



Affiliated with Whatcom Community College  
[www.childreuscooppreschool.com](http://www.childreuscooppreschool.com)

# Family Handbook

*Updated May 2024*

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## Welcome to Children's Cooperative Preschool!

Our cooperative preschool works on the theory that positive parenting develops and expands self-esteem in children. To help achieve this, we provide a school to give parents an opportunity to learn more about children's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development through observation and interaction in the classroom. A monthly parenting education meeting provides perspective on what has been learned and offers more ideas that can be taken back into the classroom and home.

Children's Co-Op Preschool (CCP) benefits both parents and children. While parents have a resource from which to seek advice about child rearing, the children have a chance to experiment with all kinds of materials and equipment while learning to share with other children. Additionally, they learn to trust and accept guidance from other adults.

Any parent or guardian of a child between the ages of 2.5 and 5 who is willing to accept the duties and responsibilities of active participation in CCP is eligible. Students are accepted on a non-discriminatory basis.

Children's Co-Op Preschool is a 501c3 non-profit, governed by a board of parents, and advised by the classroom teachers and Whatcom Community College Parenting Educator.

At Children's Co-Op Preschool, we all pitch in and make our school the best it can be!

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## School Information

Children's Cooperative Preschool  
1409 18th Street (former Larrabee Elementary School)  
Bellingham, WA, 98225  
[bhamchildrengooppreschool@gmail.com](mailto:bhamchildrengooppreschool@gmail.com)

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## Staff Information

Heidi Peterson, Lead Teacher (360-510-7663, [heidipeterson14@gmail.com](mailto:heidipeterson14@gmail.com))  
Allie Bishop, WCC Parenting Educator (503-468-2873, [abishop@whatcom.edu](mailto:abishop@whatcom.edu))

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## Eligibility for Children's Cooperative Preschool

Children in the 2-day class must be 3 years old (36 months) by January 1, 2025.

Children in the 3-day class must be 3 years old (36 months) by September 1, 2024.

**To be eligible for our programs, students must be able to:**

- be toilet-trained and use the bathroom independently (with a teacher nearby to ensure student safety and well-being), with the understanding that occasional accidents may occur ([see below for additional details](#))
- be ready to explore, learn, and play alongside friends

## Health and Safety

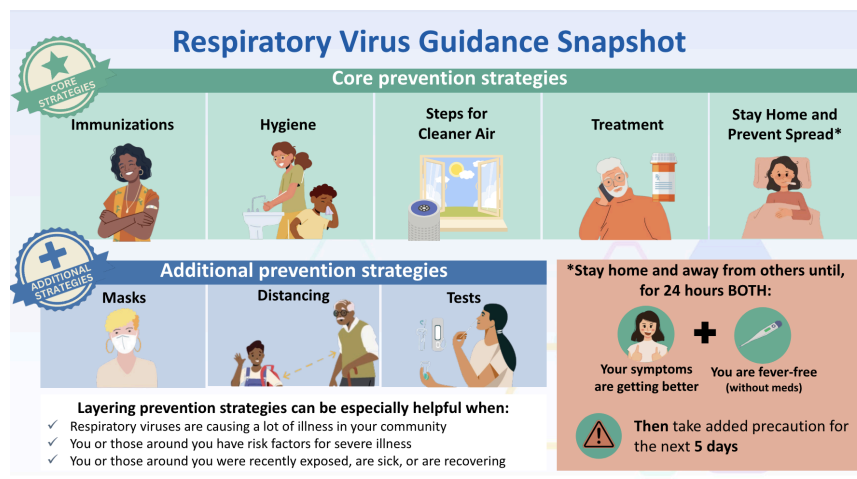
Children's health and safety are always the first concern at preschool. Please note the protocol for the following areas.

### Covid/Illness Protocols

You should keep your child home from school if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms (alone or together):

- Severe Cough/Congestion
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours
- Abdominal Pain
- Mouth or Skin Sores
- Rash

The following graphic from the CDC outlines prevention and protection measures for respiratory illnesses, including RSV and Covid-19.




## Medications

Please do not send medication, including cough drops, to school in your child's backpack or lunchbox. A completed and signed medication form must accompany all medication. If your child has a life-threatening allergy or condition that requires the use of medication (Epi- Pen, Asthma meds, etc.), a health plan must be established and a signed health plan form must accompany any prescription medications to be kept at school prior to your child's first day of attendance. A child with a life-threatening allergy or condition will not be permitted to be at school until these critical steps have been taken to ensure his/her safety.

## Immunizations + Health Records

We follow the [Washington State Department of Health](#) guidelines for immunizations. The Covid-19 vaccine is not required, but is recommended.

<div> <div>Child Care Vaccines Required Chart for Parents</div>  </div>							
	Hepatitis B	DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)	Hib (Haemophilus influenza type B)	Polio	PCV (Pneumococcal Conjugate)	MMR (Measles, mumps rubella)	Varicella (Chickenpox)
By 3 Months	2 doses	1 dose	1 dose	1 dose	1 dose	Not routinely given before 12 months of age	Not routinely given before 12 months of age
By 5 Months	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses	2 doses		
By 7 Months	2 doses	3 doses	2 or 3 doses**	2 doses	3 doses		
By 16 Months	2 doses	3 doses	3 or 4 doses**	2 doses	4 doses**	1 dose	1 dose
By 19 Months	3 doses	4 doses	3 or 4 doses**	3 doses	4 doses**	1 dose	1 dose
By 7 years or preschool/ school entry at ≥ 4 years*	3 doses	5 doses**	Not routinely given to children age 5 years and older	4 doses**	Not routinely given to children age 5 years and older	2 doses	2 doses

**Families must provide immunization records at the beginning of the school year.** You can access these records through your child's pediatrician, or using the Washington State DOH [MyIRMobile Tool](#).

## Toileting/Potty Training

Children must have independent toileting skills to be enrolled at Children's Co-op Preschool. This means that children must use underwear (not pull-ups or diapers) as we

do not have the staffing or the facilities to change diapers. Children must wipe themselves. Teachers give gentle reminders and invitations to use the bathroom during class time, and accompany children across the hall to use the bathroom, and support them in handwashing after using the toilet.

We understand that potty training is a journey that takes time, and can involve regression and challenges! We know that accidents can occasionally be part of that journey. Honest communication about where children are on their potty training journey is incredibly important for children to move into a place where they can be consistently independent.

### **Snack/Food Allergy Policy**

We may have students in class who have severe, life-threatening allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, eggs and dairy. Contact with these foods might result in anaphylaxis that will necessitate life-saving measures and for the staff to call 911. Because of this, certain foods may be restricted. We will communicate these needs at the start of the school year, and update them as needed.

Please be sure to communicate any dietary restrictions or allergies to teachers.

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### **Family Commitments**

As members of the co-op, a representative from each family is expected to:

- Work about 1-3 volunteer classroom shifts per full month
- Hold a school job
- Attend all monthly Parenting Education Meetings
- Participate in fundraising

All of these responsibilities can be shared between family members.

### **Classroom Volunteer Shifts**

Depending on enrollment numbers and insurance-required ratios, each family is required to volunteer for between one and three class volunteer shifts per month, with one of those being a back-up shift, in the event that the original volunteer has an emergency that prevents them from volunteering last minute. Your class representative will reach out via email with a sign-up link for volunteer shifts.

Classroom volunteers assist teachers with tasks as assigned, including engaging children in play, supporting hygiene practices (handwashing), and other duties as needed/assigned.

In order to hold class each day, we must have the proper ratio of adults to children:

- 1:5 (all children 37 months+)
- 1:3 (any children 30-36 months present)

These ratios are required by our insurance. Because of those safety requirements, parent volunteers should make extra efforts to be punctual on their volunteer days: we cannot hold class if we do not have the correct adult:child ratio.

## **School Job**

Each family is required to hold a school job, which supports the classroom, teachers, and community in some way. These jobs may include, but are not limited to:

- Board positions/leadership
- Fundraising committee
- Play dough making, craft prep
- Open house committee

There are many ways to support CCP with school jobs, and we welcome suggestions for creative family jobs that use your talents, expertise, and interests! Families can sign up for their job at the beginning of the school year.

## **Parent Education Meetings**

When you enroll your child in Children's Cooperative Preschool, one parent of each child is enrolled as a Parenting Education student at Whatcom Community College. As a Parenting Education student, you receive 3 credits per quarter (9 per school year). Completing 18 credits (2 years of co-op enrollment) culminates in a certificate in parenting education. Your classroom volunteer shifts are counted as your "lab", and your monthly parenting education meeting is counted as your "lecture". By enrolling your children at CCP, you are committing to these mandatory course requirements.

Parent Education meetings are a monthly, hour-long meeting facilitated by CCP's Parent Educator from Whatcom Community College. At these gatherings, the board shares any relevant school business, and we look at a parenting topic that is relevant to the ages and stages of the children in the co-op. Parents have an opportunity to request topics that are of particular interest to them. Parents are also welcome (and encouraged!) to reach out to the parent educator with any questions or requests for additional support.

## Fundraising Participation

In order to keep tuition affordable, we ask families to participate in school fundraising. The fundraising committee chooses and organizes a number of fundraisers during the school year. There are a number of fundraisers throughout the school year, so families can choose ones that work for them. The fundraising commitment is \$150. Families can also take a buy-out option and donate \$150 to CCP in lieu of participating in fundraising.

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## School Schedule

### 3 Day Class

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

### 2 Day Class

Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30 am - 11:30 am

CCP follows the [Bellingham School District Calendar](#) regarding breaks, holidays and snow closures. Additional activities will be announced at the Parenting Education Meetings and via email. Please be advised that the school start and finish days for the Co-Op are different from those for public schools, due to additional clean-up and prep days.

## Drop-off and Pick-up

Please bring your child to the gazebo on the southwest corner of the school building for drop-off. You will receive a QR code that you need to scan each day as a sign-in. Pickup happens at the same location.

## Daily Schedule + What to Bring

Every preschool day includes:

- Free play in the classroom (choice time)
- Gross motor time (indoor or outdoor, weather permitting)
- Circle time (stories, music, movement)
- Snack/Lunch
- Art activities/crafts

Please send your child in weather appropriate clothing, with a backpack that fits their water bottle and their lunchbox. Please make sure that all of your child's things are



labeled with their name. *Please do not* send personal items from home to play with at school: there are many engaging and exciting materials at school!

## ***Lunch/Snack***

There is a time for mid-morning snack/lunch provided each day. Parents are encouraged to pack and send a few simple, nutritious foods. Snacks must be able to be opened, handled, and eaten entirely independently by kids themselves, and must be small enough to fit into a lunch box that fits in the child's backpack. Ideas for snacks are fruits/vegetables (cut-up apples, peeled orange slices, blueberries, strawberries, dried fruits) and small crackers/bread.

Depending on the needs of the class, teachers may offer an additional prepared snack for children during the class time. Please be sure that you have communicated all dietary restrictions and allergies to the teachers.

## **Key Dates for 2024-25 school year**

Wednesday, September 11: 3-day Class Open House

Thursday, September 12: 2-day class Open House

Monday, September 16 + Tuesday, September 17: First Days of School

Monday, November 11, 2024: No school/holiday (Veteran's Day)

November 28 to 29, 2024: No school/holiday (Thanksgiving)

December 23, 2024 to January 3, 2025: No school/holiday (winter break)

Monday January 20, 2025: No school/MLK, Jr. day of service

Wednesday January 22, 2025: No school/day of commemoration (Treaty Day)

Monday February 17, 2025: No school/holiday

April 7 to 11, 2025: No school/holiday (spring break)

May 26, 2025: No school/holiday (Memorial Day)

June 11, 2025: Last Day of School

## **Weather Policy For Canceled Classes**

### **For each class:**

When three days have been missed due to weather-related cancellations, make-up days will be rescheduled in the Spring. We do not make up the first two snow days.

Teachers, along with the President, make this decision and the President will notify families by email about the make up classes, if needed.

When the Bellingham School District declares a closure due to inclement weather conditions and snow, we cancel as well. If there is a school delay, preschool is canceled. You can find out about school cancellations on the [Bellingham Public Schools website](#), or by calling 360-676-6400.

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## Tuition and Fees

1. A non-refundable \$75 Registration is collected at the time of registration, and a \$125 Supply Fee is collected in May for the upcoming school year.
2. Each member will pay tuition on the **FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH**, there will be a late fee charged if it is received after the 5th. **Tuition not paid by the fifth of the month will have a \$15.00 late charge added. This fee is strictly enforced. A fee may be charged if payment is declined.**
3. **MEMBERS WITH MORE THAN ONE CHILD ATTENDING CCP:** WCC fees are included in our tuition payments. Since WCC fees are only charged once per family, WCC fees will be deducted from each additional child's CCP tuition.
4. Tuition must be paid regardless of the child's absence due to illness, bad weather, holidays or vacations. In case of emergency or extended illness, please reach out to the board president.

Tuition is a yearly amount that is broken down into 10 payments.

**3 Day Class:** \$3,700 yearly / \$370.00 per payment

**2 Day Class:** \$2,300 yearly / \$230.00 per payment

We use Jovial to collect tuition. You will be automatically billed on the first of each month, through the Family Access Portal. We do not accept paper checks, but there is an option to submit a check online. You may also pay more than your specified amount at any time.

CCP no longer accepts paper checks or cash payment. All tuition payments must be done through Jovial. You may use a credit card or an electronic check (ACH/eCheck) via Jovial. If you wish to pay via credit card, there will be a processing fee included. It will show up as a "donation." You will be required to make this donation. Essentially, you will be donating the cost of the processing fee to the school so in turn, CCP can pay the fee.

CCP accepts payments for multiple months in advance. To do so, simply enter the total dollar amount you wish to pay when processing your payment in Jovial.

## Withdrawal Policy

In the event of a student withdrawal from CCP during the school year, the family is to submit written notice to the class registrar between the first and tenth\* of the month. If notice to withdraw is given after the tenth\* of the month, families are expected to submit tuition for that month. **In no case will the registration fee or supply fee be refunded.**

*\*This date may change subject to calendar conflicts and are outlined at the start of each school year.*

## The Role of the Teacher

The teachers in the Children's Co-Op Preschool are hired and paid by the preschool. The teacher's primary responsibility is to set up a sound educational program for young children. In doing this, he or she works to establish routines and activities that will be most effective in promoting social, physical, intellectual, emotional, and creative growth for each child. The teacher works with parents individually to assure each child's success at preschool.

The teacher constantly evaluates and interacts with the children in the preschool to see what materials they are ready to learn from, and determines which activities will challenge them next. The schedule provided is very important to the security of the preschool child. The teacher knows that young children learn best through first hand experiences and creative play; therefore, the environment is set-up to promote these types of activities. The teacher always keeps in mind the need for fostering creativity, encouraging development of inner controls, and promoting problem solving.

The teacher plans the curriculum and the parents, as assistant teacher helpers, help carry it out by working in assigned areas with the children. The teacher may change the curriculum when another activity appears to better suit the children. The teacher has the responsibility to explain any part of the program so everyone will understand the "whys" of an activity.

## The Role of the Parenting Educator

The parenting educator/facilitator of the Children's Co-Op Preschool has been hired by, and is employed by, Whatcom Community College. They are responsible for parent education. She conducts monthly parent meetings which are designed to meet the needs of the group through lectures, discussions, or guest speakers. She works with classroom teachers to ensure we are delivering developmentally appropriate programming that aligns with our mission.

The parenting educator/facilitator, Allie Bishop, is available for individual conferences at the request of the parent and also welcomes e-mails. Families can trust that their communications with the facilitator are always confidential. She is aware of resources available to families in the community and is willing to help locate assistance if needed in a specific area. The facilitator also meets with other teachers at Whatcom Community College to exchange information about preschool and current early childhood research. The facilitator is also the faculty adviser to the Preschool Board, Preschool members and parent meetings. The facilitator is a person who firmly believes in the strength of the family and in the purpose of a cooperative preschool.

## Who to Contact with Questions/Concerns

<b><u>Teachers</u></b>	About your child or other children in school; children's daily schedule/school program; if your child contracts or has been exposed to a contagious disease; if you have a talent, occupation, hobby or collection you would like to share; if you have ideas for field trips.
<b><u>President</u></b>	About the general function or administration of the school; to get a message to all families; to use the school's name in the community; if you have an item to discuss at the parent meeting; if you have an issue you would like to bring to the attention of the board.
<b><u>Vice President</u></b>	If you are unable to reach the President; if you are unsure of what your school job entails or for general function inquiries; fundraising questions/comments
<b><u>Secretary</u></b>	If you have information regarding meetings or organizations in the community where we should have a representative.
<b><u>Tuition Treasurer</u></b>	If your tuition may be a little later than the regular due date; if you have questions or concerns about CCP finances; If your tuition is incorrect in Jovial; if your tuition is going to be late; if you would like to pay for your tuition in advance.
<b><u>Parenting Educator</u></b> Allie Bishop <a href="mailto:abishop@whatcom.edu">abishop@whatcom.edu</a>	If you have any questions/concerns about our program; if you have ideas/suggestions for parent meeting topics or parenting questions or concerns; If you will need to miss a parenting education meeting; if you have questions about accessing student services and benefits at WCC.
<b><u>Registrar</u></b>	If you wish to terminate membership; if you have a friend who wants to join the co-op; if any of your contact information changes.