees and the scholarship fund.

4. Serve as a board member in a professional manner: see board duties.

■ Tips and Hints:

1. Coordinate length of report time with the Chair. Organize the information ahead of time in order to present the information efficiently.
 2. Promptly send PAC information to members via email/online discussion groups including newsletter/blogs/podcasts and lectures, etc. Post a hard copy in the classroom.
- **PAC Reps notebook/digital records** shall include:
 - A copy of the PAC bylaws and handbook which includes the duties of all PAC members
 - A current list of PAC committees
 - A current roster of PAC members and the chairs of each committee
 - Minutes and financial reports.

Responsibilities of Board:

The board is the official/legal entity running the parent cooperative preschool. As such, the board is responsible for making sure that they have copies and familiarity with the following documents, and sign forms and documents as needed to maintain the non-profit status. They also make sure that these documents are in order and are kept readily available as references for the board and membership.

***Affiliation agreement** with North Seattle College, signed each fall. This agreement is required for the co-op to be covered by the insurance set up through OPEP, Organization of Parent Education Programs, the umbrella organization of co-ops set up through Washington State Community Colleges.*

***Financial accountability** – the college expects each co-op to hire a competent bookkeeper to oversee their financial responsibilities are met*

***Budget** – adopt a realistic budget that is reviewed at the monthly board meetings to make sure that the monthly financial statements of expenses & incomes is in line with the adopted budget*

***Fiscal Management** – make adjustments to the budget if needed and vote to approve expenditures as needed, with careful oversight over the co-op finances, including following the fiscal controls in the Risk Management Manual*

***Non-profit Organization Legal responsibilities** – be aware of legal responsibilities of the non-profit board*

***RMM** – Risk Management Manual prepared by OPEP should be read by all board members and referred to regularly to maintain safety and meet the insurance guidelines*

***Co-op Documents** that the board must be aware of and use as guiding documents for their decisions:*

Policies and Procedures

By-Laws

Standing Rules/ Policies

Board Selection and Orientation – should be outlined in the above documents

GROUP DEVELOPMENT

No one booklet, nor even years of experience, will answer all the questions facing the leaders in a parent coop group. Leadership in “coop” is a learning experience for all concerned, and when seen as such, mistakes can be accepted as a part of growing.

An effective group is characterized by the following criteria:

- (1) Leadership is shared, all voices are heard, and most members feel comfortable in their roles.
- (2) Goals are communicated clearly, built on the values of equity and inclusion, and strategies to manage different views are respectful. Shared goals are developed via consensus.
- (3) The group develops a philosophy of acceptance. Members welcome diversity and recognize that people have different backgrounds, values, opinions, and concerns.
- (4) Group develops a spirit of cooperation and friendliness.

Stages of group development

Most groups progress through several developmental stages. With some understanding and patience, the leaders can help the group to grow.

Initial Stage: The leaders usually assume responsibility for the group. New members may not know what they want and are content to follow the leadership for a while. Leaders need to find the fine line between giving a pattern for the group to follow and allowing other members to participate in decision making.

Second Stage: This is a normal and necessary stage in group development. Individual members begin to feel more secure in the group and want to share decision making. As the group begins to recognize goals, there are often conflicts about what these goals are and dissatisfaction about methods for achieving them. In this stage leader may set an example to the other members by accepting differences of opinion. They can respect the rights of each member to make contributions, whether they personally agree or not.

Third Stage: The group has developed a team spirit where individual differences are accepted and the group works cooperatively toward shared goals. Some groups revert to a first or second stage when a large turnover takes place or leadership is lost. Trouble can be avoided by careful planning on the part of the group to train new leaders to assume leadership.

Group theory

Group theory indicates that organized groups have two functions, both of which need to be done well for the group to function effectively. These two functions are the “task” function and the “team” function.

The task function is often described as “getting the job done”. In this case the instructor’s job is teaching the given material about different techniques and permitting people to practice them.

The Coop’s job is to conduct coop business in a way that supports the development of both the child and the parents.

The team function is often described as forming group cohesiveness or filling the social and emotional needs of the group. When you plan meetings remember to schedule some time for individual discussion, sharing, and support.

Development of team and task functions. The impact of these needs varies with the stage the group is in. The different expressions of these needs are described below.

Stages	Team Concept	Task Concept
Forming	Seeks identity of group and self within the group.	Identifies the group tasks and norms.
Storming	Conflicting desires and personalities develop among group members.	Conflicting priorities and negative reactions to group decisions emerge.
Norming	Group cohesiveness emerges- the group speaks of “we” & “us” rather than “I”.	Group chooses tasks in relation to good of the group
Performing	High level of support for member and group goals.	Performing tasks independently (chooses and implements best solutions).

Goals for leaders

Groups generally run more smoothly when the leaders focus on common interests and consensus building rather than pushing for a particular view or position. Although this goal may appear to apply only to the chair, your group will function more smoothly if all board members work together.

Consider yourself a facilitator. Keep the group moving while staying focused on the agenda. Help members find their own solutions, rather than telling them what to do. If you encourage the use of problem-solving procedures, members will have the tools and confidence to solve their problems.

Resist the temptation to give advice or make decisions for the group. When members ask for advice, provide several possible answers rather than one answer. This can be done by asking other members for ideas rather than supplying the answer(s) yourself.

Help coop members get to know one another. This can be done by calling participants by their names, and by providing ice breakers and activities where members can work together.

Model acceptance of different values and goals. This can be done by pointing out with pleasure when people have different opinions, and stating you think it is good that people can express their differing values.

Setting the tone for meetings

The group leaders set the tone for the group. While the chair is directing business other board members can monitor other aspects to see that all is going well.

Atmosphere of the group. The leadership sets a positive tone for the group by modeling appropriate behavior, encouraging positive interaction between members, and selecting suitable surroundings.

Model acceptance and interest in members. This can be done by using people's names, listening to them carefully, and accepting their goals and desires for their children and the program.

Encourage group members to understand and accept one another. This can be done by providing name tags for people, and the opportunity for them to get to know one another better. This is often done by using ice breakers and providing sharing time. The Parent Education instructor from the college may have some activities to offer.

Provide pleasant physical surroundings. Hunt for a room that is the right size for the group. All members should be able to see each other, and the easel or chalkboard if they are used. The temperature and lighting should be comfortable.

Group norms. Group norms dictate the acceptable behavior of group members, and will have a great effect on the tone of future meetings. There are several particular aspects to clarify for the whole group.

Acceptance of different child rearing approaches. Because there are many right ways to raise children people may express different opinions. The Parent Instructor from the college will help people sort out appropriate parenting. It is important for the group leader to mediate any conflicts, explain that differences are okay, and diminish no one.

Starting time. The first evening you can state that you will be beginning promptly at future meetings. It is important to stick by the hours you establish; otherwise your credibility will decrease. It is also the experience of many group leaders that regardless of when you start there will be some people who will arrive late.

Courtesy in speaking to one another. For the chair, this means avoiding interrupting and listening carefully to what each person is saying. For other board members it means listening to the discussion and supporting the chair if they need help.

Closing meetings. The way a meeting closes can affect people's expectations and interest in the next meeting. We will look at three aspects of positive closing.

Close on time. This means that the chair needs to keep an eye on the time and may need to begin to draw to a close 10 or 15 minutes before actual closing time. If they have trouble watching time, another board member can volunteer to act as time keeper. (If people have been actively involved in a meaningful discussion, it will take them longer to close than if they are at a natural breaking point.)

End the meeting on a positive note. Be aware of group and individual feelings. If the group is feeling low, attempt to inject a positive note on which to end. If an individual is feeling low, try to catch him or her before leaving and offer a positive note for departure.

Set positive expectations for the next meeting. Positive expectations can be established by referring to a previously expressed concern you will cover next month or developing curiosity by offering a "teaser" situation that you will deal with at the next meeting.

Individual styles

Occasionally individual group members have styles that get in the way of group functioning. Recognizing and dealing with these actions is essential to group functioning and problem solving. It is the responsibility of all the group leaders to prevent these individuals from disrupting or dominating the group.

Blocks progress—tends to be negative and disagrees; attempts to maintain or bring back an issue after the group has passed on. Acknowledge their concern and refer to the decision that has been made. Remind the group they need to keep moving on order to keep to the agenda.

Seeks recognition—calls attention to himself or herself through boasting, complaining, or acting in unusual ways. Find constructive ways for that person to get attention. For example, they might take a committee report, or be time keeper for the agenda.

Dominates— speaks authoritatively, frequently interrupting others in the process. Remind the dominant that “We are listening to Mary’s opinion now”.

Asks leader for opinion. Redirect question to the group.

Bored. Find person’s interest or experience and call on that.

Definitely wrong. If the person is definitely wrong, you can say, “That is one way of looking at it” and then go on.

Irrelevant. Direct attention to topic under discussion. (E.g., “That is interesting and let’s come back to that after we finish...”)

Obstinate— usually the person does not see the point. Try to get others in the group to help out. (E.g., “I seem to be having some trouble explaining this, can someone else give it a try?”)

Too quick and helpful— often keeps others out. Tactfully redirect questions to others. (E.g., “Does someone else have an opinion on that?”)

Rambler. When person pauses for a breath, rephrase one of the statements and pass on to another person.

Shy, hesitant. Ask a direct question which can be definitely answered. Ask for their agreement on an issue.

Side conversation. There are a couple of ways to handle this. One is to stop what you are saying and wait for the side conversation to stop. Another is to draw one person into your discussion by asking their opinion. For example, “Mary, we need to hear everyone’s opinion on this issue. Will you share your ideas with all of us?”. Still another is to confront the situations directly, for example, “Mary, we wish to finish the meeting on time. Side conversations slow the group down. Will you postpone your discussion until after the meeting?”

If your meetings are long or frustrating, check the list above to see if any disruptive styles exist. The parent instructor can also help the group identify and work to avoid disruptive patterns. With a bit of thought you can find ways to meet the needs of these individuals as well as those of the group.

Best wishes for your forthcoming year with the coop. With the information presented in this booklet and the combined experience of your group, you are set for an exciting year. You can learn and grow from any snags that may develop. You can experiment with different styles of leadership as well as with different styles of parenting. If you run out of ideas— ask for help.

Have fun! Enjoy your growth as a leader.

CARING CO-OP COMMUNITY

A large part of your leadership in the cooperative preschool will be centered on building a caring co-op community. If parents see themselves as valuable members of a caring community, they are more likely to actively participate in the creation and maintenance of a supportive group of families. Many families build lifetime friendships through cooperative preschools. Just as we strive to build an appropriate learning environment for children, we work at making the co-op environment one where parents can learn skills and feel supported in the important work they do as parents.

TO ACHIEVE A CARING CO-OP COMMUNITY

1. Use encouragement rather than put-downs.
2. Listen to all views and foster mutual respect between members.
3. Separate the PEOPLE from the PROBLEM.
4. Include, encourage, and invite parents to participate in many different ways.
5. Share planning and decision-making with others in board meetings, parent meetings, and committee meetings.
6. Explore many different ways to share group duties and tasks among all families.
7. Check for understanding and others' perceptions when problems occur.
8. Ask "What? Why? and How?" questions to help individuals and the group become more aware of choices and their consequences.
9. Celebrate all the accomplishments and joys of belonging to a caring community of families.
10. Articulate goals, practices, and traditions of your group. Recognize that orientation to co-op practices is an on-going process best achieved through facilitating positive relationships between parents.
11. Clearly define the limits and basic responsibilities of co-op participation.

DURING MEETINGS

- Offer encouragement. Recognize group members' contributions. Validate their opinions, ideas, and feelings.
- Be a mediator. Resolve disagreements among group members by offering compromises, legitimizing the existence of different opinions, or suggesting a creative solution that integrates mutual concerns.
- Act as a gatekeeper. Help keep communication open by inviting quieter members to speak or proposing procedures to give everyone equal time.
- Comment on the process. Point out when the group develops an especially effective way of dealing with a task. Summarize what was accomplished. Let people know when you agree with the group's decision.

Basic Ground Rules for Parent Groups

As your leadership team comes together for the school year, remember that you each bring your own styles, needs and strengths to your team. The cooperative parent group will take their cues from their leaders in terms of what kinds of interaction and behavior is appropriate. If the Executive Board establishes and models these basic ground rules, the group will become more productive and supportive of your leadership.

1. RESPECT OTHER GROUP MEMBERS.

- Be very clear that judgmental, critical, and derogatory remarks or actions are NOT appropriate.
- Emphasize common experiences and value individual differences.
- Discourage competition and comparison among members.
- Recognize that all members have different strengths and talents that will benefit the group.

2. KEEP FOCUSED ON THE TOPIC OF DISCUSSION.

- Defer other topics to a specific time for discussion.
- Plan times for socializing and open-ended sharing.

3. LISTEN TO EACH OTHER.

- Discourage side conversations, interruptions, and private jokes, as these do not help the group process.
- Encourage focusing attention on the person talking.
- Offer all members a chance to be heard.
- It's okay to "pass" during discussions.

4. PRIVATE, PERSONAL INFORMATION IS NOT TO BE SHARED OUTSIDE THE GROUP. Building and keeping TRUST is important to the group.

See Appendix for Ground Rules, from: **Who, Me Lead a Group?**, J. I. Clarke (For Discovery and Support Groups)

Effective Team Leader and Member

Having been elected as a cooperative preschool Executive Board member, you have accepted the responsibility of serving the whole parent group in a leadership role.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP...

- communicate.
- are open, honest and fair.
- make decisions with input from others.
- act consistently.
- give the team members the information they need to do their jobs.
- set goals and emphasize them.
- keep focused through follow-up.
- listen to feedback and ask questions.
- show loyalty to the group and to the team members.
- create an atmosphere of growth.
- have wide visibility.
- give praise and recognition.
- address problems proactively.
- develop plans.
- share their common mission and goals.
- exhibit a willingness to change.
- want to take charge.
- remain available and accessible.
- demonstrate assertiveness.
- display tolerance and flexibility.
- accept ownership for team decisions.
- set guidelines for how team members treat one another.
- represent the team and fight a “good fight” when appropriate.

Board members serve in a leadership role and are also members of the whole cooperative parent group.

EFFECTIVE COOPERATIVE MEMBERS...

- support the team leaders.
- help the team leaders to succeed.
- ensure all view points are explored.
- express opinions, both for and against.
- compliment the team leaders on team efforts.
- provide open, honest, and accurate information.
- act in a positive and constructive manner.
- provide appropriate feedback.
- understand roles.
- bring problems to the team.
- accept ownership for team decisions.
- balance appropriate levels of participation.
- participate voluntarily.
- maintain confidentiality.
- view conflicts as an opportunity to learn.
- operate within the boundaries of team rules.
- approach team leaders with feedback when their behavior is not helping the team.
- discuss ideas, not people.
- avoid disruptive behavior such as side conversations.
- avoid defensiveness when fellow team members disagree with ideas.
- attend meetings regularly.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING

Despite all your best efforts to prevent problems, cooperative preschool groups and Boards may struggle with challenging situations periodically. You may benefit from using the following process in resolving difficult situations:

1. Take time to analyze.
 - Gather information, organize it and think about it.
 - If the problem is a conflict involving individuals, try to allow the people involved to feel a part of the solution.
2. Plan for options.
 - Identify possible solutions through brainstorming.
 - Review the group's standing rules/policies and past meeting minutes. Reminding the group of set policies may make a solution easier to implement.
 - Find points of agreement to build upon. Restate the group's goals. When a common purpose is identified it may be easier to find a solution.
 - Use the College Instructor or other advisor to help clarify the problem.
 - Remember that group development predicts some conflicts will happen as a group feels more involved and secure enough to state their opinions.
3. Evaluate and reflect.
 - Evaluate and reflect decisions that led to existing policies. Small changes may prevent future problems and help the group feel involved in the process. If the group takes time to evaluate, problem solving becomes more of an on-going process rather than crisis management.

SOME TYPICAL CO-OP PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

PERIODS OF TRANSITION (for example a new facility, Teacher or Instructor)

- Limit or reduce change in other areas.
- Plan for annual changes earlier in the school year to reduce other stresses.
- Model a spirit of adventurous enthusiasm. Focus on the group's resiliency, strengths and commitment. Verbalize what great problem solving role models you are for your children.
- Use the available resources at North Seattle College.
- Connect with other co-ops.
- Attend leadership trainings, whether through North Seattle College or elsewhere.
- Seek the support of alumni.

PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING

LOW ENROLLMENT

- Analyze factors contributing to low enrollment. Make a plan based on your analysis.
- Use word of mouth and utilize alumni
- Hold an Open House.
- Contact other Parent Coordinators to notify their lists about your openings.
- Advertise locally: community bulletin boards; newspapers, and other local publications; library information areas; online and email groups.
- Check the NSC/PAC website to verify accurate information.
- Examine budget closely: Is it possible to cut something or raise funds to reduce the need for increased enrollment?
- Avoid overselling the co-op to reluctant parents.

HIGH ENROLLMENT

- Refer parents to nearby co-ops.
- Temporarily high enrollment may be a positive situation if there is anticipation of some drops in the near future.

FINANCIAL DILEMMAS

- Identify problem areas early. Communicate at every board and parent meeting about finances.
- Address the problem of financially delinquent co-op members in your group's policies.
- Review the budget and monthly financial report, fundraising goals and plans, and consider a tuition increase or a one-time donation or emergency payment.
- Utilize your College Instructor and the Financial Advisor from PAC.
- Support your Treasurer by helping to plan for a better financial picture and by implementing needed measures.

CURRICULUM CONCERNS

- Schedule an Orientation meeting before the school year begins and continue to orient new parents to the group's philosophy.
- Facilitate accurate explanation and representation of the curriculum to new parents.
- Refer concerns to the Children's Teacher and the College Instructor. A small concern left unaddressed soon becomes a large frustration, which can lead to a family's dropping from your co-op. Give the Teacher and Instructor an opportunity to hear the concern and address it.

CONCERNS WITH CO-OP MEMBERS NON-PARTICIPATION

- Set expectations for participation clearly and early in the year.
- Practice group building.
- Pair experienced co-op members with new parents.

- Work with parents to find a good fit for committee work.
- Reinforce orienting practices to facilitate better understanding for the whole group.

FACILITY USAGE DIFFICULTIES

- Identify a liaison person in the co-op to discuss usage.
- Build positive relationships with members of your facility's managing board, maintenance or cleaning personnel, and other appropriate boards, committees or individuals.
- Arrange for and attend meetings to exchange information and discuss how the usage of the facility is going.
- Show appreciation for your use of the facility. Small gifts or volunteer work parties are usually appreciated.
- Have a method in place for having an on-going discussion of the facility usage.
- Convey to the group that most local facilities greatly subsidize co-op preschools through low usage fees. When parents have concerns, be sure they do not go directly to the facility but first to their designated co-op liaison person, the Teacher or the Instructor.
- Stay current with risk management for safety.

PARENT WITH SPECIAL ISSUES

- If a parent in your group is especially stressed to the point of concern, or is a parent with special needs, refer to your College Instructor, who is trained to help with community resources and referrals.
- Consider how unconscious biases and assumptions impact the situation, and experiences of marginalization may be involved.
- If appropriate, ask the parent if and how the group can help.

When your Board or your co-op group must make a decision, utilize all your resources as leaders. Be mindful of your group's development, the individual styles of the members of your group, and try to approach the decision-making process by asking these questions:

1. WHAT? Do we have all the facts?
2. HOW? How will we put this into action?
3. WHY? Have we overlooked any new ideas?
4. WHO? How will this decision make us feel?

APPENDIX

Sample Agenda & Hints for Monthly Parent Meetings

During meetings, the chairperson can create a supportive atmosphere for the group and should strive to make this comfortable time for everyone. An agenda for the business meetings is helpful to the group in conducting the parent meetings as effectively as possible. Group members are better prepared to participate when they have had an opportunity to read the agenda before the meeting.

An *agenda might include* the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| ▪ Parent Education by instructor | 7:00 |
| ▪ Refreshments/social time | 8:00 |
| ▪ Report from the teacher | 8:10 |
| ▪ Reports from the treasurer, PAC, PC | 8:25 |
| ▪ Old Business | 8:35 |
| ▪ New Business | 8:45 |
| ▪ Announce next meeting/Closing | 9:00 |

Order and timing of items. The parent education portion of the meeting may precede or follow the business portion of the meeting as group and instructor decide.

Assign a time to each segment of the meeting. Tell members *in advance* the length of time so they can plan their presentation to fit the time. A minute before the time is up signal (or announce) that you will be moving on. If the matter is controversial, allow enough time for options and consensus building.

Tips for an effective agenda

1. Limit the number of decisions to be made in one meeting
2. Allow enough time for a thorough discussion
3. Distribute an agenda which outlines decisions to be made, when necessary, several days before a meeting
4. Have someone check off items as you progress

Agenda Samples

Pre-3's Fall Orientation Meeting

- 7:00 Welcome and Introductions**
- 7:10 Parent Educator:**
Ice Breaker, NSC introduction, information and business
- 7:20 Chair or Vice Chair:**
Workday assignments
Board buddies
Parent meeting snack sign-up
- 7:30 Treasurer:**
Budget, tuition and scholarships
- 7:40 Parent Coordinator:**
Forms, rosters and handbooks
Update on enrollment
- 7:50 Chair:**
Communication
Job descriptions
- 8:00 Teacher:**
Partners or drop off/diaper/ toilet buddies
- 8:05 Break (pick jobs and partners)**
- 8:20 Teacher:**
Parent Responsibilities
Classroom Responsibilities
Health and Safety

8:55 Job announcements and final questions

Fall 3-5 Orientation Agenda Sample 7:00 - 9:00pm

Welcome!

7:00-7:15 Chair

Co-op Life & Expectations

Board Buddy System

Parent Meeting Dates

7:15-7:45 Parent Educator

Introduction

Icebreaker

Description of Parent Education in 3-5's

Parent Obligations/Meetings

7:45 – 8:00 Teacher

Class schedule and information

Slow Start

Distribute child profile questionnaire

Class timeliness discussion

8:00 – 8:20 Vice Chair

Distribute snack, cleaning, work schedules and class calendar

Location of Attendance sheets

Describe I'm special week

The on-call system

8:20 – 8:25 Parent Coordinator

Parent Handbooks with new standing rule changes

Roster/Waitlist Update

8:25 – 8:30 Secretary

Group E-mail list and missed meeting expectations

8:30 – 8:35 Treasurer

Discuss Tuition collection and delinquency policy

Review budget, financial report, reimbursement procedure

Explain PAC Scholarship procedure and Forms

8:35 – 8:40 PAC Report

8:40 – 8:50 Health and Safety

Collect all required forms

First Aid/CPR certificates of members kept on file

Location of First Aid kit

*Dates to Remember: **First Day of School**, “Slow Start”, decided upon at each co-op class*

***Scholarship applications** due third Friday in September*

School Calendar and monthly meeting dates

Some Hints for Leading a Group

In planning and conducting meetings, the chairperson supports each member's participation and encourages the entire group to be involved in decisions. The board can only make recommendations. Decisions must be made by the total membership.

Some techniques which may be helpful are presented on page 18.

- Making summaries and transitions for the group as a discussion progresses
- Using differences of opinion to further group understanding of an idea
- Asking for motions that will enable the group to make decisions
- Tabling decisions and/ or appointing a committee to gather additional information for a future meeting

To help the group make logical and orderly decisions, the chairperson may appoint a committee or task force to gather and publish information in advance. During the meeting, it is helpful to be sure the group can accurately define the problem. Summarizing the issues for the group helps clarify the direction of the group and points the way to the next step in the discussion.

New Parent Information

The parent coordinator explains to each new parent the information about the coop program and provides a group orientation before school starts for new and returning parents.

Initial program information:

- **Identify the group:** name, location, time of meeting, age group served, number of children in the group, and tuition
- **Describe what the coop experience includes.** Do *not* minimize the expectations for participation. Be real about the amount of time required for meetings, work day, transportation, cleaning, etc...
- **Generally define the role of parents as students** in a non-credit class at NSC. The coop is both the vehicle for and results of the parents' learning.
- **Convey the benefits of the program.** For example, a unique parent-child shared relationship; involvement in your child's education; working with 15-20 other parents for the enrichment of each child; an opportunity to help other children; an opportunity to share concerns with other parents; access to the resources of the College; and a sense of community developed in working with the coop.

Group orientation information:

- Presentation by the teacher
- Review requirements for participation
- Review how coops get the work done (officers' role, committee jobs, assistant teacher)
- Explain the relationship to North Seattle College

- Accept a deposit for enrollment (not refundable after a given date). A deposit should be accepted only *after* the applicant has been given a fair picture of the coop experience.
- Give printed material about the coop, usually in a folder. The material may include by-laws, a guide for parents, yearly schedule, roster.

Chair's Master Planning Calendar

June/Summer

- Meet with previous Chair and receive Chair notebook.
- Transfer bank account signatures
- Give roster of new board to Parent Educator.
- Determine date of fall orientation (usually in early September)
- Review the monthly meeting dates set at spring orientation for any conflicts with vacations and holidays. Check first and last day of school. Have these ready for fall orientation.
- Schedule mtg. with new board to plan fall orientation (usually in June)
- Review location of keys to preschool and who has them.
- Read and become familiar with the By-laws.
- Review cleaning procedure of the school.
- If applicable contact the person in charge of the usage of your space, introduce yourself, and confirm usage of facility for your program.
- Review any documents and procedure for signing leases and dates due
- Review advertising
- Year end audit
- Discuss Fall fundraiser

September

- Conduct fall orientation.
- School is set up/clean-up
- Return parent agreement to college.

-Attend Fall Leadership workshop at NSC.

- Fall picnic (if applicable)

-Check with Health & Safety on all forms due and certifications of appropriate people for First Aid/ CPR (health and safety, subs, teacher). Post on H&S board.

-If applicable update All School rosters and calendars. Post #'s by phone

-Consider having an All School board meeting in beginning of October. It can be a good way to disseminate information between all classes and get to know each other and the issues of the site.

-Review the file date on the Nonprofit Corporation Annual Report. This keeps the incorporation status for your program. (This is mailed to co-op via college.)

October

-Check in with teachers regarding professional development plans, including if they plan to attend WAEYC conference typically in October.

-Check with board to make sure they are able to manage their task and if any committee person needs support in their duties.

-Develop cohesiveness within the group.

-Insurance usually due (bill from college)

-Facility safety check

-Review playground needs

_Review advertising

November

-If applicable determine plans for winter social. It is advisable to have a Board meeting during the month of December, as there will still be business to attend to.

- If applicable, determine appreciations for teacher and others .

- If your parent coordinator is not able to attend the Parent Coordinator's meeting in November, find a substitute. This meeting covers the entire registration process and is very important. You may need to review registration policy.

-Review registration guidelines for coop and college Winter Registration

December

-Winter social/parent meeting. Have parents sign cards, etc. for teacher and parent educator

-If applicable write a thank-you to parent who hosts house for winter social

-Review snow policy

January

- Find out the dates for priority registration and review the impact this will have on the class.

-Review the process for teacher/program evaluation and teacher rehire.

- Review the teacher/program evaluation forms and discuss making any changes as needed.

-Distribute the program/teacher evaluation forms and collect before end of month. Return to your class secretary to do a summary report.

-Give a copy of the summary report for teacher to review.

-Remind committees to update their committee records during the year

-Review guidelines for missed mtgs. for all parents. Parent Educator needs to be receiving copies of attendance records from secretary.

-Review (this was done at fall orientation) at the parent meeting any changes in scheduled parent meetings, which may be due to conflicts with the winter and spring break dates.

-If applicable, schedule carpet cleaning for winter break

-If applicable, mid year audit.

-Review mid year budget

-Discuss Spring fundraiser

February

-At the board meeting, review the program/teacher evaluations and the summary prepared by the secretary (some sites this is chair- look in job descriptions/standing rules)

- The summarized evaluation can be discussed at the February board and parent meetings.

-Personnel committee should review and draft a teacher's employment agreement (usually chair, Tres., vice-chair and parent educator), set a preliminary budget of suggested teacher salaries and next year's tuition.

Updated 2021

-If applicable discuss teacher raise and working agreement at parent mtg. (By voting at February meeting whether to renew the Teacher's Working Agreement, you have one month period to review any possible changes to the agreement. You can move your time frame to the March meeting, depending on renewal dates.)

-Distribute registration procedures for all parents.

-Discuss year and dates, spring orientation date and a time to plan for the meeting.

-If needed assist the parent coordinator in getting an estimated head count on returning parents for next year's programs

-Quarterly Safety check by H&S person

March

-Discuss and review with the board the Treasurer's budget proposals for next year. Board recommends one to be voted on for the next year at the parent meeting.

-Facilitate the board to make a recommendation to renew (or not) the teacher's contract. Discuss possible changes. Have the secretary/designated board member write up final employment agreement.

-Entire class may (check your standing rules) vote to renew the teacher's working agreement and vote on board's recommendation budget for next year.

-Chair and treasurer to sign teacher agreement.

- Ask the secretary to review the attendance records for Parent Meetings to see if there are any parents that need to make up for missed meetings.

-Prepare for any amendments in the standing rules (policies and procedures should be reviewed annually) or Bylaws (these are legal foundational docs that don't usually change) for presentation to the parents at the March meeting. A vote can be taken at the April meeting.

-Remind parents to turn in committee folders/updated digital records with notes about the parent jobs at April mtg.

-Update any of the committee descriptions.

-Discuss any appreciations for end of year/ set a committee.

-Review and determine the agenda for spring.

-Orientation, decide on date and refreshments.

-Set fall dates

Updated 2021

April

- Review committees and make any changes.**
- Program evaluation**
- Vote on by-law changes.**
- Plan for end of year social.**
- Collect committee folders/digital records on class and board jobs.**
- Organize the closing of preschool.**
- Plan the spring orientating agenda.**
- Select thank-you gifts/cards to teacher and others to be presented at end of year social.**
- Identify any thank-you notes that need to be written for special efforts and contributions throughout the year.**
- Quarterly H&S check (April/May). Year summary turned into NSC Parent Ed Coordinator.**

May

- Update parent information folders and committee folders/digital records as needed.**
- Spring Orientation meeting. Board elections.**
- Plan for changeover to new board. Remind board to update their officer handbooks/digital records and get ready to pass on to new board members.**
- Meet in June with new board members for a transition meeting**
- Choose dates and time of board mtgs.**
- Summer Parks schedule for group to meet.**
- Plan for closing of school.**

Celebrate for a job well done!

Ground Rules

****Everyone Participates***

****Right to Pass***

****All Beliefs Are Honored***

****Mutual Respect***

****Confidentiality***

****No Side Conversations***

From: Who, Me Lead a Group?, J. I. Clarke (For Discovery and Support Groups)

Generic Phrases for the Chairperson

“I’ll note that. Let’s put that on the agenda.”

“Let me think about that.”

“What are “we” going to do about that?”

“I noticed that...”

“We’re all in this together.”

“I’ll take that to the board.”

Yearly Sample Calendar for a 3-5's Co-op

AUG

- 8/3 Board planning session
- 30th/31st (Wed/Thu) Classroom set-up (9-11AM, 11-1PM& 1-3PM), sign up w/Parent Coordinator)

SEP

- 4th **Labor Day Holiday (Wed. 9/6 classes start at SPS)**
- 6,7,11,13 New Student tours (sign up with Parent Coordinator)
- 11th 9:30 – 11am First Board Meeting, at the preschool
- 8th 9:30 – 11:30 Leadership Training (board/secretaries) at North Seattle
- 11th 6-9:00 pm First parent meeting, (6-8 AM class, 8-9 PM class), at the preschool
- 12th 6-9:00 pm Curriculum night (6-8 AM class, 8-9 PM class), at the preschool
- 14th (Thu.) First day of preschool (AM Slow Start on 9/14 & 9/15)
- 30th 8:00-4:30 CPR/First Aid Training (contact H & S officers to sign up), at NSCC

OCT

- 9th 9:30-11:30 am Board Meeting (note change of date)
- 12th 7-9 pm PM Parent Meeting (2nd Thurs.)
- 19th 7-9 pm AM Parent Meeting (3rd Thurs.)
- 21st 8:00-4:30 CPR/First Aid Training (contact H & S officers to sign up), at NSCC

NOV

- 6th 9:30-11:30 am Board Meeting
- 9th 7-9 pm PM Parent Meeting (2nd Thurs.)

	10 th	(Fri)	Veteran's Day Holiday - No school
	16 th	7-9 pm	AM Parent Meeting (3 rd Thurs.)
	23-24	(Thu/Fri)	Thanksgiving Vacation – No School
<u>DEC</u>	4 th	9:30-11:30 am	Board Meeting
	14 th	7-9 pm	PM Parent Meeting (2 nd Thurs.)
	21 st	7-9 pm	AM Parent Meeting (3 rd Thurs.) <i>**need to change due to break</i>
	Dec. 18- Jan. 1		Winter Vacation – No School
<u>JAN</u>	8 th	9:30-11:30 am	Board Meeting <i>**note 2nd Monday due to New Year</i>
	11 th	7 pm	PM Parent Meeting (2 nd Thurs.)
	15 th		Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday – No school
	18 th	7-9 pm	AM Parent Meeting (3 rd Thurs.)
<u>FEB</u>	2 nd	(Fri)	<i>SPS Day Between Semesters – **decide if preschool off</i>
	5 th	9:30–11:30 am	Board Meeting
	8 th	7-9 pm	PM Parent Meeting (2 nd Thurs.)
	15 th	7-9 pm	AM Parent Meeting (3 rd Thurs.)
	20-23		Mid-Winter Break – No School
<u>MAR</u>	5 th	9:30–11:30 am	Board Meeting
	8 th	7-9 pm	PM Parent Meeting (2 nd Thurs.)
	15 th	7-9 pm	M Parent Meeting (3 rd Thurs.)
	16 th	(Fri)	<i>SPS Professional Development Day - **decide if preschool off</i>
<u>APR</u>	2 nd	9:30–11:30 am	Board Meeting
	9-13		Spring Vacation – No School
	12 th	7-9 pm	PM Parent Meeting (2 nd Thurs.) <i>**need to change due to break</i>
	19 th	7-9 pm	AM Parent Meeting (3 rd Thurs.)
<u>MAY</u>	7 th	9:30–11:30 am	Board Meeting
	10 th	7-9 pm	PM Parent Meeting (2 nd Thurs.)
	17 th	7-9 pm	AM Parent Meeting (3 rd Thurs.)
	25 th		Last Day of School
	28 th		Memorial Day
			TBA – Classroom Clean-up
			TBA – New Parent Orientation
			TBA – New Board Orientation & Transition

CHECKLIST FOR INFORMATION TRANSFER FROM ONE EXECUTIVE BOARD TO THE NEXT

Use this checklist in the spring when a new Board is elected and again in the fall when the Board is beginning a new school year.

- Membership information – registration information of all enrolled parents and those on the wait list.
- A current roster.
- A roster of out-going Board members and in-coming Board members.
- Projected budget and financial statements.
- Copies of mid-year and end of year financial audits.
- Facility use contract.
- Building and Post Office Box keys.
- Teacher contract.
- Parent handbooks or folders.
- Orientation packet.
- Suggested committee or parent positions list.
- Inventory or copies of supply orders.
- Samples of letters to parents, planning calendar, Board and parent meeting agendas, meeting minutes.
- Suggestions for communication to members.

Things to Remember While Running a Meeting

The Basics

1. The Chairperson runs the meeting. Thus, the Chairperson also sets the tone for the meeting and shows respect to the attendees by having the meeting be relevant and starting and ending on time.
2. Use consensus decision making practices so that decisions made by the group are based on carefully listening to all voices.
3. The Chair puts the group's will into words. Restating the motion before voting as well as verbalizing the vote result makes clear what the minutes should say. This aids the secretary and everyone knows that they are voting for, or have approved.
4. Every meeting is a partnership between the leader and the participants.
5. Disagree without being disagreeable. Take time for all voices to be heard when there are differences of opinion.
6. If there is not consensus after taking time for all voices to be heard, it is best to postpone the decision. Consensus means that decisions made are ones that everyone in the group can live with. Taking a break for people to think more deeply often leads to better decisions for the group, and buy in to the decision made. Strengthening our relationships is more important than expediency unless an emergency decision has to be made.

CONSENSUS: What is consensus? Why do consensus building?

Consensus occurs when all members of a group cooperatively arrive at a decision they can support. A consensus decision best reflects the thinking of all members of the group, but it may not be their first choice of every group member. Consensus means that members of the group reach substantial agreement, rather than unanimity. Consensus does not involve majority voting, takes longer than voting, and is typically harder work. Consensus should be employed when the decision has a significant impact on the organization, or involves a major change in the way things are done, and application requires the support of each group member.

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR CONSENSUS?

Every member of the team participates in the discussion, both listening and being heard.

Conflict is viewed as an asset not something to be avoided, not everyone will totally be satisfied.

Participants must monitor the process looking for the next-most-acceptable alternative.

Avoid majority votes, averaging, coin flips, bargaining, etc. when trying to reach closure.

Be suspicious of an agreement that comes too quickly or easily, explore why.

Groups or individuals affected by a consensus program or plan should be part of the process.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED FOR CONSENSUS?

1. Start with a group that has worked together in positive ways and that recognizes individual member's strengths.
2. The group agrees on a focus, a topic, a goal to be achieved or a problem to be solved.
3. Consciously decide/declare that the decision to be made is important enough to use consensus.
4. Review the rules for consensus with the participants.
5. Information is then gathered by the participants and shared with the group; or the facilitator or outside experts bring information to the group, as important decisions are data based.
6. Move to a brainstorming session (pose questions) in order to generate many ideas.
7. The ideas that are generated are considered and those that are clearly unworkable are discarded, the facilitator uses various techniques to continue to reduce the list.
8. When "solutions" or "actions to be taken" have been narrowed to two or three, arguments pro and con are given.
9. The facilitator tests for consensus, may use the "Fist To Five," "Thumbs Up," or other techniques. Meeting adjourns so that participants can discuss in their constituent groups.
10. Group facilitator tests for consensus, may call a break to allow informal discussion between pro/con participants; or adjourn meeting to seek additional information.
11. Facilitator moves the group to Conditional Consensus and a Tentative Implementation Plan.
12. Conditional Consensus and Tentative Implementation Plan is discussed with all impacted groups.
13. Develop Final Consensus, an Implementation Plan, a Communication Plan and determine how success will be evaluated.

CONSENSUS DECISION STEPS

State the problem, question, decision
Agree on time limit for discussion
Initial "straw poll"
Discussion
Summarize emerging decision

Check "range of consensus" 1 - <i>Strongly support</i> 2 - <i>Agree with reservation</i> 3 - <i>Mixed; questions, reservations</i> 4 - <i>Somewhat opposed; concerns</i> 5 - <i>Strongly oppose.</i>

Yes ? Record decision	No? Hear and consider reservations, discuss further
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No consensus possible in time available? •Carry it over/delegate •Extend time, continue discussion •Use fall-back method (vote?)

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Through a process of discussion and understanding, consensus decision making enables a group to reach a final decision built on the group's wisdom that everyone can support. Because the process is more time consuming than a vote, it is only successful with a commitment to the process from the group. A commitment to consensus decision making often reflects the groups' values to be inclusive and honor each other's points of view. Consensus can result in a creative solution that is solidly supported by the entire group.

However, in spite of a groups' best intentions, different understandings within a group about working with consensus can lead to problems, such as abandoning consensus for "difficult" decisions, or the inability to make a decision and move forward. For these reasons groups find it helpful to reach agreement on a definition or "method" of consensus decision making. The following information is meant as a guide for groups when working with consensus.

E-Mail Etiquette

Email Recommendations:

1. **Include a clear and specific subject line.**
2. **Edit any quoted text down to the minimum.**
3. **Read your own message at least twice before sending.**
4. **Ponder how the recipient might react to the message.**
5. **Check spelling and grammar.**
6. **Don't use negative or insulting language, or USE ALL CAPS.**
7. **Remember that email is not private communication, especially from work.**
8. **When in doubt, save the message, overnight and reread it in the light of the dawn.**

Reminders:

-Count to ten and then send.

Don't send when you're tired or furious. E-mail can easily be angry, hurtful, or critical. It takes a lot of time to undo the damage, Treat emails like letters and phone calls; wait for a calmer moment to respond.

-There is nothing like the real thing. Never substitute e-mail for a necessary face to face meeting. Remember that a misdirected message can get messy, especially when they are of a personal nature.

-Rumor, gossip, and hearsay

Don't pass on rumor or innuendo about real people. This could come back to haunt you. E-mail can be easily forwarded to the wrong person, or worse, to the subject of your non-affection.

-Do unto others

Flaming—sending an abusive or insulting e-mail—is usually a mistake. Would you say it in person? If not, don't send it.

-Personal bandwidth

Remember the hierarchy when it comes to communications. First there is the face-to-face meetings, then phone calls, then voice mail, and then e-mail. Face-to-face meetings have the most impact and e-mail had the narrowest communications bandwidth. It's hard to communicate successfully in the best of circumstances. If it's an important message that can't be said face-to-face, then pick up the phone, or leave voice mail. Or, if you must, send e-mail.

Adapted from:

1. draft from Harvard Business School Publishing
2. NET-etiquette: Mind your Email Manners

North Seattle College Parent Education Program

Referral Process for “Non-Typical Behaviors” –Adopted 5/5/17

Program Mission and Goals:

The Parent Education Program implements practices that will create a welcoming environment for all the diverse members of our co-op neighborhoods. The program seeks to eliminate barriers to participation for English Language Learners, people of color, students with disabilities, families with low incomes, etc.

The Seattle Colleges are committed to the concept and practice of equal opportunity for all its students, employees, and applicants in education, employment, services and contracts, and does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity, color, age, national origin, religion, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, status as a veteran or disabled veteran, political affiliation or belief, citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or presence of any physical, sensory, or mental disability, except where a disability may impede performance at an acceptable level. In addition, reasonable accommodations will be made for known physical or mental limitations for all otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.

Purpose: Within the context of these values, mission and goals, this policy aims to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in the cooperative preschool setting and to gather additional information that will help teachers and the child’s parent determine the best possible learning environment for individual children. The cooperative preschool setting provides an opportunity for the family members working in the classroom to observe their own and other children, and learn through the parent education and confidential conversations with the teacher and parent educator about developmentally appropriate learning and behavior. This collaboration can help families to discover “red flags” and obtain early intervention when there are concerns about “non-typical” behaviors. Our priority is to work with the families and communities to provide a safe supportive learning experience for all children and adults, and to recognize how unconscious bias can impact our views of what is considered “non-typical” behavior.

Definition of Non-Typical Behaviors: Non-typical behavior is defined as “behavior outside the range of typical development for a specific age,” as determined by preschool cooperative staff through observation. These behaviors can include physical, social, cognitive and emotional behaviors that are indicated as “red flags” based on the knowledge and resources of the teacher and instructor.

Parent Responsibilities: The child’s parent/guardian and/or family members involved in the class shall work in collaboration with the teacher and college parent education instructor to conduct observations and discuss referrals to appropriate screenings and assessments.

Instructor/Teacher Responsibilities: The primary responsibility for helping the family to determine the best possible learning environment for their child rests with the classroom teacher and parent education instructor. The instructor and/or teacher will meet with the family to discuss the outcomes of the activities below and determine an appropriate course of action.

Observations

1. The classroom teacher and/or parent education instructor will conduct several written, descriptive observations of the child's behavior. They will record the child's movements, activities, and interactions with peers and adults in the classroom, focusing on times of day when behaviors of concern have been noticed.
2. Parent/guardian or appropriate family member of the child exhibiting non-typical behavior will also be encouraged to conduct short observations as well.
3. The instructor and/or teacher will provide the family with information from the WA state Early Learning Guidelines and possible other relevant resources to help clarify the concerns, as well as sharing information about the child's strengths at a meeting to discuss the observation notes and share information about possible referrals for further assessment.

Enhanced Supervision

If there are safety considerations and/or on-going disruption to the class, the family and teacher/parent education instructor will develop a plan for enhanced supervision. Such a plan may involve the child's parent/caregiver or another adult in the class shadowing the child with a focus on providing guidance in coaching appropriate behavior and preventing safety risks. The teacher and/or parent education instructor will provide guidelines and modeling appropriate shadowing techniques. It is recommended that those assisting with the supervision check in regularly with the parent, parent education instructor, and teacher to share successful strategies and assess if the plan needs to be modified.

Referral

The parent/guardian will meet with the teacher and parent education instructor to discuss referral options that may provide additional assessment to help meet the child's needs. If the family does seek an assessment, then once it has been completed, they will meet again to discuss how this new information helps to inform an appropriate plan for the child, and how to best communicate that to the co-op community to support the child's learning experience in the classroom.

Disruptive Behavior

The cooperative preschool is committed to providing a safe educational environment for all children and members. Behavior that significantly interferes with the educational experience of other children and the orderly operation of the preschool must be promptly addressed. Enhanced supervision is typically set up for a child exhibiting persistent behavior that physically harms others, damages property or disrupts classroom activities. Assessment is essential to determine appropriate strategies to best meet the child's needs. The goal is a mutually respectful

discussion and agreement on steps to decide if the co-op setting is the appropriate learning environment for the child.

Teamwork

The cooperative community is committed to serving all children and will not suspend or expel children. We do expect that families will work with the teacher, parent education instructor, and co-op community. This may include developing an appropriate plan to meet the child's needs, following up on assessments as needed to determine the child's needs, and working with the community to maintain a positive learning experience for all the children and families within the cooperative community. The plan should be in writing and signed by the parent, teacher and parent education instructor. Regular check-ins are recommended to make sure the plan is working well or assessing the need for changes.

Non-compliance

Should a family not comply with requests to participate in developing and following through with a plan to address serious safety concerns, the board may at their discretion consider dismissal of the family from the program, following their standing rule policies regarding this process. There should be clear written communication regarding the process, with deadlines set up for follow up prior to notice about dismissal. Documents should be signed by the parent and board chair to make sure everyone is aware of the process.