

Common Questions and Answers

What is Garden Preschool Cooperative?

We're a nonprofit preschool that provides high-quality, progressive early-childhood education in a nurturing and supportive atmosphere. Founded in 1995, the school was envisioned as an alternative for parents seeking greater involvement in their child's education.

What is your educational philosophy?

Child-directed, teacher-facilitated play is central to all aspects of our curriculum. Young children learn best by play — by actively thinking, experimenting, exploring and manipulating their environment to make sense of their world, to understand and negotiate relationships, to develop creative thinking and to build a positive sense of themselves and their significance in a community. Play provides an important foundation for academic learning in the later years and is central to all aspects of social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

Do you follow a specific teaching pedagogy?

Our program is based on the well-researched and well-proven developmental-interactive approach to teaching as pioneered by the Bank Street Graduate School of Education in New York.

As a parent in the cooperative, what will be expected of me?

Being part of a cooperative school provides an unparalleled opportunity to be involved in your child's early educational experience. Parents staff the board, participate in all aspects of running and maintaining the school, and assist the teachers in educational duties. Every day a parent is present at the school as the "parent of the day" to help with educational plans, play with the children and help serve snacks and lunch.

How often is a family expected to participate as a parent of the day?

With an enrollment of 18 to 20 children, families can expect to spend approximately one day per month as parent of the day.

What if our family cannot be parent of the day on our scheduled day?

You can swap days with another parent in the current or a subsequent month. You could also have your babysitter or another family member substitute for you (they would need to go through the same pre-screening process as all parents at the school ahead of time). If neither of these are possible, a substitute can be hired from the substitute teacher list as approved by the board. Your family would be charged a fee for hiring the substitute.

When is the school open?

The school year is September through June, weekdays from 8:45am to 4pm, which includes a lunch period, rest/nap time, and two snacks. Extended care is typically available beginning at 8am and ending at 6pm, however these extended hours have not been offered in the 2020-2021 school year due to reduced demand and COVID regulations. We also host a summer camp.

How old does my child need to be to attend?

Children must be between 3 and 5 years old when they enter school in September. This ensures that there is an appropriate span of ages in the mixed-age classroom.



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How much does it cost?

For the 2020-21 school year, tuition is \$12,750 (\$1,275 per month, September through June). Before and after care time is typically charged either as a monthly flat fee of \$150 for full extended care hours (8am to 6pm) or at \$4 for every 15 minutes for time used beyond the core school hours. (For instance, if you drop off your child off at 8:45am each day, and pick up at 5pm, you would be charged an additional \$16/day.) There is also an annual supplies fee (\$500) and billing administration charge (\$50). (Fees are subject to change.)

Do you have a playground or take the children outside?

We're incredibly lucky to have Hamilton Park just a block away, where children can play together and enjoy the sights and sounds of both nature and city life. Except on days of extreme weather, children go to the park or outside every day. Outdoor experiences complement and extend the learning of the classrooms with opportunities in all areas of development. Students also go on regular field trips, including to our plot at the Community Garden.

Do you provide meals for my child?

No. Parents are to provide a lunch, including a water bottle for their children. The parent of the day is responsible for providing healthy, nutritious snacks. Due to COVID regulations, children also bring their own snacks in the 2020-21 school year.

Could you explain the admissions process?

We require a completed application (available on our website) and an application fee of \$75. We'll then be in contact to confirm the paperwork is in order. This year, a member of the enrollment committee will meet with the family via video chat. Applications are due in early-February for the 2021-2022 school year (beginning September 2021). Decisions will be announced in March.

What happens if my child cannot be offered a spot?

Unfortunately, with a small school size of 18 to 20 students, we are unable to accommodate everyone who wishes to attend. We do maintain an active wait list and occasionally get openings during the school year. We recommend that you submit your application as soon as possible and indicate you'd like to be added to the wait list.

How can I learn more?

Start by visiting our website at www.gardenpreschool.org. If you think we may be a good fit for your family, please join our email list by signing up on our home page. We'll be sure to alert you of upcoming events, open houses, and application deadlines.

Still have unanswered questions?

Feel free to email us at: enrollment@gardenpreschool.org. When you are ready, you can also download an application online.

Please note that information in this document is for directional guidance only for prospective families and is subject to change.