

Lutherville-Timonium Recreation Council  
Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks



# Policy Statement

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## PROGRAM

The Lutherville-Timonium Recreation Council sponsors a Cooperative Tots Preschool for 3 and 4 year-old children in the community. The Co-op meets in the Recreation Activities Room at Pinewood Elementary School, 200 Rickwood Road, in the Pine Valley section of Timonium.

The program is based fundamentally on play activities, because it is through self-selected play that children can develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually in ways consistent with their individual needs. Play is a child's natural way of learning. Through meaningful play experiences, children develop concepts and skills basic to the more difficult tasks of learning in later years.

The daily program provides individual and group experiences with arts and crafts, science, language arts, math, cooking, books, and music. Block, manipulative, and dramatic play areas are also available. Outdoor play and a snack round out a full and rewarding day for the children. They are free to learn, to create, and to grow within a structured routine.

Please do not call Pinewood Elementary School to contact the teachers in the program. If necessary, call the classroom directly at **410-561-3096** with any concerns. The teacher and assistant, along with one or two parent helpers, are with the children each day in the classroom. Our program also has a board of parent volunteers, which includes an enrollment coordinator, secretary, treasurer, social media coordinator, and a room parent for each class session. Any concerns can also be referred directly to the enrollment coordinator or room parents of the Co-op.

## PROGRAM HOURS

The program is divided into two semesters – the first running from September to January and the second from January to May. For the 2024-2025 school year, the class schedule is as follows:

3's AM meets on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:15 – 11:45 AM

4's AM meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:15 – 11:45 AM

Extended day/Lunch Bunch: Monday- Friday ( 12:00 pm- 2:30 pm)

\*Lunch Bunch is a mixed age group program that is open to any student currently enrolled in the program. Parent volunteers are not required.

The program observes all holidays and vacations observed in the Baltimore County Public Schools. The Co-op closes for the same Professional Development Days as Pinewood Elementary (dates subject to change by the Director). A list of important dates and school closings is provided to parents before school begins.

Visitation is acceptable to prospective parents looking to join the Co-op. Schedule an appointment with the enrollment coordinator, and they will provide you with a confirmation form

and inform the teachers to expect you. We ask that you do not bring any mobile children for liability concerns.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The Co-op follows the same inclement weather closings or state of emergency closings as Baltimore County Public Schools. If they are closed, the Co-op is closed. When public schools open one hour late because of inclement weather, classes will start one hour late in the AM, but PM classes will start on time. However, if there is a two-hour delay, AM classes will be canceled and PM classes will start on time.

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The “cooperative” part of the Co-op is what makes it a unique preschool program. The parents are an integral part of the program. Parents are required to participate in the program on a regular basis throughout the year. Parent Responsibilities include:

**1. Parent Helper Days:** The room parent schedules these in advance. For the 3 year-old program, you can expect to work about once a month and for the 4’s it will be once-twice a month. Parents with multiple kids will work a corresponding multiple of days more than a single-child parent. Your helper day will mainly consist of assisting teachers and children with their daily projects and activities. Active and cooperative participation from parents is mutually beneficial to the children, teachers, program, and the parents themselves. There is an involved spirit of community and friendship at our Co-op as a result. Key things to keep in mind when it is your volunteering day:

- A) Arrive 15 minutes early (9:00 AM or 12:15 PM) to assist the teachers in preparing the classroom for the daily activities
- B) Supply cups or napkins, as indicated on the monthly calendar
- C) Before and after snack, clean the table and sweep the floor around the snack table
- D) After the class is over, vacuum the rug and assist in any further cleaning
- E) Do not bring any siblings or other children on your helper days
- F) Refrain from using your cellphone while you are a helper

**2. Cell Phone use:** Cellphone use is not permitted during the time you are volunteering. We understand that there may be emergencies when you have to take a call, if that is the case, please let one of the teachers know and step out of the classroom for the duration of the call.

We know that there are many precious moments that occur at school and that it is tempting to film/photograph them, but we ask that you refrain from this while you are engaged in assisting in an activity or helping the teachers to transition the children. Finally, please be mindful of the fact that we do not have permission from families to post pictures of children on social media websites.

3. **Housekeeping:** These days are scheduled once a semester and involve a cleaning assignment for the last 30 minutes of class or another duty as specified by the teacher (for example, cleaning toys or dress-up clothes).
4. **Credits:** Each parent earns three credits per semester by completing odd jobs such as cutting out crafts projects, purchasing supplies or small items, or making play dough.
5. **Volunteer Orientation:** It is a mandatory state regulation that all parents are informed of important procedures to follow as a volunteer. The room parent provides a state-mandated checklist to each parent on the first day of school and reviews all procedures at that time. Each parent who volunteers in the classroom must sign the checklist form; this also applies to relatives who may volunteer in the classroom.
6. **Fundraisers:** We may have fundraisers, based on the need to help supplement the costs of the daily operation of the Co-op. Participation in fundraisers is strictly voluntary. Past fundraisers include Chick-Fil-A night, Panera Night, and Scholastic Book sales. All help is sincerely appreciated.
7. **Advertising:** In fairness to all parents, we do not permit advertising on the bulletin boards and/or solicitation to parents to participate in fundraising parties that financially benefit other parents (for example, Pampered Chef parties, jewelry parties, Southern Living parties, etc.) Any parent can advertise in our newsletter at the following rates: \$20 per newsletter ad, or \$50 for the year. The copy-ready ad, along with payment for that ad, should be submitted to the Co-op secretary for inclusion in the next newsletter.
8. **Field Trips:** Field trips for our 4's program are offered throughout the year, usually two in the fall and one in the spring, as well as one or two in-house events. Parents are responsible for transporting and accompanying their child on these trips, or for arranging for someone to transport and accompany the child. The Co-op is unable to provide transportation because the cost is too prohibitive. Parents must complete and return permission slips for their child to attend the field trips. Sufficient notice is given to the parents for the dates of the field trips. The 3's program does not participate in any field trips.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

All children must arrive on time. School begins promptly at 9:15 AM. Late arrivals are disruptive to both the teachers and the students. Please bring your child to the lobby and never leave your child unattended. Your child may enter the classroom when the teachers open the doors. All parents and caregivers need to sign their child in and out each school day; this is a state regulation. Also, if you know you will be available at a different phone number while your child is in school (i.e., cell phone), you must include that phone number on the sign-in sheet.

Children must be picked up promptly at 11:45 AM ( morning class) or 2:30 PM ( lunch bunch). When any change is to be made in the time or method of a child's departure, please notify the teachers through a written note. Verbal messages from the children are not acceptable.

If you are more than 10 minutes late in picking up your child, the teachers have been instructed to call one of the people listed on the emergency card to come for your child. The third time a child is picked up 10 minutes late, a fee of \$25 will be charged. Every additional five minutes that a parent is late (after the first 15), the parent will be charged an additional \$5.

**NOTE: Gum and other foods not supplied during snack time are not permitted in the classroom. Also, please discourage your child from bringing anything such as books, stuffed animals, or favorite toys to the Co-op unless specifically requested.**

## ENROLLMENT

Class size is based on total enrollment, with an average of 18 children or fewer per class. Class size will not exceed 20 children.

A teacher, assistant teacher, and one or two parent helpers will work with each class. Additional parents may be scheduled for special events.

## ADMISSION POLICIES

All children must be 3 or 4 years old (depending on their class) by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year.

All children MUST be toilet trained – ***there will be no exceptions to this policy.*** In the event of on-going accidents, the teachers reserve the right to suspend enrollment of the student until the problem is corrected.

Since the Co-op has very reasonable tuition rates, we do not offer a discount to families who have more than one child enrolled in the program for the same school year. This includes parents of twins and triplets.

Tuition is due by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Tuition not paid by August 15<sup>th</sup>, will be assessed a \$75 late fee. If the tuition is still unpaid by August 31, the child will not be permitted to start the program until payment has been satisfied. If you have questions regarding payment, please contact our treasurer at [ltrccooptotstreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:ltrccooptotstreasurer@gmail.com).

Refunds will be given in the first two weeks of school at 50%. After this, refunds may be given on a case-by-case basis.

A waiting list is maintained in the event of vacancies and is handled on a first come, first served, basis. If space allows, we will accept new registrants after the school year begins. However, we will not accept new students after March 1<sup>st</sup> of the spring semester. Tuition is pro-rated for those who enroll late.

Current students and their siblings will be given an opportunity to pre-register for the following year's classes before enrollment is open to new families. You may pre-register by filling out an application and sending a \$150, non-refundable, reservation fee. This will guarantee your child's spot in our program; you will receive a confirmation letter as your receipt.

All children will be considered for the Co-op and given an adjustment period of five weeks to work with their age group. Reasonable accommodations will be made for children with special needs to help them remain in the program; however, children who pose a physical risk to the other children or whose behavior is too disruptive as to inhibit the program, will not be allowed to remain. The Board will make a final determination.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

In our Program, we view discipline not as a means of punishing a child who has acted inappropriately, but rather as a means of teaching a child. Positive discipline teaches children where the limits are set, how to maintain control over their bodies and how to solve problems in the event of conflict.

Discipline is most effective when it follows logical consequences. The consequences for behavior must make sense to the child. If a child is throwing sand outdoors, it is logical to tell the child that the sand stays in the sandbox and that if it gets thrown out again, the child will have to find somewhere else to play. But let's not leave it at that. Get the child involved in a discussion about what would happen if all the sand were thrown out of the box. A little bit of nonsense and humor doesn't hurt either. If this child were simply told to leave the sandbox after having thrown sand, what would he/she have learned from the experience? Since the purpose of discipline is to teach, more verbal children should be encouraged to talk to their peers when conflict arises. (For example, a child who was struck by a peer should be encouraged to tell that peer that they do not like to be hit and that it hurts.) This helps children to empathize with one another's feelings and really see the results of their actions.

Limiting a child's choices of activities due to inappropriate behavior is an effective means by which to teach children to respect property and one another. For example, a child who is stepping on plastic blocks should be warned that he/she would be asked to find a different toy if they do it again because stepping on blocks could break them.

Separation of children may become necessary in the case of two or more children having extreme difficulty playing together without conflict. The teacher then needs to assign appropriate play areas for the children, with the message that they may try playing together again later if they do well on their own. The use of a time-out shall be very limited. A time-out is an opportunity for a child who is out of control and at risk of harming himself or others, to calm down and gain control once again. A time-out is never to be used as a punishment. It is not the logical consequence for the behavior. A time-out shall never be demeaning (for example, forcing a child to sit in a corner or put his head down). Again, it is an opportunity to gain control over oneself, so that the child and adult can discuss the situation and a more appropriate action may be taken.

When talking to children about their behavior, give them input on what they feel is an appropriate consequence for their action. This works especially well as children get older. For example, a child who is hurting children with housekeeping utensils may be asked, "What can we do to help you to remember how to use the utensils properly?" You may be surprised at how a child may respond to this. If their suggestions are inappropriate, then you make the decision yourself. The child stands to gain the most if he/she makes retribution on his/her own terms.

Inappropriate behavior shall be viewed as exactly that. Children shall never be referred to as naughty or bad. Always address the behavior as the problem, not the child and whenever possible, give a child a choice. Let them own their own actions by choosing what they will do. A teacher is not expected to love all the children all of the time, but they are expected to give unconditional acceptance of the child as a good person trying their best to learn about life.

## FAMILY ISSUES POLICY

The primary focus of our Program is to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment for your child. Therefore, it is our policy to refrain from participating in any legal or custody issues, which could potentially have a negative impact on our staff and/or our students.

In the case of a non-custodial parent/adult removing a child from school property, the Co-op requires that a copy of the custodial agreement, as well as a written request by the custodial parent/guardian to deny release of the child to the non-custodial parent/adult be submitted to the Program. Further, a non-custodial parent cannot be denied access to a child without legal protective or restraining order. Any person preauthorized by the custodial parent to pick up the child shall show a picture ID to the teachers upon pick up.

## HEALTH FORMS / HEALTH POLICY

**Health Forms:** All children are required to have health forms and immunization charts completed and signed by their physician before they are admitted to the Program. No child will be able to enter the classroom on the next scheduled school day without having turned in all signed and completed forms to the room parent. If it is the religious belief of a parent not to immunize their child, according to the MSDE, Office of Childcare, there needs to be proof of a bona fide religious belief (i.e., something with the church's name, the family's name, and indication that they don't believe in immunizations).

**Illnesses:** Because of our concern for the physical well-being of each child, we request that your child be kept at home if they have had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours. This policy applies to parent helpers as well.

Anytime the parent learns that his or her child has been exposed to a communicable disease, (for example, Covid-19, Fifth Disease /Pinworms/Head Lice), the parent is responsible to inform the teachers or their class vice-president of this situation so the other parents may be informed. This is important so measures can be taken to ensure the health of all children. This also allows us to keep all parents informed of these special situations. It is especially important that pregnant moms are made aware that they have been exposed to Fifth disease, as it can be harmful to their unborn child. Your continued cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.



**Food Allergies:** If a parent or guardian requests a modified diet for medical reasons, a letter from the child's health practitioner must be provided to the Co-op and updated every six months. This letter must specify which foods should be deleted from a child's diet. The Co-op will take every reasonable precaution to accommodate these special needs, provided there is documentation.

Parents who do not want their child to have a particular snack due to a lifestyle choice or other reason must provide their child's snack every school day.

## BACKGROUND CHECKS

All volunteers are required to complete three background checks (fingerprinting, Release of information from CPS, and a Baltimore County Park and Rec background check). Per Baltimore County Parks and Rec and Maryland State Department of Education, parents who have not successfully completed all three background checks, will not be permitted to volunteer. Directions on how to complete the background checks can be found on our website at [LTRCCOOPTOTS.com](http://LTRCCOOPTOTS.com).

## CLOTHING

Children should wear play clothes. Daily outdoor play periods are planned, so please dress your child appropriately during cold winter months. A child who is not well enough to play outdoors should be kept at home – please do not request that your child be kept indoors. Also, please send your child to school with play-appropriate shoes. Closed-toed, and no crocs or flip-flops.

Please remember to send in an extra change of clothes for your child on the first day of school. Please keep in mind that these will be used in case of an accident and, although school starts in the summer, we may need to use this extra change of clothes in the winter, so please include shorts and pants.

Please *LABEL ALL CLOTHING*.

## TRANSPORTATION

Parents must arrange the transportation of their child to and from school. A class list, including addresses and phone numbers, is given on Orientation Night to all parents so that they may organize carpools. (This should be conducted outside of classroom time and appropriate car seats must be used according to the State of Maryland regulations.) Please inform the teachers in writing of the arrangements you make for your children. Try to make arrangements with other parents in the program in case of emergency situations (car won't start, flat tire, etc.). The child will not be released to any persons other than that child's parents without a written note to the teachers.

The Recreation Center parking lot is shared with the school. You are required to escort your child to and from the building. **NEVER LET YOUR CHILD RUN FREE.** Parents are asked to please wait for their children in the outer area until the teacher dismisses them. **Please, at all times, observe the posted speed limit on school property; this is for the safety and well being of all of us. Also, please use extreme caution when entering and exiting your vehicle, as many parents and children are arriving and leaving at the same time.**

<b>PARKING</b>
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Do not park in fire lanes or in handicapped parking spots. The police will issue tickets. **The parking spots in the lots are assigned to Pinewood teachers and are not for Co-op use.** We suggest parking in the front circle of the school or on Greenpoint Road in Mays Chapel. The Co-op does not assume responsibility for any tickets, fees, or damages to any vehicles on school property.

**Parent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby certify that I have received and am familiar with the Policy Statement of the LTRC Cooperative Tots Preschool. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures set forth in this Policy Statement and approved by the Lutherville-Timonium Recreation Council.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature and Date**