



KIDS CARE COOPERATIVE
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Orientation Manual

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Welcome to Kids Care Cooperative!

We are delighted to have your family as a part of our group.

Kids Care Cooperative has a long history of helping families in the Iowa City area meet their childcare needs. Established in 1972, Kids Care Cooperative offers a truly unique childcare experience.

When you become a member of Kids Care Cooperative, you gain so much more than a flexible childcare solution. Your children will make new friends, and you as a parent can be comfortable with the knowledge that your children are in a nurturing, safe environment. The concept of parents as providers, sharing responsibilities and investing in the well being of everyone's family is what makes Kids Care Cooperative a rewarding experience.

We hope you will enjoy your time with us at Kids Care Cooperative. It will be a pleasure to get to know you and your family!

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Cooperative System:

For each scheduled day of work, a member earns the following childcare credits:

- *Regular, 1 child:* 5 credits, 1 credit is used when the child is present on work day. The remaining credits are used during the same week.
- *Regular, 2 children:* 6 credits, 1 credit is used for each child present on work day. The remaining credits are used during the same week.
- *Alternate, 1 child:* 5 credits, 1 credit is used when the child is present on work day. The remaining credits are used during a two-week period.
- *Alternate, 2 children:* 6 credits, 1 credit is used for each child present on work day. The remaining credits are used during a two-week period.

Dues:

Each member is responsible for paying dues every month. Please place the appropriate amount in the dues box in the general supply cabinet and record your payment in the dues log book. Dues should be paid within the first two weeks of each month.

- Regular membership/one child: \$16 + \$5 for snacks
- Regular membership/two children: \$18 + \$6 for snacks
- Alternate membership/one child: \$10 + \$2.50 for snacks
- Alternate membership/two children: \$11 + \$3 for snacks

Snack System:

Included in each member's monthly dues is a fee to help cover the cost of snack. The General Supply Manager is responsible for purchasing the crackers, cheese, and juice for which s/he is reimbursed with Coop funds. If the Coop goes through a period of low membership and there is no one to fill the position of General Supply Manager, members will take turns bringing in the snack supplies at the beginning of each month.

Reserve Calendar:

Members earn one reserve spot for each day worked. These reserve spots must be used within the time they are earned (in other words, you cannot accumulate unused reserves). The number of reserve spots corresponds to the number of workers for any given day. For instance, there are two reserve spots available on two-worker days and three reserve spots on three-worker days. Siblings from two-child families fill one reserve spot. For more information on cancelling a reserve spot, refer the General Policy 9). To reserve a spot for your child, write his/her name on the Reserve Calendar posted on the front board. Special "Turn-Away" reserves are earned if your child is turned away when the Cooperative is at capacity. Turn-Away reserves can also be earned when a non-scheduled member offers to stay and work so that the Coop can accommodate more children on that day (OR you can choose to earn credits – see General Policy 7.5). On the Reserve calendar, record your name and the date that you were turned away to indicate that you are owed one "Turn-Away" reserve. You must utilize your "Turn-Away" reserve sometime before the last day of the following month (for instance, if you were turned away on February 13, you must use your reserve by March 31 or it is forfeited). Once you have utilized this reserve, erase your name and turn-away date from the calendar.

Cubbies:

All regular and alternate members have a cubby labeled with the child's name. Your child's completed artwork will be placed in these cubbies along with general correspondence related to the Coop. You may also use the cubbies to store extra clothing for your child. Please check them and clean them out regularly.

E-mail List:

Important information about the Coop is exchanged via e-mail. Check your email account regularly for messages and use it to convey your ideas, suggestions, and concerns to the group at large. When you first join the Coop, we encourage you to introduce yourself to members via e-mail.

Schedule and Roster:

Each month you will receive a schedule (via e-mail) that indicates who will be working throughout the month. This schedule will also include a member list, phone tree, and any birthdays that occur within the month.

2. DAILY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to remember that we are licensed by the State of Iowa and must, therefore, follow all rules and regulations that any other licensed, childcare center follows. When you join Kids Care Cooperative, you commit to being a professional child care worker. Completing your professional training within 6 months of your first day as a Regular or Alternate worker is critical and required (see 5. Membership Requirements & Staff Development). Parents who fail to complete their training will be dismissed.

Before you work:

Consider the curriculum theme for the month and plan an activity (songs, books, art project, etc.). Something simple is best – especially for the younger children. Suggestions are also provided by the Curriculum Coordinator and can be found in the protective plastic sleeve on the bulletin board. You may bring items from home for special projects. You may also make a purchase for a project as long as the total cost is under \$5.00 (please submit receipts to the Treasurer for reimbursement). Larger purchases must be made with the Board's approval. The Coop's library also has several "activity" books for you to reference. Feel free to ask other members for activity ideas.

Small items that toddlers may choke on should not be brought to the Coop. The Coop policy prohibits use of toy guns, candy, gum or balloons.

If you are unable to work on a day for which you have been scheduled, you must attempt to switch working days with another member or find a substitute. Please refer to General Policy 17.

When you arrive on a day you work:

- Arrive no later than 8:50 a.m.
- WASH YOUR HANDS. (This is required by law.)
- Make the bleach/water solution and fill two spray bottles.
1 teaspoon bleach to 250 mL water in each spray bottle.
- Record your child's name on the blackboard.
- Inspect rooms and secure doors.
- Check the calendar for scheduled fire or tornado drills.
- Discuss any special plans or activities with your co-worker. Decide who will be completing the logs that morning (Activity Log, Infant Log, Emergency Drill Log).
- Greet each child and parent. Get information about the child from the parent as needed.
- Verify that parents are signing in their children and providing emergency contact information.
- Have one worker begin an activity around 9 a.m. to smooth the parents' departure.
- One consistent security object may be kept by each child. We've found it best that other personal toys be sent home.
- Greet any volunteers as they arrive and introduce them to the kids.
- NEVER, EVER LEAVE ANY CHILD UNATTENDED in either of the rooms.
- If you wish to use the Big Room, check first with the Church secretary for permission. Also check the condition of the room and make necessary safety changes before the kids enter.
- Remember throughout the morning to "catch the children being good" and positively reinforce this behavior.

Snack time:

- We usually have snack around 10 a.m.
- 15 minutes before intended snack time, clean the snack table and high chairs with bleach/water solution. Wait two minutes before wiping dry.
- Line the children up at the sink and wash everyone's hands, including your own.
- Check the list on the refrigerator for specific dietary restrictions before serving snack.
- Provide one napkin to each child onto which you will serve cheese and crackers. Be sure that the cheese is cut into small enough pieces so that it is not a choking hazard. Children also receive 100% juice (diluted to a 1:1 ratio) or water in a sippy cup.
- Keep children seated while eating. Ideally at least one worker should remain seated at the table to set an example and engage children in conversation.
- Encourage each child to throw away his/her napkin and uneaten snack when finished. Their sippy cups should be placed in the blue wash bucket on top of the refrigerator.
- Encourage the children to say please and thank you.

- One worker should start a new activity to occupy those kids who finish earlier. Other workers may then clean up. Wash the table again with bleach/water solution and sweep under the table. Clean the high chairs with bleach/water solution.
- While eating, children 6-18 months must be strapped into highchairs. Children under 6 months must be held while eating.

Diapering:

- Verify adequate supervision of both rooms of the Coop before entering the bathroom to change a diaper. On a two-worker day, your co-worker will need to supervise all the other children while you change a diaper.
- Children with diapers should routinely be checked around mid-morning (snack time) for stool or excessive wetness. This is also a good time for all children not in diapers to use the bathroom.
- Parents whose children wear diapers should store them in the alphabetized bins. Locate the child's diapers and wipes according to the first letter of the child's first name. If the child is low on diapers, make a note on the chalkboard so that the parent is reminded upon pick-up.
- Cloth diapers are not allowed at the Coop, because of Johnson County Health Department regulations.
- Please be aware that anything you touch between the time you change the diaper and the time you wash your hands may become contaminated. **WASH YOUR HANDS AND THE CHILD'S HANDS IMMEDIATELY** after changing the diaper. **THIS IS REQUIRED BY STATE LAW.**
- Gloves are provided and are required for diaper changes.
- Clean the changing table with the bleach/water solution provided. Spray the surface, let sit for two minutes and then wipe starting at the head-end and ending at the foot-end.

Clean-up:

- Plan to stay until 11:45 to complete all necessary daily cleaning tasks.
- Encourage and assist capable children to pick up toys when they are finished playing with them, rather than waiting until the end of the morning.
- Reach an agreement with co-workers concerning clean-up chores. At least one worker should continue activities with children, while others pick up.
- Re-shelve all toys.
- Sweep, especially under the snack table and highchairs.
- Empty trash cans in the bathroom and by snack table. You may consolidate trash into one bag when possible and re-use a liner if it is not excessively soiled. The trash is to be disposed in the large dumpster located out the back door of the Church.
- Clean snack table and high chairs with bleach/water solution.
- Kitchen utensils and sippy cups in the blue bucket should be carried to the kitchen for washing with soap and water. Rather than using a sponge, use paper towels supplied by the church and located in the bathrooms. Air-dry the dishes in the drying rack on top of the refrigerator. Friday's workers should spray the dishes and utensils with bleach/water solution after washing with soap and water and allow them to air-dry in the drying rack. Knives used for cutting cheese should be wiped dry and kept in the utensil box in the supply cabinet.
- Mouthed toys should be placed in the labeled bucket so that they may be cleaned by the member responsible for this cleaning job.
- Check for cleanliness of the bathroom sink, toilet seat, and around the base of toilet. Spray the toilet's flush handle and changing table pull handle with bleach/water solution.
- Spray door knobs, light switches, refrigerator pull, cabinet pulls, and telephone with bleach/water solution.
- Close all windows and doors, turn off lights, and lock all three cabinets.
- Crib sheet should be changed and mattress should be wiped down mattress with bleach/water solution by the child's parent.
- Be sure that all logs have been completed – Activity Log, Infant Log, Emergency Drill Log.
- Stay until all children have been picked up. Remind parents to take home art projects. Inform parents about any significant happenings throughout the morning.
- Empty bleach/water solution spray bottles.

Field Trips:

- Kids Care Cooperative's insurance coverage allows for walking field trips only.
- If you plan to take children on a fieldtrip to the library or nearby parks, a fieldtrip permission form must be filled out by the working member and signed by all parents. This form is located in the file cabinet with an original copy in the Daily Operations Book.

- Field trips are only permitted when the adult to child ratio is at “ratio plus one”, meaning that there is at least one volunteer present.
- Refer to General Policy 15.18 for a detailed description of field trip procedures.

Bringing your child(ren) on a day you are not working:

- Write your child's name on the chalkboard and highlight your child's name on the Daily Attendance. Be sure to include the name and phone number of any additional emergency contacts for that day.
- Be sure your child has a clean diaper or tries to go potty then WASH YOUR CHILD'S HANDS BEFORE S/HE BEGINS PLAYING.
- Introduce your child to a worker to facilitate the child's adjustment and transfer responsibility to the Coop.
- Alert the worker to any special phases or needs of the child, such as medical problems, food allergies, toilet training, separation anxiety, aggressive behavior, security objects, etc.
- Leave only labeled items with your child (diapers, bottles, security blanket, etc.)
- Each child may bring one security object to the Coop each day. Please leave other toys and books at home. Difficulties may arise when a child tries to defend what is rightfully theirs.
- When you return to pick up your child (at or before 11:30 a.m.) make sure that a worker knows you have returned for the child. Before leaving, erase your child's name from the blackboard.
- If someone other than a member parent will be picking up the child, make a note on the chalkboard and let the Key Worker know in advance. IF THIS PERSON IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE COOP, A PHOTO I.D. MUST BE PRESENTED AT THE TIME OF PICK-UP. If a parent fails to inform the working member, the worker must call the parent to verify the pick-up.

3. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are related to the health and safety of our children. Additional information can be found in the Kids Care Cooperative General Policy Manual.

Hand Washing and Sanitizing Policies:

Hand Washing is the first line of defense in protecting our children and ourselves from the spread of disease.

- Hands should be washed:
 - Upon arrival at the Coop
 - After sneezing and/or coughing
 - After wiping a runny nose
 - After using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet
 - After changing a diaper (the child's hands must also be washed). Gloves must be worn during diaper changes.
 - Before handling or serving food.
 - Before and after providing First Aid (gloves should be worn while administering First Aid).
 - After handling ANY bodily secretions (urine, vomit, etc.)
- Liquid Sanitizer is also available for times when a worker cannot reach the soap and water immediately.
- Mouthed Toys should be cleaned using a bleach/water solution.
- All surfaces that children eat off of should be cleaned with bleach/water solution before and after each meal. Spray the surface with bleach/water solution. Let sit for two minutes and then wipe dry with paper towel.
- Diapering surface should be cleaned with bleach/water solution after each diaper change. Spray the surface with bleach/water solution. Let sit for two minutes and then wipe dry with paper towel.
- Dishes and utensils should be cleaned with soap and water after each use and once a week (Fridays) with a sanitizing bleach/water solution. Washing of dishes must be done in the Church kitchen – NOT THE COOP BATHROOM.
- The following should be sanitized DAILY:
 - Sink
 - Door knobs, light switches, refrigerator pull, cabinet pulls, and telephone
 - Table and highchairs
 - Toilet, area surrounding toilet, diaper changing table
 - Exersaucer (if used)

- The following should be sanitized WEEKLY:
 - Mouthed toys
 - Floors
 - Trash cans

Illness:

- Sick children and sick workers may not attend Kids Care. A person is considered too sick for Kids Care attendance if they have a fever, croupy or productive cough, cold with significant nose drainage, rashes that come with a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye (conjunctivitis), impetigo, scabies, lice, herpes I or II lesions, or any other contagious disease. Children who act too ill to play but have no obvious symptoms are also asked to stay home. In some cases a physician's recommendation may be required before a child is allowed to return to Kids Care or a member may return to work.
- At times, we are all unsure about bringing our children to the Coop when they are exhibiting what could be the first symptoms of an illness. If there is any doubt, please err on the side of caution. Remember that some members have other children at home, including infants, and we don't want to expose them, or any of our children, to a contagious illness.
- It is the responsibility of the Key Worker to screen children arriving at the Coop for illness, and to turn away any child who appears ill. The Key Worker may send a child home at any time of the morning if they are too ill to stay. If a child is sent home due to illness, the incident should be recorded on the Early Dismissal Log.
- Medications are not given at the Coop. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

Health-Related Emergency:

- First Aid Kits are located in the general supply cabinet and in the traveling case next to the cubbies. Additional ice packs are in the freezer.
- Try to call the child's parent or guardian. (phone numbers are on the Daily Attendance sheet)
- Wash open wounds with soap and water.
- Perform any first aid that you feel qualified to do.
- If medical treatment is necessary and the parents cannot be reached, take the child and child's packet of medical release forms to the doctor or hospital. Physicians' phone numbers and addresses are located on the child's medical paperwork which can be found in the travelling First Aid kit or the child's file in the binder in the cabinet located in the playroom.
- In the event of airway obstruction, respiratory or cardiac arrest, do not transport the child yourself. Instruct a co-worker to CALL 911 and then have the qualified worker initiate resuscitation efforts.
- The Key Worker should fill out an Incident Report. A Co-Director will sign this report and place it in the Incident File.

Absences:

A member who cannot work his/her scheduled shift is responsible for finding a replacement. The worker has two options:

- 1) Switch shifts with another worker, ideally switching days with another worker from the same week.
- 2) Ask another member to substitute (e.g. ask a Regular member to work twice in one week or ask an Alternate member to work on an "off" week), with the understanding that you will cover a shift of theirs the following week.

Remember that at least one worker per day (the Key Worker) must be certified in First Aid/CPR.

When switching days with another worker, the certified worker must make sure a certified member will be working.

The other worker on the day you were scheduled to work should be notified of any changes you have arranged.

Refer to General Policy 17 for more information on Absences, Vacations, and Leave of Absence, Family Additions, and Medical Leave.

4. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

It is the duty of Kids Care to provide a safe and welcoming environment for the wide age-range of children. When a child's mental or physical well being is being threatened by another child, it is the responsibility of the workers to intervene.

KCC encourages workers to use a positive approach to discipline including active listening, natural or logical consequences, redirection, and time-outs. For more information regarding positive discipline, consult the Coop's library.

Corporal punishment, including spanking, slapping and shaking, is not acceptable. Punishment that is humiliating or frightening or in some way diminishes a child's self-esteem is also not tolerated.

The following behaviors are not permitted at Kids Care: hitting, pushing, pinching, biting, spitting, offensive language, throwing or abusing toys, climbing or jumping off furniture, or using furniture in a manner for which it is not intended. In addition, children are not allowed to push chairs or move the furniture, as the noise is disruptive to Church staff and is potentially dangerous. Workers must use their own discretion in responding to other verbal or physical behavior.

When a child's rights have been violated by another child, or when equipment or materials are being abused, it is the responsibility of the worker closest to the situation to follow through with discipline, even if the parent of the offending child is at the Coop.

At the discretion of the Key Worker, the parent of a child who is very disruptive or very upset may be contacted to pick up their child for the day. If a child is sent home for the reasons discussed above, the incident should be recorded on the Early Dismissal Log.

Refer to General Policy 16 for more on Behavior Management.

5. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS & STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Membership Requirements:

1. Submit all required paperwork.
2. Attend an orientation session prior to the first day of work.
3. Pay dues within the first two weeks of each month.
4. Arrive at Kids Care no later than 8:50 on the mornings you work.
5. Sign up for a Cooperative job – and do the required work consistently. Refer to General Policy 12 for a complete list of job descriptions.
6. Sign up to assist with a cleaning job – detailed on the poster adjacent to the Coop bathroom (refer to General Policy 12).
7. Become certified in **First Aid** and **Adult/Child CPR** within **three** months of start-date.
8. Complete **Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training** within **three** months of start-date.
9. Receive certification in **Universal Precautions** within **three** months of start-date.
10. Acquire at least five hours of additional In-Service training during your first year of membership (four hours every year thereafter) related to child care, child development, and/or preschool. At least one Co-Director must receive 10 hours of In-Service training per year. Record dates and hours on your Professional Growth Record located in your file.
11. Members are required to attend at least three general meetings per year.
12. Keep forms up-to-date.

FORM

Parent Information Record
Parent Health Report
Child Health Report
Child Immunization Card
Parental Emergency Medical Consent
Release from Liability

UPDATE

As changes occur
Every third year
Annually & as changes occur
Annually & as changes occur
Annually
Annually

Staff Development:

Each working member must complete 5 hours of In-Service training during their first year of membership in Kids Care Cooperative and 4 hours of In-Service training during subsequent years of membership. At least one Co-Director must receive 10 hours of In-Service training per year. Continuing education hours must come from an outside accredited agency. The training should be focused on the following topics: child development, guidance and discipline, appropriate practices, health and safety, communications skills, professionalism and ethics.

Hourly In-Service credits may be achieved by attending a training session scheduled by Kids Care Cooperative, the 4C's: Child Care Resource and Referral, or any other community organization or college.

Members are responsible for recording their In-Service training hours on their Professional Growth Record located in their file. Questions about In-Service Training should be directed toward a Co-Director or the Re-Licensure Manager.

Staff Development Resources:

The following list of resources may be helpful in fulfilling your requirements for CPR, First Aid, Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training, Universal Precautions, and In-Service training. Check the bulletin board at the front of the Coop for current training opportunities.

- Adult/Child CPR and First Aid:
 - American Red Cross (337-2119) – Local contact - Lori Brooks (319) 338-5703
STORMBROOKS@msn.com
 - 4C's Community Coordinated Child Care (338-7684)
 - University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (CPR only)
- Universal Precautions Against Infectious Diseases:
 - Prepare Iowa: Learning Management System at <http://prepareiowa.learnpublichealth.com>
 - Lori Brooks (319) 338-5703; STORMBROOKS@msn.com
 - 4C's (338-7684)
- Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training:
 - Prepare Iowa: Learning Management System at <http://prepareiowa.learnpublichealth.com>
 - 4C's (338-7684)
- In-Service/Continuing Education
 - 4C's offers a variety of classes throughout the year.
 - Grant Wood AEA offer periodic seminars for child care workers
 - The In-Service Manager may plan special programs from time to time.

6. SAFETY & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

We have designated the Iowa City Public Library Children's Room as our safe place if we are ever forced to evacuate Trinity Church. During ALL emergency events, the working members MUST carry with them: the Daily Attendance with emergency contacts and their phone numbers, the traveling first aid kit (which contains the Emergency Medical Contact forms), and a member's cellular telephone, if available. Two umbrella strollers are available for safely walking the children to this safe destination. If possible, ask a Church staff member to assist in quickly moving the children in an emergency situation. Once the safe place is reached, let library staff know of our situation and ask them to assist us in obtaining help. If 911 has not been called, do so at this time. Contact parents to notify them of the situation using a cell phone or the library phone.

One Fire Drill and one Tornado Drill are held each month during Coop hours. The drills are scheduled by the Schedule Manager, and initiated by the Key Worker. In a fire drill, the children are taken to either the front or the back door of the Church, but not outside. For a tornado drill, the children are taken to the bottom of the stairway in the basement. The drills must be timed and recorded (along with the number of kids) on the Fire Drill/Tornado Drill Log on the front board. Evacuation routes are posted on all doors of the Cooperative. When performing monthly fire drills, staff should alternate use of both routes.

Please refer to General Policy 21 for more information on emergency procedures for the events listed below:

- Fire
- Tornado
- Blizzard/Inclement Weather
- Sick Child/Medical and Dental Emergencies
- Missing or Abducted Child
- Power Failure
- Earthquakes
- Chemical Spill
- Intruder in the Building
- Intoxicated Parent
- Bomb Threat Emergency

WHEN CALLING 911, REMEMBER TO TELL THE OPERATOR that you are “a daycare worker at Kids Care Cooperative” and give them the name, address, and telephone number of Trinity Episcopal Church. This information is posted by the phone at the Coop and is in all first aid kits. If you are on a field trip give them the name AND location to the best of your knowledge.

Kids Care Coop is located at: Trinity Episcopal Church
320 East College Street
Iowa City, IA 52240
Phone: (319) 337-3333

Infectious Disease Control and Universal Precautions Policy and Procedures:

Disposable gloves are required for all incidents involving blood or bodily fluids. Gloves are located in the First Aid kits as well as in the bathroom in the diaper changing station. Gloves and all disposable material with blood (tissues, gauze, etc.) should be placed in a zip lock bag and/or grocery sack and then placed in the normal garbage. Clothes containing blood or bodily fluid should be placed in a plastic bag, tied shut and put in the child’s cubby (out of reach of children) to be sent home with the parent. If any materials are dripping with blood, double bag them, label them BIOHAZARD, and place them out of reach of the children. Before taking out the Coop’s garbage at the end of your shift, ask the Church’s custodial engineer or secretary for a red biohazard bag to properly dispose of the soiled material.

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Policy:

As a member of Kids Care Cooperative, each of us is a "Mandatory Reporter" of child abuse. This means that, as professional child care providers, we are responsible for identifying children who are at risk of abuse. We are obligated by Iowa law to report any suspected case of child abuse.

Within six months of becoming a Regular or Alternate member of the Coop, you are required by law to complete Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training. Upon completion of the training session, a certificate will be issued by the trainer and should be included in your file at the Coop.

More Safety and Health Guidelines can be found in KCC’s Safety and Infection Control Reference: CPR, FIRST AID and Universal Precautions in the Child Care Setting (American Red Cross, Central Iowa Chapter September 2001)

7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What if my scheduled workday is not until Friday and I want to bring my child to Kids Care on Tuesday. I haven’t earned credits yet, so how can I use them?

Your childcare credits are good during the week that you are scheduled to work. If you don’t work until Friday, you are essentially using the credits BEFORE they are actually earned. We expect that workers will come to work on their scheduled workday every time that they are scheduled. On occasion, unforeseen circumstances may make it impossible for you to work your scheduled shift after you have already used your childcare credits. In this situation you are expected to trade shifts with another member, find a member to substitute for you, or plan to work a different shift than the one for which you are currently scheduled. Refer to General Policy 17 for the protocol for absences.

Will I be able to leave my child every day?

Yes, if there is an available spot. Our license allows for a maximum of 12 children plus one school-aged sibling to attend each day with an adult to child ratio of 1:4. If every enrolled child came to Kids Care on any given day, we would exceed capacity. We serve our members on a “first come, first served” basis each day. In order to serve everyone, we ask that all members self-regulate. For instance, if your child attends the Coop daily, consider giving your spot to a child who does not attend as regularly on a day that the Coop is full. You may also consider working an extra shift on a two-worker day so that we can accommodate four more children. This kind of cooperative spirit is what makes Kids Care unique and wonderful! If the Coop is full when you arrive to drop off your child, you will receive an extra reserve spot to be used by the end of the following month. Refer to General Policy 9.7.

You are always welcome to stay and play with your child on a day that the Coop is full. This would not count as a working day, however, and your child would be considered a visitor. S/he is welcome to play with the kids, have snack, and partake in any activities, but you must stay with her/him.

I only used three of my five credits last week. Does that mean I have seven to use this week?

Credits do not carry over from week to week. All the more reason to bring your child into play as often as possible!

What is a Reserve?

A reserve is designed to allow members guaranteed childcare on days that they need to leave their children at Kids Care. Regular members earn one reserve spot each week and Alternate members earn one reserve spot every other week. A maximum of one reserve spot can be used per week and they cannot be accumulated. Turn-Away reserves are earned when the Coop is full and a member's child is turned away. Turn-Away reserves can also be earned when a non-scheduled member offers to stay and work so that the Coop can accommodate more children on that day. Turn-Away reserves CAN be used during a week when you already plan to use a "regular" reserve spot. Refer to General Policy 8.7 to for more on Turn-Away reserves.

Today I came to Kids Care and they were full. I stayed to help, so can I count today as my workday instead of the day I am scheduled to work?

No, even if you volunteered to be a third worker, we expect all workers to work on their scheduled day unless they have previously arranged to switch shifts with someone. However, if you do stay to enable the Coop to accommodate more children, you have the option of EITHER receiving an extra reserve spot to be used as a "Turn-Away" reserve (see General Policy 8.7) OR receiving child care credits equal to the number of children (not including that of the non-scheduled member) who were accommodated (see General Policy 7.5).

What if I can't find a substitute on a day that either my child or I am sick?

Because we are a Cooperative, you will, in almost all circumstances, be able to find a substitute IF YOU CALL THE OTHER MEMBERS BEFORE 8:00 a.m. Please try to contact members as soon as you anticipate needing a substitute. In the unlikely event that no one is available to work for you, notify all members via email or the phone tree so they know the Coop will be open to fewer members that day. If you are the Key Worker and the worker scheduled with you is not certified, the Coop must close for that day. This should only be done in an extreme emergency. You are responsible for making up that shift in the future, by working an extra shift as soon as you are able.

Why should I work for someone and why should they work for me?

First of all, it is the Cooperative spirit of our group that has made it a thriving organization for the past thirty years. We work for our co-members, so that the maximum number of children can enjoy the Coop each day. Working should be a fun experience for the parents too, and if it is not, then members should consider whether Kids Care is the right fit for their family. Substituting for a co-worker also increases the likelihood of that co-worker substituting for you in the future.

Who is the Key Worker and what are their duties?

The Key Worker is a certified member who has completed trainings in First Aid, CPR, and Universal Precautions. S/he is responsible for certain supervisory functions and the routine tasks of the day. At least one certified member is assigned to work each day. On the work schedule, the Key Worker is indicated by an asterisk. Often times, the Coop is staffed by two Key Workers.

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