

Mundelein Cooperative Preschool Parent Handbook

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How the School Operates

Mundelein Cooperative Preschool (MCP) is a non-profit organization run by an elected board of directors. The board sets policy, handles all financial matters, makes personnel decisions, according to the school's established by-laws. Board members also handle day-to-day activities by participating in and supervising the preschool's operating committees.

The director handles all educational matters and serves as the staff liaison to the board of directors. The director is the professional head of the school and the main representative of MCP within the community. He/she is the head of staff, as well as leader of the educational progress of our children in tandem with the teachers. He/she works with parents and teachers to handle any problems or referrals to other agencies should the need arise.

Parents are also a vital part of the educational process at MCP. There are many opportunities for parents to contribute their time and talents. Each parent's participation is what makes our school the premier preschool experience in our area. Your suggestions and improvements are welcomed and encouraged. Collectively, MCP benefits from the parents, staff members and board members who bring their ideas, experience and service to our school.

Philosophy

We at MCP believe in the importance of fostering the mental, physical, and social growth and development of the preschool child within a planned and enriched environment provided by trained personnel and the cooperative involvement of parents.

We believe, and current research in early childhood education maintains, that children learn best when activities and materials are concrete, real and relevant to the lives of young children, and where the children's learning is directed by his or her own curiosity and desire to make sense of his or her world.

Our program emphasizes learning as an interactive process. The school environment encourages learning through active exploration and interaction with adults, children and materials. Early learning concepts are introduced as appropriate within the framework of the child's self-directed play as well as in small and large group activities so that each child may begin at his/her own pace to master the skills he/she will utilize in Kindergarten.

Our preschool is organized as a cooperative. This means that each parent is committed to participating in the operation of the school. This allows the parent to share in the child's excitement of learning, gain new understanding of their child's developmental growth, acquire a new appreciation of their own child as a separate person and also to establish vital close communication with their child's teacher. The active parent involvement enables us to provide the highest quality program and maintain close ties to the parents and families we serve.

Goals

The goal of MCP is to provide a succession of experiences so that each child may have the opportunity to develop at his/her own rate. We feel that a child's exposure to the goals listed below is more important than his/her *accomplishment* of these goals.

We strive to help each child:

- Develop a positive self-image
- Gain personal values and skills
- Learn problem solving and decision-making skills
- Expand knowledge through exploration and investigation
- Develop communication skills
- Develop large- and small-muscle skills
- Experience art, music and imaginative play activities
- Be exposed to concepts such as color, shape, letters, numbers, etc.
- Develop math, reading and writing readiness skills
- Learn about themselves and their community
- **Experience success and have fun**

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Absences

If your child is sick, please call to report his/her absence by 9:00 a.m. If your child has a fever of 99.2 or above, he/she should not attend school until 24 hours after the fever has subsided. If your child is vomiting or has diarrhea, he/she should not attend school until 24 hours after it has ended. For other communicable diseases, please refer to the chart at the end of this handbook.

PLEASE NOTE: If your child is unable to attend school on their scheduled day due to an illness or a conflict they WILL NOT make up that class on another day.

Age Requirements

Children must be three by Sept 1st for the T-Th AM class. Children with Fall birthdays (Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec) can join either the PM class in September, or wait to join the AM class as of January 1st, space permitting. If a child is enrolled prior to their 3rd birthday, it is generally recommended that the child stay in the T-Th program for 2 years. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis.

Arrival and Departure

Class hours are as follows:

AM: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

PM: 12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Classes will begin promptly and children are expected to be in the classroom on time. Please **DO NOT** arrive before 8:55 a.m. or 12:25 p.m. Teachers need the time before class to prepare for the day. Each student must be escorted into the classroom by the adult bringing him/her to school. **MCP is not responsible for any child who is not taken directly into the classroom.**

Classes end promptly at the designated times. Each child must be individually dismissed by the teacher and signed out by the parent. **Once signed out, the school is no longer responsible for the child, as each child is placed into the care of the adult who has come to pick up him/her from school.**

Children can **only** be dismissed to authorized persons – those you have designated on the proper forms. If you need your child to be dismissed to a person not authorized on the forms, you must send in a signed, dated note authorizing the person to pick up your child. That person, if he/she is not another parent of the school, will be asked to provide identification before the child is released into his/her care.

If you are unavoidably delayed and unable to pick up your child promptly, please call the school and notify the teacher. Please make this the exception and not the rule. Please remember if you are late, this is a stressful situation for your child and MCP is not a licensed day care. It is our goal to provide as positive

experience as possible. Due to the extra demands placed on the teachers when you are late you will be assessed a fine. If you are more than 10 minutes late you will be charged \$5 per additional five minutes late.

Birthdays

We will do our best to schedule you to parent aide on your child's birthday. Please do not plan a big celebration at school. We like to keep celebrations simple. The class will sing "Happy Birthday" to the child and he/she will receive a birthday crown or small token from the teachers. Special birthday treats that adhere to the snack policy listed in this handbook will be permitted to celebrate your child's birthday.

Please do not distribute invitations or goody bags at school.

Calendar

An MCP school calendar is included in this handbook. We follow the District 79 school holidays and closings. Monthly tuition remains the same during these times. Parents will be notified of any calendar changes.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not to be used during school hours by all employees/volunteers when working directly with the children, no personal calls or texting is allowed. Staff is encouraged to inform family or other persons to call the school in case of emergency during class time. Staff may take cell phones to the playground in the event an emergency occurs and help is needed.

Classroom Maintenance Fee

Each family has paid a \$30 maintenance fee that is used to deep clean the school and pay for any repairs needed throughout the year. This helps us ensure a healthy and safe environment for our students.

Clothing

Please dress your children appropriately for the types of activities in which we regularly engage – for example clay, paint, glue, sand, sitting, crawling or rolling on the floor. We do have smocks available for messy work, but in spite of our best efforts, children tend to get messy when participating in activities.

Provide an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothes for your child. Please keep these in your child's backpack.

We try to go outside every day. Send your child prepared for the weather. In the winter, be sure to pack a warm hat, mittens (preferred over gloves at this age), snow pants, boots, etc.

Discipline

It is our goal that each child learns self-management skills and inner control through a safe, loving and planned environment. The children are provided with consistent, realistic limits and routines and are encouraged to follow them through positive reinforcement. We help the children to use their words, rather than physical means, to resolve conflict. They are helped to be in tune with their own feelings as well as the feelings of others.

If needed, we remove a child from the scene of conflict in order to help the child regain self-control by either having him/her talk with the teacher or moving to a quieter play area with more relaxing media (play dough, sensory table, etc.) where the child can gain self-control.

Under no circumstances will corporal punishment or verbal abuse be used.

Dismissal

MCP may request the withdrawal of any child from the program with due consideration to the following factors:

1. Any exhibition of behavior that is detrimental to the group, including physical harm to others or property.
2. Refusal of the child or parent to cooperate with the program's expectations and guidelines.
3. Withholding of vital information such as medical conditions that are important to the child's well being and developmental progress.

Due consideration shall include: adequate parental notification, repeated attempts to address the child's individual needs and documentation. Dismissal is subject to the Board of Director's vote.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, the director or teacher in charge will first attempt to contact the parent(s) and the child's physician. Signing the MCP Policy Agreement gives your authorization to MCP to take whatever emergency medical steps deemed necessary for the care and protection of your child. Any expenses incurred will be the parent's responsibility.

Field Trips

There will be various field trips scheduled throughout the year. These trips enhance the children's understanding of their world, as well as reinforce classroom concepts.

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to/from field trips. Car seats are required.

Because of the nature of some activities, field trips may not always be scheduled during your class time. Please be flexible or arrange for another parent to accompany your child.

Fire Drills

Fire drills will be conducted several times during the year to meet both state and federal regulations.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, please notify both the teachers and director personally, as well as filling out the appropriate forms in your registration packet. Children with food allergies will have an emergency plan posted in the director's office, and their allergy will be noted on the refrigerator as well.

MCP is striving to be a peanut-free environment, and the snacks provided to the children by parents must be from the approved snack list. However, if your child has a food allergy, you will be asked to provide a snack for your child each class session. The snack should be individually packaged with your child's name, the date and your signature on it. Parents of children with food allergies who provide individual snacks for their children will not be required to provide snacks for the entire class. Please see the section on Parent Aides for more information.

Fund-raising

As a non-profit organization, MCP relies on the generosity of parents, their families and friends to help support the school financially. Conducting fund-raisers helps the school save for capital expenditures and keeps the school financially healthy. The school's primary fund-raiser is the For the Kids Auction, held annually in late winter.

Health Forms

In order to meet the State of Illinois licensing requirements, MCP requires a health check-up of each child (including a TB test and lead screening), parent aide (with a TB test or chest X-ray), teacher, assistant teacher and director. **No one may begin participating in the school program until the proper health forms have been completed and are on file with the registrar.** There will be no exceptions.

Holidays

For a variety of reasons related to the cultural diversity and the educational development of the children, MCP will explore holidays through related themes. For example, when discussing "weather" in December, we may mention that some people choose to decorate evergreen trees for a holiday called Christmas. Holidays will not be ignored. They will simply be kept low-key and will focus on providing experiences that children can enjoy and learn from on their own level. Our approach is considered both creative and progressive in the early childhood education field.

There will be approximately two to three parent-attended seasonal celebrations during the school year. Our staff will decide when these celebrations will be scheduled and you will be notified of the dates and times.

If you have further questions regarding MCP's holiday policy, please contact the director or any board member.

Insurance

MCP carries all necessary forms of insurance as required by state law.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be conducted in the fall and in the spring. Please check your school calendar for dates (subject to change as needed).

Policy Agreement

Each parent will be required to sign the MCP Policy Agreement during registration. By signing the MCP Policy Agreement, you are agreeing to its contents and granting permission for your child to:

- Use of all the play equipment in all of the activities at school
- Leave the school premises under the supervision of a staff member for neighborhood walks and field trips
- Be included in evaluations connected with the school program
- Be included in any publicity photographs or materials connected with the school program
- Be included in visits by students or others conducting research about or observing a developmentally appropriate preschool program.

Toilet Training

MCP is not licensed to change diapers. All children must be toilet trained by the time he/she begins class. No Pull-Ups, diapers or similar items are allowed.

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first day of each month. A \$20 late fee will be assessed if a payment is more than five days late. **It is your responsibility to remember tuition payments -- statements are not mailed out.**

Please make checks payable to **Mundelein Cooperative Preschool** and put your child's name and class on the each check.

Deposit tuition payments in the tuition box outside the director's office. **Do not give your tuition payment to any staff member or leave it on the director's desk.**

Please do not combine field trip or fund-raising fees on the same check as your tuition payment.

If there is a problem regarding payments, please call the treasurer. There is a 10% discount for each additional child enrolled during the school year.

Visitors

Visitors are always welcome. Appointments should be made in advance with the director or registrar so they may be present to answer any questions.

Withdrawing from Preschool

A parent withdrawing a child from MCP must provide written notice and meet the following conditions in order to receive a refund:

- If the student will be withdrawn prior to October 1, the director and/or registrar must be notified by August 1 of the year or forfeit their entire tuition deposit.
- After October 1, 30 days written notice in advance of withdrawal is required.
- If you withdraw your child prior to January 1 with proper written notice, 50% of your tuition deposit will be refunded.
- If you withdraw your child after January 1 with proper written notice, then 75% of your tuition deposit will be refunded.
- Tuition deposit refunds will only be made if your account is current.
- If no advance notice is given, your entire tuition deposit is forfeited.
- Classroom maintenance and registration fees are not refunded.

After due consideration, MCP may request the withdrawal of any child in the event that the child or parent(s) do not adjust to the school situation. A fair tuition adjustment will be considered on a case by case basis.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a cooperative preschool, we expect parents to participate in their child's education. This is enriching for both the child and the parent. Not only does it show your child that you are actively involved in their education, but it fosters a life-long appreciation of volunteering.

As a non-profit organization, we rely on our parents to help us run the school and provide the best education for their children that we can. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

MCP parents participate in the cooperative experience in three ways: 1) as parent aides in the classroom 2) by serving on a committee and 3) by becoming a board member.

Parent Aides

Please arrive 5 minutes prior to class time (8:55 a.m. or 12:25 p.m.) to help set up and discuss plans for the day with the teacher.

Always plan on staying after dismissal time to clean the classroom as specified on the checklist included in this handbook.

A monthly parent aide schedule will be distributed. You will be assigned to parent aide a minimum of once a month per child. If you are unable to parent aide on your day please let the teachers know. Snack, cups and napkins are still to be provided on your scheduled day regardless if you are there or not.

If you trade parent aide dates with another parent, please indicate the change on the calendar posted on the refrigerator at MCP and let the teachers know.

If you are unable to consistently parent aide on a certain day, please notify the secretary as soon as possible so you will not be scheduled on that day.

If you are pregnant, please let the secretary know your due date, so you can be scheduled around your delivery and the weeks following.

Children, including siblings, not enrolled in the school or enrolled in a different class session may not be present in class on the day you parent aide. This is dictated by Illinois State Law.

Snacks

Due to an increase in allergic reactions, we are now striving to become a peanut-free and water only preschool. Although this may be our goal, we know that we cannot possibly control a public facility entirely.

Parents of children with food allergies will be asked to provide their own snack for each class session. These snacks should be labeled with the child's name, the date and the parent's signature. Parents who provide individual snacks for their child with a food allergy will not be assigned snacks on the monthly calendar. There will be a mandatory orientation meeting for parents of children with food allergies at the start of school. **At that time, your child's allergy action plan signed by their doctor and all updated medications are required. Your child will not be able to attend school until these items are received.**

All snacks served in the preschool must be from the approved list. No exceptions will be allowed, unless approved by the teacher or director beforehand. For the safety of all the children, anyone bringing in an inappropriate snack will be asked to refrain from serving it.

Snacks must be store-bought and unopened. No items may be purchased in bulk because of the risk of cross-contamination.

Because of the risk of cross-contamination from store-bought bakery goods, birthday treats must also be provided from the list below.

At this time, the following items are considered safe, but **please make sure to read labels carefully** to check for the words "peanuts" and "traces of peanuts," especially if a brand name is not listed. No snacks will be served if the food label

indicates the words “peanuts” or “may contain trace peanuts”.

Regular Snacks

Pepperidge Farm Goldfish Crackers
Pretzels (most brands)
Nabisco Cheese Nips
Saltines
Graham Crackers (most brands)
Keebler Grahams (cinnamon or honey flavor)
Nabisco Teddy Grahams
Kix Cereal

Birthday Snacks Only

Kellogg’s Rice Krispie
Treats (original only)
Nabisco Oreos (original
or Double Stuff)
Fruit Roll-Ups
Kellogg’s Pop-Tarts
(strawberry, blueberry,
frosted cherry, wild berry)

Regular Snacks

Nabisco Triscuits
Nabisco Wheat Thins
Fruit (bananas, apples, grapes, canned, etc.)
Microwave Popcorn (most brands)
Applesauce
Kellogg’s Nutri-grain Bars (fruit flavors)
Raisins or other dried fruit (not in bulk)
Nabisco Newtons (fig or other fruit)
Lender’s Bagels (plain)
Sunshine Cheez-It (regular)
Vegetables (carrots, celery, etc.)
Kraft Handi-Snack Cheese Breadsticks & Crackers

Birthday Snacks Only

wild watermelon, frosted
raspberry and blueberry)
Jell-O cups (no pudding)
Popsicles
Fruit Juice Ice Pops
Chips Ahoy! (plain
chocolate chip cookies)
Stauffer’s and Austin Zoo
Animal Crackers (original,
iced or chocolate)

Drink

Please provide bottled water only- no flavored waters, please.

Please bring enough snacks, drinks, cups and napkins for the students, teachers and parent aides.

Parent Aide Checklist

Before Class

- Put snack in kitchen
- Write snack on calendar sheet posted on refrigerator (this is required by the Department of Children and Family Services – DCFS)
- Review the day’s activities with the teacher and assist with set-up

During Class

- Interact with the children and encourage socialization

- Become involved in play
- Help the teachers watch for difficult situations
- Encourage the children to try new activities and be creative
- Help children with a task if they ask for assistance
- Help the teachers as needed
- Encourage the children to help during clean-up time
- Participate and have fun!

Snack Time

- Wipe tables with disinfectant
- Set up drink and snack
- Assist with hand washing
- Join children at the table, help with manners and engage them in conversation
- Encourage the children to discard their paper goods after snack

After Class

- Disinfect tables
- Sweep floor
- Vacuum carpets
- Disinfect bathroom sinks, toilet seats and flusher
- Replace paper towels, toilet paper and refill soap if needed
- Empty garbage into dumpster if needed (AM if necessary, PM always)
- Assist with any additional clean up tasks as requested by teachers

Typical Daily Activities

Creative Play: This consists of one hour or more of the children’s self-directed activities. Teachers and parent-aides encourage a safe “give and take” atmosphere and suggest appropriate expansion of certain play situations without intruding into the child’s choices and interests. Special interest areas are provided each day. Art is often done during the creative play time as well.

Art: The learning processes involved in doing an activity and the child’s enjoyment and pride are the main purposes for art. It is the process, not the end product that is important. Do display your child’s artwork – it is a great source of pride for children. We often make presents for special occasions, both flat and three-dimensional projects.

Music: Listening, singing finger plays, actions to music, playing rhythm instruments are all provided. Language skills vary, so each child’s participation is expected to vary.

Reading: Books are available during creative play. Stories are told, read and acted out on a regular basis, with increasing language skills, interests and attention spans taken into consideration.

Circle/Group Time: During circle times, the children sing, listen to stories, engage in group activities and discuss the calendar, weather and the day's plans.

Snack: Providing a snack during preschool is mandated by DCFS. Snack time also provides an excellent opportunity for preschoolers to master their social skills, manners and learn patience and cooperation.

Heath Routines: Hands are washed upon entering the school first thing in the morning, after toileting, prior to snack and when necessary. Children are encouraged to handle toileting and hand washing tasks independently.

Committees

In support of our cooperative philosophy, families must be active on one or more committees. Depending on your committee, your help may also be needed to assist other committees through out the year. Participation on your committee is instrumental for the smooth functioning of the school. Your committee chairperson will be contacting you within the first few weeks of school to arrange an initial meeting and/or assign responsibilities. If you do not hear from your committee chairperson during this time, please contact the second vice president.

Book Club: Process all book orders.

Communications: Assist the Communications Chairperson (who serves on the Board of Directors) in publicizing MCP throughout the community. This includes upkeep of MCP web site, posting notices for MCP events, helping out during publicity events and producing and distributing a monthly newsletter to the parents.

Equipment/Repair/Housekeeping/Clean-up: Perform minor repairs to the MCP facility, toys and equipment. Remove snow from stairs, walkways and ramps prior to the starting of a class. Collect recyclables and launder towels/rags weekly. Manage a volunteer group and participate in one of three deep cleanings of the preschool held in fall, winter and spring. Also, help sterilize and clean various classroom toys throughout the year.

Hospitality: Provides snacks and/or refreshments for all MCP special events, such as Parent Night, Family Nights, open houses and registrations. Assist Ways and Means Committee by staffing and supervising catering and bar for

annual auction.

Special Events: Organize and run the end of the year picnic celebration. Assist the Ways and Means Committee with the setup and cleanup of annual auction.

Ways and Means: Assist the Ways and Means Chairperson (who serves on the Board of Directors) in the organization and supervision of the various fundraising events for the MCP during the school year including the spring/fall fundraiser as well as the auction.

Communicable Diseases

This information has been reprinted from the Illinois Public Health web site: www.idph.state.il.us. All state licensed preschools are required to follow the procedures. Fever free is considered a temperature less than 99.2°F for 24 hours.

Disease	Incubation	Communicability	Exclude Until
Chickenpox	2-3 weeks	1 day to 2 days before rash until all lesions have formed crusts	all lesions have crusted (average 7 days)
Common Cold	1-3 days	1 day before- five days after symptoms	24 hours fever free
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	1-3 days	during the course of active infection	24 hours after treatment begins; eye drainage cleared
Fifth Disease	variable	before onset of rash	24 hours fever free
Head Lice	several days-weeks; eggs hatch in 7-10 days. reach maturity-2 weeks	until lice and viable eggs have been destroyed	1 st treatment completed; 2 nd treatment in 1 week or re-exclude
Impetigo	variable; 4-10days	while lesions are draining	under medical care: lesions healing: no new lesions
Infectious Hepatitis	10-50 days	2 weeks before the onset of jaundice until 3 weeks after	3 weeks after onset of symptoms
Infectious Mononucleosis	4-6 weeks	unknown, probably only during acute illness	under medical care; doctor's OK to return
Influenza	1-5 days	3-7 days after onset of symptoms	24 hours symptom free

Disease	Incubation	Communicability	Exclude Until
Measles	8-13 days	onset of cold symptoms until 4 days after rash appears	5 th day after rash
German Measles	14-21 days	1 week before to 4 days after rash appears	4 th day after rash
Mumps	12-26 days	6 days before swelling until swelling is gone	until 9 days after onset of swelling
Ringworm	10-14 days	while lesions are present	24 hours after treatment and lesions shrink
Scabies	several days or weeks; eggs hatch-1 week	until mites and eggs are destroyed	1 st 24 hour treatment complete; 2 nd treatment in 1 week or re-exclude
Scarlet Fever	2-5 days	greatest during acute stage; 2-4 days after rash appears	under treatment and fever free 24 hours
Strep Throat	1-3 days	untreated: 10 days- weeks treated: 24-48 hours	24 hours after antibiotic treatment and fever free for 24 hours
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)	5-21 days	1 week before - 3 weeks after onset of cough	excluded until 5 days after antibiotic treatment