



Handbook

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Troy Co-op Preschool
First United Methodist Church of Troy
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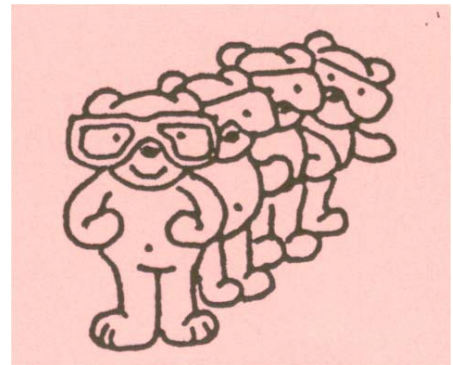
History of Troy Co-op Preschool

The Troy Cooperative Preschool (TCP) had its beginning through efforts of the Troy Junior Women's Club. Information on organizing a nursery was gathered by committee members Jan Corry, Barbara DeGroot and Judy Scott. In March 1970, interested mothers met with members of the Greater Detroit Cooperative Nursery Council. By May, the First United Methodist Church of Troy had very graciously agreed to lease space to us. Mrs. Joan Wittry was hired as our teacher, officers elected, and the preschool became a reality!

TCP Philosophy

The members of Troy Co-op Preschool want our children to

- experience creative learning situations.
- obtain personal pride in their achievements.
- enjoy group play.
- function away from home.
- think for themselves.
- respect others and their property.
- develop a healthy self-concept.
- relate to other people.
- develop self-discipline.
- be perceptive, imaginative, creative human beings.
- realize that it is FUN to learn.



Parents are learning too! Besides being a valuable assistant for the teacher, co-op parents also

- observe their children's interactions with classmates, other parents and the teachers.
- gain insight into childhood behavior and age-appropriate activities.
- develop a relationship with the teacher who can become a valued resource both personally and professionally.
- obtain resources and ideas to use at home that allow the parent to reinforce and build upon what the child learns at preschool.
- develop friendships by associating with people who have similar values and interests.

A Commitment from the Board to the Membership

The Board of Directors of TCP (Board) is made up of parents of current preschool students. The Board's obligations are

- to effectively administer a non-profit, non-sectarian cooperative preschool.
- to assist our highly qualified teachers who determine the appropriate curriculum.
- to provide a reliable flow of information.
- to provide a safe and interesting environment in which to conduct classes.
- to encourage members to participate at all levels.
- to clearly identify each parent's duties within the co-op.
- to appreciate each individual contribution.

Did you know that TCP

- is licensed by the Family Independence Agency?
- teachers are members of the Greater Detroit Council of Cooperative Nurseries?
- teachers are members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children?

"You can do anything with children if you only play with them." -- Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898)



How to be a good (even great) co-operator

1. Understand your Responsibilities and Fulfill them

Meetings – Co-ops are one of the “meetingest groups around.” Each meeting DOES serve a purpose.

Orientation Meeting

- ❖ Become acquainted with your “job,” your responsibilities, your Board of Directors, your teacher, and your preschool routine.
- ❖ Form carpools and babysitting partnerships.
- ❖ Sign volunteer lists.
- ❖ Meet new friends.

General Meetings (2 per school year) – usually on Monday evenings in November and April

- ❖ Discuss preschool business – this is where you have a say in how the preschool is run.
- ❖ Hear parent education programs – speakers on child development, parenting, and education topics.
- ❖ Socialize with other parents.

Home Meetings (2 per school year) – usually on Tuesday evenings in October and February

- ❖ Discuss preschool business particular to your class with your teachers and other parents in your class.

Your commitment includes attending three out of the five of these meetings.

Your Job – Parents contribute in two significant ways; first by knowing and effectively performing his/her job. You will receive a “job folder” to guide you. You can call on your Board advisor for advice and help when needed. Jobs range from those requiring minimal time to others that require a more active role in the running of the preschool.

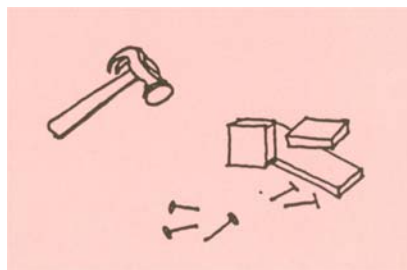


Working Days – The best part of co-oping!

The second significant contribution from parents is working in the classroom. For each class (except smaller Friday classes), there will be up to three working parents assisting the teacher plus a hired assistant teacher. Your Class Representative will create a schedule with parents’ input each semester.

- Each parent is solely responsible for the days on which they are scheduled to participate. If the parent is unable to take their assigned turn, they must find a substitute by trading with another parent. Post any changes to the schedule on the bulletin board in the classroom so the teachers will know who is working each day. ***PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE TEACHERS REGARDING A CHANGE IN THE SCHEDULE***
- There will be a volunteer Emergency Parent list available for each class. If an Emergency Parent agrees to substitute rather than trade a working day, they shall be paid \$10.00 by the asking parent.
- Working parents are asked to arrive 15 minutes prior to their class start time to help prepare the room and review the day's lesson with the teacher.
- Working parents arriving early may bring two preschool children with them including their own. For safety's sake, children in the 3's classes will play at the play dough table and 4's classes will begin their small group activities at the activity box.
- We are guests of the church and must follow their guidelines. They ask that we hang all coats in the hallway and that the clutter be kept to a minimum.
- At the beginning of the class, add your name to the sign-up sheet to indicate which areas you will be responsible for.
- Your workday responsibilities may include some general cleaning. All of the cleaning supplies are stored in the cabinet under the sink.
- During class clean-up time, help the children return all toys to the proper toy bins, hang up dress-up clothes, replace kitchen items and stack blocks in the correct cubbies.
- Check for broken equipment and notify the teacher of any needing repair.

Fundraising – You will have several opportunities to participate in voluntary fundraising programs. The money raised is used to buy new equipment and to contribute to the preschool's operating budget.



Reimbursement Procedures – Your job may involve buying supplies for the preschool. Please be cost conscious with the preschool’s money (discount stores, buy in bulk, shop sales). The following steps will ensure a quick reimbursement:

- Use our Tax Exempt Number -- #38-1918406. The preschool does not have to pay sales tax.
- Completely fill out a reimbursement voucher. Extra vouchers are in a pouch in the hallway.
- Try to submit one voucher for several purchases, if possible.

2. Support your Teacher

We have an unparalleled set of teachers. They teach in our preschool because they cherish the parent/child/family aspect of co-oping. They have a challenging job planning the children’s program and curriculum and helping parents gain new insights into their children and the group as a whole.



3. Promptly Express any Dissatisfaction

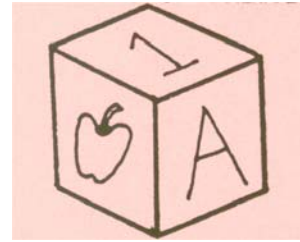
An unhappy parent who complains just to a small group of friends can demoralize the whole group. This is your preschool and, if you have any concerns to voice, do so to the proper person. There are several options:

- First, research your concern. Is it covered in the handbook? Was it covered at a meeting?
- If you are concerned about your child, their adjustment to preschool or behavior while in preschool, go to the teacher. They can offer insight. Please consider that drop off and pick up are very busy times. Ask the teacher when they would be available to discuss your concerns.
- If you have a concern about the program, policies, or the organization of the co-op, contact a Board member. The Board will address all suggestions submitted in writing.
- Contact your Class Representative.
- You are welcome to attend any Board meetings. The Board meets on the first Friday of each month at the church. There are parent volunteers to watch children. Please let the Secretary know if you are coming with children.
- Address your concern in the written evaluation distributed mid-year. The Board takes them very seriously.

The ABC's of Preparing Your Child for Preschool

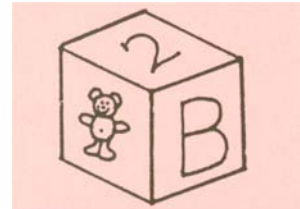
A is for Advance Understanding

- ❑ Discuss what to expect at preschool.
- ❑ Mention the other children in the class, how many there are, whom they know.
- ❑ Discuss toys and equipment they may play with.
- ❑ Learn the teachers' names. Discuss how the teacher will help him at preschool.
- ❑ Mention that other parents will be at preschool and some days it will be your turn to be a "helping parent."



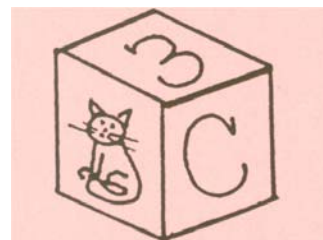
B is for Beginning Strategies

- ❑ The beginning weeks of preschool may be exhausting for your child.
- ❑ Your child may behave badly when you are the working parent. Most do, so please do not be embarrassed.
- ❑ In the beginning, your child may want you to stay. If so, and if you can, plan to stay. Encourage him to accept help from the teacher, so he learns that she will help him at preschool. Your child will make the decision himself that he no longer needs you with him. This is an important experience for some children.
- ❑ Your child may say he doesn't want to come to preschool. It's best to not leave the choice up to him.



C is for Comfortable Clothing

- ❑ Children should wear washable play clothes. They will be playing with sand, paint, water, clay, paste, and other messy materials. Parents should dress likewise.
- ❑ Dress warmly. We will be going outside almost every day.
- ❑ Label all outerwear with child's name in permanent marker.
- ❑ Tote bags are provided, but need to be replaced at the parents' expense if lost. Send the tote bag with your child every day.



What Will I See At Preschool?

Noise

There is no objection to good-natured noise; this is normal at this age. If shouting or running are keeping the other children from enjoying their day, we remind the children to use “indoor” voices and “walking feet,” saving “outdoor” voices and running for later.

Active Play and Rhythmic Activity

Although you may not notice any formal, classroom-type instruction, goals are in mind for all aspects of our program.

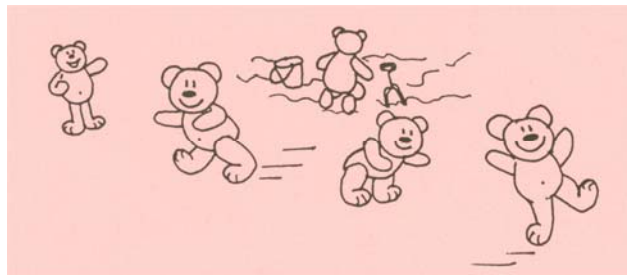
Fine Motor Coordination

- Painting
- Crayons
- Scissors
- Pasting
- Tracing
- Puzzles
- Small toys
- Workbench and tools
- Cooking
- Computer



Gross Motor Coordination

- Running
- Jumping
- Climbing
- Throwing
- Swinging
- Moving with music
- Outdoor play



Intellectual Development

- Magnifying glasses and butterfly gardens introduce science.
- Play dough and drawing encourage art appreciation.
- Textures, smells, colors, and tastes use the senses.
- Puzzles and games reinforce spatial relationships and perceptual concepts.
- Blocks help develop large muscles and aid in eye muscle coordination.
- Dramatic play allows imagination and experimentation with different roles.
- Water table explores special relationships, as well as sensory experiences.
- Daily routines require memory and recognition.



Snack

Snacks are provided for a time of refreshment, relaxation and social learning. A typical snack is water and crackers. During the year we might also do cooking projects to eat such as vegetable soup and applesauce, at the teacher's discretion. A food allergy list is posted on the bulletin board. Be sure your child's allergy is listed. Parents may bring in additional snacks for the entire class; notify the teacher in advance for a day you wish to bring food. All leftovers of non-perishable food should be dated and will be kept in the cupboard. The children are encouraged to pour their own drinks and pass the crackers.



Story Time

Preschool is a wonderful time to introduce children not only to books, but also to *literature*. At story time, the teacher shares and models a love for good quality books while offering language and concept experiences. Parents are urged to

- sit with the children and help provide a comfortable, reassuring environment.
- help focus the children's attention on the story and/or pictures.

Craft Area

Crafts and art introduce children to various media. They learn to control the material and express their emotions. There is no right or wrong to art; they can express and experiment until they are satisfied.



Assistant Teachers

The assistant teachers are wonderful assets to our classroom. They are a second "regular" the children can count on. And they have the uncanny knack of knowing just what the teacher needs – before she does!

Individual Attention

If the teacher spends a great deal of time with one particular child it is because she knows that this child needs extra help or may need to be diverted from interfering with the play of other children. The teacher tries to give each child the attention he needs when he needs it.

Individual Accomplishment

The children may at times struggle to put on coats or work zippers by themselves. We encourage each child to help himself to the limit of his capabilities.

Undesirable Words

The teacher generally ignores undesirable words, knowing that as a rule the child will not continue this behavior if his words do not have the "shock value" he counted on. If the language continues, the teacher will work on teaching more appropriate words.

Daily Routines

Cooperation in routines is expected of the children; however, the teacher may not insist that a child join the others. Some children will not be ready yet to join a group activity and we can help them most by encouraging without pushing them. He will become ready more quickly if we permit him to develop at his own speed.

Arguing

We try to let children solve their own differences, stepping in only when there is obvious distress or when there is danger of harm. We will model verbal behavior for the children when necessary (e.g. if two boys are fighting over a truck, encourage them to talk to each other about what they want or how they feel, and model language for them when needed, such as “Were you done with that toy?” and “Instead of grabbing the toy, ask if you can have a turn next”.

Dangerous Situations

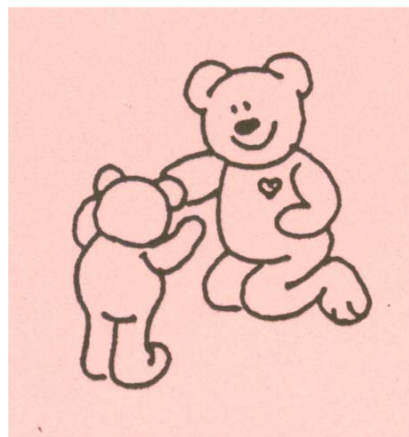
The children are not allowed to hurt themselves, other people, or property. Adults should intervene in all situations when safety is at stake.

Talking About a Child

NEVER talk about a child in front of him or other children. The teacher will discuss any behaviors or situations involving the child with the parents privately. Confidentiality is important.

Optional Friday Program

The optional third day for 4-year-olds is based on a curriculum of playing with the alphabet. The crafts, music, movement, snack, and story all emphasize the letter of the day. Class size is smaller than the regular preschool class. Additional fieldtrips and special events reinforce the alphabet concept. Though not intended to teach phonics, the result is an awareness of letters and sounds learned through play.



To and From Preschool

Arrival

The church requests that we use the parking lot and not block the main entrance by leaving our cars by the curb.

Enter through the main entrance of the church. When walking through the church, remember we are *guests* of the church. This is a time for indoor voices and slow walking feet.

Encourage your child to take off his coat and hang up his tote bag. They will recognize their hook by the picture above the hook that matches the picture on their tote bag and eventually will recognize their printed name.

Departure

Parents picking up the children enter through the main entrance of the church, come downstairs, collect tote bags, gather mail from mail pouches and meet their child outside on the playground.

Carpool parents need to keep their group together. Holding hands is best while walking to the parking lot. Parent must initial the “check-out” sheet when they pick up their child and any carpool children.

During bad weather, the teachers will bring all the children upstairs to the main entrance of the church. A taxi sign is hung in the front window to let parents know they can stay in their cars and their child will be delivered to them.



Class Times

Tots Program (2-year-olds and parents)

Tuesday AM	9:45 – 11:00	AM
Tuesday PM	TBD	
Wednesday AM	9:45 – 11:00	AM

3 AM – Tues and Thurs

Working parents arrive	8:45 AM
Children arrive	9:00 AM
Children leave	11:15 AM

4 AM – Mon & Wed (and opt. Fri)

Working parents arrive	8:45 AM
Children arrive	9:00 AM
Children leave	11:30 AM

3 PM – Mon and Wed

Working parents arrive	12:00 PM
Children arrive	12:15 PM
Children leave	2:30 PM

4 PM – Tues & Thurs (and opt. Fri)

Working parents arrive	12:00 PM
Children arrive	12:15 PM
Children leave	2:45 PM

The “Be Attitudes” for Working Parents

BE YOURSELF -- Relax and enjoy the session. The children will learn that different parents have different ways of telling and helping and they will accept these differences, learning that there are many good ways of doing things.

BE RESPONSIBLE – All children must be supervised at all times. If you must leave your assigned area of responsibility, ask another adult to supervise for you.

BE EXPRESSIVE – Talk with the children more than the other adults in the preschool. Ask them about what they are doing and feeling. This helps build their language and conceptualizing. And always *praise, praise, praise*.

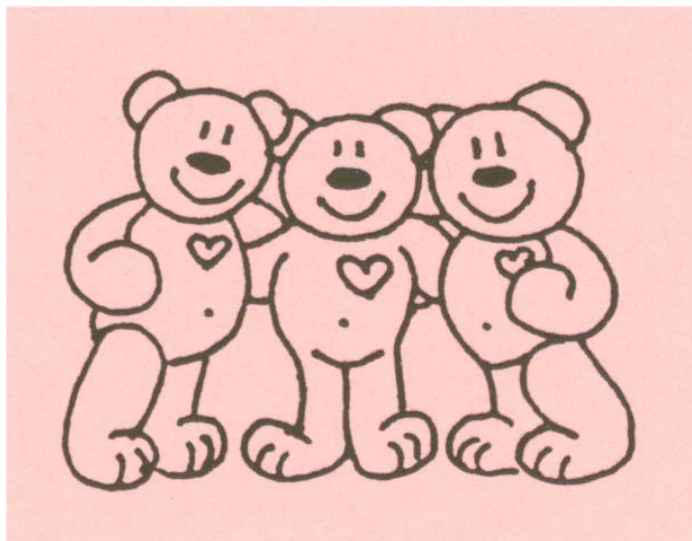
BE SYMPATHETIC – Comfort the hurt or upset child first, then help him verbalize his feelings, because they are real.

BE READY – Are you dressed to be crawling under the climber or standing in the snow?

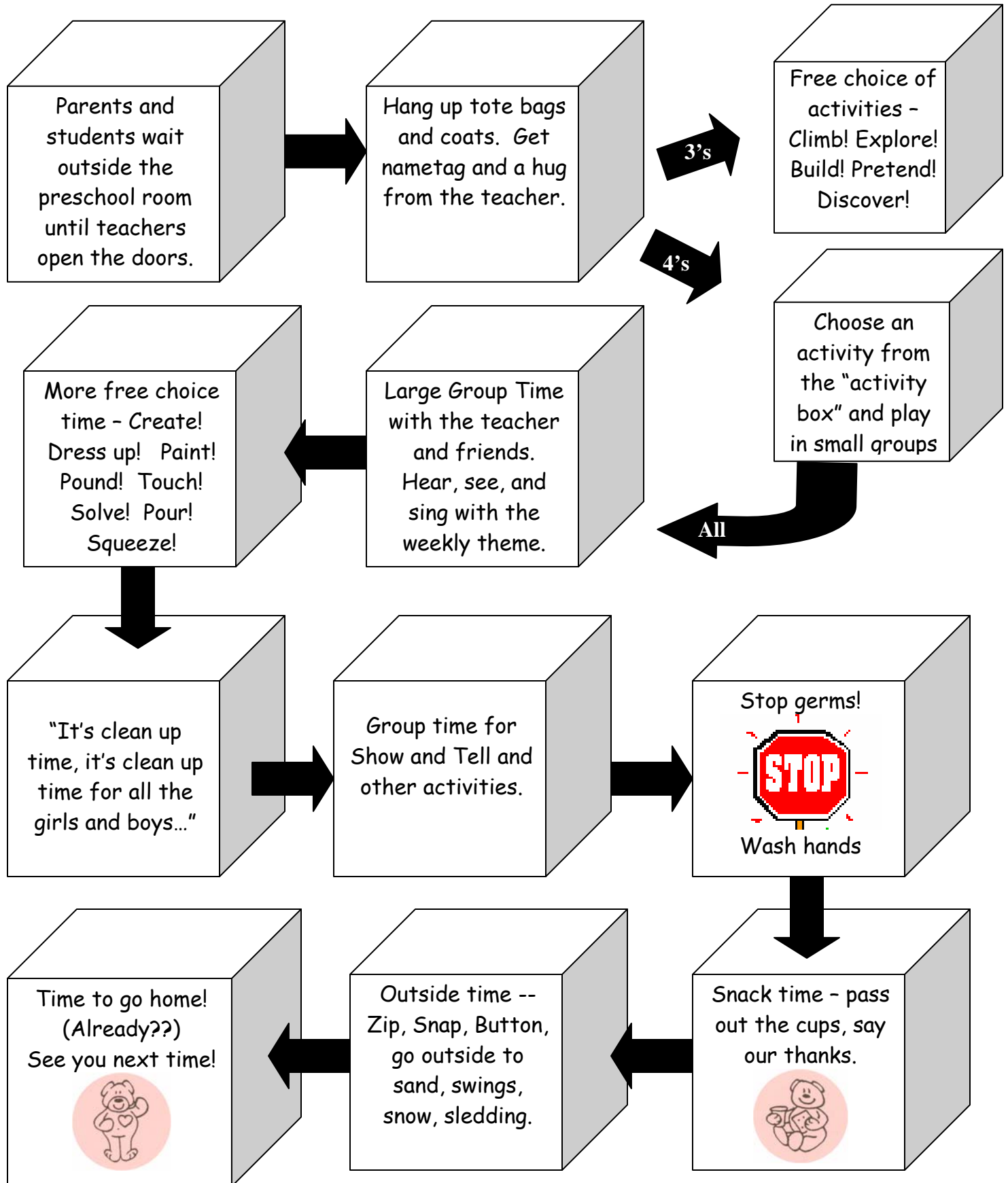
BE THANKFUL – This is a great opportunity to grow *with* your child.

“Children have more need of models than critics.”

-- Joseph Joubert



A "Beary" Enjoyable Day at TCP



Parties and Special Days

Birthday Parties

Parents will be assigned to work on their child's school birthday. Summer birthdays are celebrated at the end of the school year. The parent should bring the treat for the class that day. Many parents also choose to donate a present to the preschool on the child's birthday. THIS IS OPTIONAL.

Holiday Parties

Parents are encouraged to come for the last hour or so of preschool on holiday party days to join in special activities with their children. Siblings are allowed to attend the party, as well. The Party Mom will coordinate a sign-up for food items to be brought to the parties. Holiday parties are usually held in October, December, February, and April.

Special Person's Day

On this special day, usually a Saturday morning, the child may bring a Special Person to preschool with him (parent, grandparent, adult friend) to share in special preschool activities.

School Picture Day

A photographer will come to the preschool, usually in January or February, and take each child's picture. You may purchase picture packages if you wish.

Fieldtrips

The frequency of fieldtrips increases as the year progresses due to the maturing of the children and their adjustment to group situations. Children need to be accompanied on all fieldtrips by an adult. A parent may accompany the child, or may designate another parent to take his child. Each parent going on the fieldtrip should have no more than 2 children in their charge. Parents and children will meet at the fieldtrip site. Siblings may not attend.

Teddy Bear Picnic

At year-end, a picnic is planned for all preschool classes combined. It is usually held at Boulan Park. Parents, children, and siblings enjoy this extra fun farewell.



Snow Days

TCP will close when the Troy School District closes school due to inclement weather. If the preschool must close for other reasons, we will contact you by phone. Snow days will not be made up.

Summary of all Preschool Jobs

Descriptions for each co-op job in the preschool follow. The President and Vice Presidents' job descriptions are listed first, followed by an alphabetic listing of all other jobs.

PRESIDENT (Board)

Direct the affairs of the preschool. Conduct General, Home and Board meetings. No vote on the Board, but can break ties and act as a facilitator for Board discussions. This job comes with a perk of free tuition for a 2-day preschool class.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT (Board)

Oversee those working on nametags and tote bags in the summer so they are ready when preschool begins. Organize preschool t-shirt order and distribution. Prepare an evaluation form, distribute to all members, collect and compile responses and prepare a report for the Board. Along with the Second VP, nominate a new President and Board. Conduct one class's home meetings.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT (Board)

Oversee registration throughout the summer. Arrange for all members to have a job and distribute job folders in the summer. Have all Board members contact the members they oversee at the beginning of the year to see how jobs are going. Report on this in a Line of Communication report to the Board. In the spring, ask returning members for job preferences for the following year. When registration begins for the next year, assign new members a job. Along with the First VP, nominate a new President and Board. Conduct one class's home meetings.

2's MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON (Board)

Register students for the Tots classes. Collect registration money. As new people inquire during the year, inform them about the preschool. Best if this is a parent of a Tots student.

3's MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON (Board)

Register students for the 3's classes. Collect registration money. As new people inquire during the year, inform them about the preschool. Best if this is a parent of a 3's student.

4'S MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON (Board)

Register students for the 4's classes. Collect registration money. As new people inquire during the year, inform them about the preschool. Best if this is a parent of a 4's student.

CALENDAR/BULLETIN BOARD

Make and distribute a calendar for each month showing the daily activities of the preschool. Keep the bulletin boards neat and up-to-date.

CHILDCARE (7 parents needed)

Tend the children of Board members while they attend Board meetings, usually on the first Fridays of each month. Work at least 5 of the 7 Board meetings (3 hours each meeting). You are welcome to bring your own children.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE COORDINATOR (Board)

Coordinate class representatives and serve as the Class Representative for your class.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE (one needed from each class)

Make the working schedule for the parents in your class. Hand out maps to your class members for the home meetings. Take notes at the home meetings and distribute them to those who were not at the meeting. Take first aid kit, fieldtrip nametags, child information cards and hospital forms with you on fieldtrips. Pass out sign-up sheets at home meetings for snacks to be brought to future home meetings and to general meetings.

CRACKERS/PAPER SUPPLIES (2 parents needed)

Purchase crackers, napkins, and paper cups for the preschool and Tots classes.

CRAFTS (one person needed from each class)

Throughout the year, cut out patterns the teacher gives you for the children to use in craft projects.

EASEL ARTS (one person needed for 3's classes, another for 4's classes)

Throughout the year, cut out patterns that the teacher gives you for the children to paint on the easels.

EQUIPMENT CHAIRPERSON (Board)

Shop for supplies and new equipment. Organize the plastic plate ordering. Help with preschool set up in August, deep cleaning day on Martin Luther King holiday in January, and year-end inventory. Oversee the Supplies person who shops for preschool supplies, Sparkle and Shine parents who clean toys, and Grounds/Workbench/Play dough parent. Oversee all necessary equipment repairs.

EVENT CHAIRPERSON (Board)

Obtain and prepare for speakers for the General Meetings. Supervise the Librarian. Make arrangements for school-wide picture portraits. Monitor the video check-out cart and straighten it up if necessary. Organize Greg and Steve concert ticket order/distribution.

FIELDTRIP COORDINATOR

Contact places where fieldtrips are desired. Set up appointments for all classes. Arrange for payment if necessary. Make fliers with maps for all applicable classes.

FRESH SNACKS

Supply food for preschool cooking projects. Arrange for any necessary appliances.

FRIDAY CRAFT AND SNACK (one needed for each Friday class)

Supply food and craft supplies for appropriate Friday class.

FUNDRAISING CHAIRPERSON (Board)

Be directly responsible for all fundraisers. Keep records of fundraising accounts. You are also the Fundraising Representative for your class.

FUNDRAISING REPRESENTATIVES (one needed from each class)

Inform all class members of each fundraising event. Collect orders and money. Assist with the distribution of fundraising items (such as wreaths, pizzas, or cookie dough).

GROUNDWORK/WORKBENCH/PLAY DOUGH

Do outdoor fall clean-up prior to the beginning of preschool. Throughout the year, keep the workbench stocked and in working order. On the first of each month, bring in new play dough for the preschool and Tots classes.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Report certain illnesses in the preschool to the county. Fill out a form once a week and send it to the county. Point of contact for reporting tracked illnesses.

LAUNDRY

Take home the dirty towels, etc. from the preschool to wash each week.

LIBRARIAN

Keep the books and tapes in the train cart and adult library neat and organized.

NAME TAGS AND TOTES

Make and label children's nametags that they wear in their classes, library and coat hook tags, and parent mail pouch tags. Prepare the nametags for the children's tote bags. Sew them onto the tote bags. (All of this should be completed before school begins, or immediately after a new student adds.)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Be responsible for the production of a monthly newsletter to be distributed to the general membership.

PARTY MOM (one needed from each class)

Assist the teacher on any days that require additional adult participation or supervision such as party days (Halloween, Holiday, Valentine's Day, and Spring parties but NOT birthday parties). Be present for the whole class period on party days (in addition to regularly scheduled working days.)

PUBLICITY (Board)

Make necessary arrangements for advertising and public relations. Organize philanthropic activities. Organize preschool open house.

PUBLICITY ASSISTANT

Assist the Publicity Chair.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK COORDINATOR

Distribute Firefly and Trumpet book order forms. Collect orders and place with Firefly and Trumpet. Distribute books when they arrive.

SECRETARY (Board)

Record minutes of all General and Board meetings and take attendance. Arrange for and set up refreshments at Board meetings. Coordinate the childcare for Board meetings.

SITE LIAISON (Board)

Serve as intermediary between the church, parents, teachers and Board. Negotiate and sign the church contract, with approval of the Board. Make necessary arrangements with the site regarding dates on the approved calendar.

SOCIAL CHAIRPERSON (Board)

Organize set-up and breakdown of Fall Orientation. Organize food for Orientation, Special Person's Day, Spring Open House and General Meetings. Assist the teachers with organizing the year-end Teddy Bear Picnic.

SUB AIDE (one needed from each class)

Work for the teacher or teacher assistant when they cannot be there due to illness or other absence. These workdays are *in addition* to regularly scheduled working days.

SUPPLIES

Keep the preschool and Tots classrooms stocked with cleaning and other supplies.

TEACHER LIAISON (Board)

Serve as intermediary between the teachers, teacher assistants, parents and the Board. Negotiate teacher and teacher assistant contracts, with the approval of the Board. Be responsible for coordinating Sub Aides to substitute for teachers and teacher assistants as needed. Coordinate hiring activities when a new teacher or teacher assistant is needed. Organize and purchase gifts for teachers and teacher assistants.

TOY SPARKLE AND SHINE (3 parents needed)

Keep one designated area of the preschool clean all year. Periodically clean toys and equipment in that area. Also, help with fall set-up, Martin Luther King holiday cleaning day, and year-end inventory.

TREASURER (Board)

Disburse all preschool funds by check. Coordinate with the bookkeeper. Maintain a complete set of records and prepare a financial report for each Board meeting, plus an annual report. Report annual Audit findings to the Board. Assume responsibility for all insurance coverage needed.

TREASURER ASSISTANT

Make deposits that the Treasurer gives you. It is preferable that this person serves as Treasurer the following year.

All Board jobs (in **bold**) come with a perk of early registration for the following year.
Total number of jobs is 77.

