



Cordova Bay Co-op Preschool

A Cooperative, Parent Participation Preschool

<http://www.cordovabaypreschool.org>

Member of Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association Registered Charity

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Table of Contents

Welcome!	3
How Does a Cooperative Preschool Work?.....	4
Working Families Can Participate Too!.....	4
What do the Children do?	5
How does the Family Benefit?	5
Philosophy	5
Educators.....	7
Responsibilities.....	7
What will be expected of you as a Cooperative Preschool Member?	8
Orientation	9
Preschool Observation.....	9
Completing the Orientation Process	10
Register Now	10
Enrolment	10

Cordova Bay Co-op Preschool

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Welcome!

Cordova Bay Preschool is a parent-run cooperative preschool located on a quiet side street in the heart of Cordova Bay. We have been in existence for over 30 years, offering “Learning Through Play” programs for 3, 4 and 5 year olds. Our preschool is a member of the Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association.

The Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association (VICPA) supports 15 parent participation preschools on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The VICPA has been in existence since 1949, and is a strong advocate for high quality early childhood education and professional working standards for cooperative families. VICPA is affiliated with Parent Cooperative Preschool International (PCPI).

Leasa Gatschene is our licensed Early Childhood Educator (ECE) who brings over 20 years of experience to our program. Along with her formal education at Camosun College, Leasa has gained much knowledge of early childhood education through practical experiences. Most of her teaching has been with 3-5 year olds in preschool settings; however she has also had experience working in a toddler centre, a kindergarten program, parent and tot programs, and as an aid to a child with support needs. Leasa feels the empathy and understanding she has gained in her role as a mom to 3 children is a valuable asset to her partnership with parents in the co-op setting.

I dreamed I stood in a studio and watched two sculptors there. The clay they used was a young child's mind and they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher the tools she used were books, music and art. The other a parent worked with a guiding hand and a gentle, loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled with touch that was careful, deft and sure. While the parent laboured by her side and polished and soothed it o'er.

And when at last their work was done they were proud of what they had wrought. For the things they had moulded into the child could not be sold or bought.

And each agreed they would have failed if each had worked alone. For behind the parent stood the school, and behind the teacher the home.

Author unknown.

How Does a Cooperative Preschool Work?

Unlike a for-profit preschool, a cooperative preschool is group-owned and operated by the parents of the preschool children; the families themselves direct the preschool while a qualified ECE is employed to plan which materials and learning experiences will be offered. Parents have the opportunity to assist the ECE in the preschool on a rotating basis (depending on enrolment, usually 1 morning per month). This is not required if you are opting for a Non-Duty Position.

This is a wonderful chance to be involved in your child's education and to see your child interacting with others in the classroom. Parents also take on different roles in the management of the preschool according to their skills and interests. There are monthly Parent Education workshops led by guest speakers who provide valuable information on child development and parenting skills. Social events during the year help build a sense of community among the preschool families.

Being involved is enlightening – and it's fun too!

Working Families Can Participate Too!

We would like to extend a special invitation to working families to consider Cordova Bay Preschool for their children. Classroom participation is not limited to only the *parents* of the child – a grandparent, nanny, or other caregiver can be a “parent helper,” as long as they attend the orientation sessions and monthly workshops that are provided for all classroom helpers. Several Cordova Bay parents work full or part-time and have made alternative arrangements with the preschool so that their children can enjoy the benefits of the coop experience.

Why Choose a Cooperative Preschool?

Parents have many reasons for choosing a cooperative preschool for their families. The following are parent comments concerning the benefits of cooperative preschool:

- “It's a nurturing experience, a gentle introduction to school to prepare children for the school system.”
- “Gives an opportunity to gently separate from your child so that she can gain independence at a pace that is comfortable for both of you; you can be there when they need you, and yet have time for yourself also.”
- “A sense of cooperation and being part of a community. The children learn that they are in the company of various adults who have different skills to offer and can help them.”
- “It's like an extended family in a world where your real extended family may be far away. It's a safe community of adults and children where kids have a variety of helpful adults to talk to.”

- “My child had so much fun on his first visit to the preschool (at an Open House) that he didn’t want to leave. He fit right in and had a great time.”
- “I like being with the kids and learning how to be a better parent!”

What do the Children do?

Many preschool centres retain the term “play group”. Play is the medium for learning in the early years. Children are provided with a rich variety of play materials, playmates their own age, and an ECE skilled in developing a program that meets the preschoolers’ physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs through equipment and materials that are of interest to them. Children will learn to use their body and mind effectively to cope with their own feelings, get along with others, solve problems, and satisfy their curiosity.

Because the preschool years are recognized as one of the more critical periods in a child’s development, the cooperative concern of the ECE and the parents make it possible for early detection of any delays in development. The ECE and parents together will provide assistance when a child needs it.

The primary function of a good preschool is to help each child achieve and enjoy the fullest development possible. Their successful experience in preschool will serve as the “readiness bridge” to the primary grades.

How does the Family Benefit?

While a cooperative group seeks to provide the preschool child with a learning experience of high standard, it is beneficial to families in other ways as well:

1. Cooperative preschools encourage a growth experience for both children and parents, as your child’s first educational step is taken together.
2. Opportunities are provided for parents to develop the skills necessary to guide their children appropriately, and to meet, socialize, and work cooperatively with a group of their peers from a cross-section of the community, sharing with them emotional and practical support.
3. The relatively lower cost of cooperatively run groups brings them within reach of more families.
4. Just as larger groups of relatives did in previous decades, the cooperative group helps to diffuse the child’s emotional dependence from his parents to other friendly adults.

Philosophy

The children’s educational program emphasizes "Learning Through Play". Our firm belief is that by playing, children develop many of the skills for later life. Children learn by being provided with a choice of toys, equipment, and materials to use and

are given guidance when/where necessary. VICPA preschools provide a play-based curriculum that:

- Supports the development of the whole child – socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually;
- Allows for the recognition of each child's unique learning style, abilities, and developmental level; and,
- Encourages hands on learning, where the curriculum can emerge from the children's interests, needs, and desires thus making learning concrete and meaningful.

Central to our programs is the belief that:

- Children thrive in an atmosphere of trust, where they are provided with support in a safe and gentle environment; and,
- A child's self esteem and ability to learn are interdependent. That is, children succeed when they have a strong sense of self; therefore we believe it is important to foster a sense of competency and independence in all aspects of the child's being.

Each of our VICPA preschools has a unique environment that includes an excellent adult to child ratio allowing for individual attention. We are proud of our quality programming with play activities that vary from preschool to preschool. Examples of what play-based curriculum can provide for children's development are:

Outdoor Play: Children need fresh air and exercise; it helps to develop strong muscles and healthy bodies. Physical play helps encourage an awareness of their bodies (balance, strength, co-ordination) and builds confidence.

Story Time: Sitting quietly listening to stories develops the skills of concentration and attention, and is an introduction to the wonderful world of books and reading.

Block Building: Building is a bridge between the world of pretend and reality. It provides experience in spatial relationships, opportunities for sharing, and develops large and small muscle control. Blocks also help children develop such pre-math skills as size, shape, sorting, and balance.

Painting: Painting provides an opportunity for self-expression and enjoyment. The fun of creating is more important than the end product.

Water Play and Sandbox: Play in these areas encourages experimentation in texture and measurement in a fun way. It also presents early scientific and math concepts.

Play Dough and Clay: Modelling provides the opportunity for sculpting art forms, being creative, and in general, having fun.

Music and Rhythm: These provide a means of self-expression through experimentation with songs, instruments, finger plays, games, and dancing.

Dramatic Play: This type of play is used to re-enact experiences, stories, fears, and feelings. It allows children to try out different roles and promotes cooperation.

Language Communication: Communication (both speaking and listening) improves enormously at preschool. They are developed through all forms of play.

Table Toys: Puzzles, beads, games, etc. These help a child to develop their hand-eye co-ordination, sequencing skills, ability to follow direction, and concentration.

Cutting and Pasting: These provide an experience in hand and finger manipulation as well as self-expression. When presented with a variety of materials, shapes, textures, and objects to glue, children find an enormous amount of enjoyment in their creations.

The VICPA preschool experience can give parents increased parenting skills, peer networking/support, and self-confidence. Many parents have gone on to become effective leaders in their schools, communities, service organizations, and government. Your skills can be enriched by:

- Attending workshops;
- Holding executive positions in the preschool;
- Being a delegate to the VICPA Board; and,
- Participating in the Making Tomorrow Conference.

Educators

All educators in VICPA preschools:

- Are fully trained and certified Early Childhood Educators;
- Are licensed and registered with the Community Care Facilities Licensing Branch, Ministry of Health Services;
- Are sensitive people who respect young children, relate easily to them and provide an environment which encourages all children to develop at their own pace, in their own way;
- Actively serve as advisors and guides to the members ensuring a quality experience for your child and family; and,
- Attend monthly professional development sessions to keep current in all aspects of early childhood education ensuring ongoing quality care for your child.

Responsibilities

VICPA preschools are parent-operated on a cooperative basis. Your responsibilities to the preschool include:

- Duty Parents assisting in the classroom on a pre-arranged rotational basis; not required if choosing a Non-Duty Position.
- Duty Parents attending orientation sessions with other parents and the ECEs; Not required if choosing a Non-Duty Position.
- Duty Parents attending monthly meetings for parent education, and socializing with other parents; not required if choosing Non-Duty Position.
- Paying a registration fee and reasonable monthly tuition, which vary according to the expenses of each preschool; Non-Duty Parents pay a higher fee, and do not participate in the Monthly Duty-Day Part of the School.
- Participating in Fundraising and other Social Events with the Parents and Children.
- Sharing the tasks of the preschool such as making play dough, borrowing library books, or holding an executive position. There is a preschool job to meet every member's schedule and interest!

What will be expected of you as a Cooperative Preschool Member?

Cordova Bay Preschool has certain criteria requirements of all Duty Parents. Some of these are provincial licensing requirements, VICPA requirements, and others resolutions of the parents at Cordova Bay. Put together, these requirements are as follows:

1. For those Choosing Duty Positions: Attendance is required at the June General Meeting, New Parent Night, September New Parent Workshop, and September General Meeting. Sessions are approximately 2 hours long. Alternative preparations, such as watching a DVD about duty day requirements, may also be counted towards orientation hours.
2. All Parents, (Duty or Non-Duty) Meeting Health Requirements through:
 - Providing a doctor's note certifying the health status of the parent helper; and,
 - Completing medical information for parent helpers and your child, including your child's immunization record.
3. For those Choosing Duty Positions:
Personally assisting the teacher in the classroom (parent duty days) approximately once a month, from up to 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after the preschool session. Alternative arrangements can be made, ask the Enrolment and Orientation Officer for further details.
4. Participating in two clean-ups, held after winter break and at the end of the year.
5. Duty Parents attending all Parent Education Meetings held on the **first Wednesday** of each month beginning at 7:00 pm. Alternative arrangements can be

made if you are unable to attend a meeting such as watching a parent education video, reading a book on parenting, and reading the business meeting minutes. **There will be monthly General Meetings that all parents, duty or non-duty are required to attend. These will follow the Parent Education Meetings.**

6. Every Parent takes on a job within the preschool such as scheduling duty days, doing laundry, setting up a science display, or assuming an executive position (President, Vice- President, Enrolment and Orientation Officer, Equipment Representative, Secretary, Treasurer, Marketing, Fundraiser, or Parent Education Coordinator.)

7. Paying a yearly registration and insurance fee (VICPA FEE) and monthly tuition fees (September-June). We do require a month's notice or one month's fees when withdrawing from the program.

8. Participating in Social Events & Fundraising for the Preschool.

9. All Parents provide a criminal record check. This is done free of charge for non-profit organizations through our local police detachment.

9. Realizing you own your preschool – you get out what you put in. Enjoy this time with your child!!

Orientation

The Province of British Columbia regulates childcare, and our license requires that 10 hours of orientation be completed prior to assisting in the preschool classroom. Part of the orientation is observing a class in session, and the remainder of the orientation involves learning about the preschool in general, program routine, preschool's philosophy, and how to assist in the classroom.

Preschool Daily Schedule at a Glance

The preschool activity day is generally as follows:

- Outdoor play
- Circle time with the ECE – stories, music, games, conversation, and then hand washing;
- Snack time; and,
- Free play, which promotes socialization and learning in all areas of a child's development through the use of puzzles, arts, sensory (cornmeal table, water play, play dough), dramatic play, blocks etc, then clean-up;
- Outdoor play or indoors play, depending on the weather.
- Friday's 'experiment' is an exciting part of our program for the four year olds.

For snack time we encourage healthy snacks: fruit, vegetables, cheese, crackers, etc., and please provide your child with a cup for water. Due to an increase in childhood allergies, Cordova Bay Preschool is a nut free zone. Please be conscious about packing 'nut-free' snacks for your child.

In the 4's class once per month is a "shared snack day" where children and families bring in a portion of food of their choice to share with the rest of the group.

Completing the Enrolment Process

After you complete the enrolment package paperwork, we need to receive your registration fee and 10 postdated cheques for the year. The next step is the New Parent Night & June General Meeting. Those two evenings will give you a better idea of what to expect throughout the year as a member of a cooperative preschool.

The next step in completing your orientation is the New Parent Training in September. This meeting is designed to show you what is inside the preschool and how you will be assisting the ECE in her daily routine. To maintain your Education as an assistant to our two ECE's you are required to attend Monthly Parent Education Nights held the first Wednesday of every month from 7-8pm.

There is a Monthly General Meeting on the the first Wednesday of each month from 8-9pm which all Parents (Duty or Non-Duty) must attend.

Registration is now underway for September. To secure your spot, there is a non-refundable registration fee of \$125. Monthly tuition fees can be viewed by clicking on the following link: [Fees](#)

Tuition Fees usually go up slightly each year. Your child must be 3 years of age by December 31st of the preschool year in order to enroll.

We are a non-profit cooperative organization, where parents act, as assistants to our ECEs, our operating costs and fees are slightly lower than private preschools. For families who qualify, financial assistance may be available through the Ministry of Children and Family Development. For information contact 250-387-5400 and ask about "child care subsidy".

Throughout the year we have various outings away from the preschool, such as summer play dates, fundraising events, and field trips where we like to be recognized as a group. At the September General Meeting all new members will be given one T-Shirt for their child and given the opportunity to order additional preschool t-shirts for their child; our school colour is Royal Blue. The t-shirts will be available at a cost of \$10 each in sizes 2-4 or 4-6. They are a great marketing tool as well as a wonderful keepsake for your child.

Enrolment

If you have any questions about our preschool or would like to arrange for a meeting, please contact our Enrolment and Orientation Officer through our [Contact Us](#) page.

For more information on other cooperative preschools in Victoria, please contact the Vancouver Island Cooperative Preschool Association at 250-598-2667 or visit their website at <http://www.vicpa.org>