

# DENVER COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

## 2023-2024 FAMILY HANDBOOK



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Hours 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

*Updated 8/1/23*

*Denver Cooperative Preschool is a nonprofit, nondenominational preschool that does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families or in its employment practices on the basis of race, color, age, national or ethnic origin, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability or handicap, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, marital status and veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local law. Denver Cooperative Preschool's core values include a commitment to equal opportunity and inclusion. All DCP employees and community members are expected to join with and uphold this commitment. All personnel who are responsible for hiring and promoting employees and for the development and implementation of school programs or activities are charged to support this effort and to respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns that are brought to their attention.*

*Our school is actively supported by the member families, is incorporated, and is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Denver Cooperative Preschool is inspected by the local fire department, health department, and the Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Childcare.*

Important Information: Tax Exempt # 9800723 Federal Tax ID # 840535656

License # 47126

**[www.dcpplay.org](http://www.dcpplay.org)**

Dear DCP Families and Cooperative Community!

Welcome to the 2023-24 school year at the Denver Cooperative Preschool!

This August marks our 63rd “back to school season” at DCP! I am truly honored to join each one of you as stewards of this incredible early childhood community. Our school has been a place of connection and growth for countless Denver children and their families. When you walk through our gate with your child you may notice a sign that says “A great place for your child, yourself, our community.” I truly believe that DCP is all of those things!

A core value of our school is to maintain a space that fully honors young children. We are a place where children are respected, curiosity and questioning are encouraged, and imaginations are stoked. We believe in allowing children to fully be themselves, for some of the most important skills we can bestow in them are self-confidence, self-advocacy, and self-reliance.

Through generations of shared vision and commitment, DCP has become a space not only for young children, but for their families. Parents and caregivers come to DCP for their children, and time and time again we are told they have found a community for themselves. We are seeking to engage one another in conversation about the lives of our children, cooperative work for the betterment of our school, and true intentionality and passion for the space we are creating for our youngest community members.

In this handbook, you will find a lot of information about what it is like to be a family at our preschool, both for caregivers and children. You will learn what to expect, and how to best prepare your child for their experience at our school. So much of what makes DCP unique is found in the time you spend in our classrooms, on the playground, engaged in committee work, and connecting with other families and staff. I encourage you to find your place in our community, dive in, and make this experience your own. Welcome!

Warmly,

Dr. Mary Nelson  
Executive Director

# Table of Contents

<b>Who We Are</b>	<b>7</b>
History	7
Mission	7
Vision	7
Philosophy and Curriculum	7
Cooperative Model	8
Governing Board	11
Personnel Committee	12
Committee Chairs	12
DCP Staff	13
NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct	14
Non-Discrimination Policy	14
Classroom Liaisons	14
Organizational Chart	15
All School “Whom to Contact”	16
<b>The School Day At DCP</b>	<b>17</b>
Arrival and Departure	17
Access to the Building/Parking	17
Clothing and Personal Care Items	18
Hand-Washing Procedure	18
Bathroom Policy, Diapering, and Independent Use of the Toilet	18
Snack Policies and Protocols	19
Cell Phone Policy	20
Parent Volunteer Background Checks	20
Playground	21
Visitors	21
Media Use/Viewing of Television and Video	22
Discipline and Guidance	22
Developmentally Appropriate Guidance Techniques	22
Violent Pretend Play	23
<b>The School Year At DCP</b>	<b>24</b>
DCP 2023-24 Important Dates	24
DCP Annual Events	26
Cleanup Days	29
Fundraising	30
Field Trips	30
Transportation	31
Birthday Parties and Special Events	31
Parent/Teacher Conferences	31
Health Screenings	32

Communication	32
End of Year Parties	32
<b>Enrollment and Admissions Policies</b>	<b>33</b>
Enrollment	33
Admissions Policies	33
Lottery	33
Waiting Lists	35
Early Intervention and Enrollment of Students with Special Needs	36
Withdrawal of Enrollment	36
<b>Financial Policies</b>	<b>37</b>
Reimbursements	37
2023-2024 Fees	37
2023-2024 Tuition Schedule and Payment Options	38
Late Entrants	39
Delinquent Fees	39
Discontinuing Enrollment	39
Refunds	40
Financial Aid	40
<b>Classroom Policies and Procedures and Staff Expectations</b>	<b>40</b>
Curriculum	40
General Classroom Expectations	41
Beginning of the Year Classroom Set-up	41
Classroom Organization and Management	41
Daily Classroom Clean-Up	42
Instructional Planning	42
Implementation of Curriculum Strategies and Techniques	43
Student Documentation and Assessment	43
Student Teacher Interaction	43
Related Responsibilities and Community Involvement	43
Professional Development	44
Class-Level Specific Duties	44
Classroom Animals	44
Equipment and Material Usage	44
<b>School Policies</b>	<b>44</b>
Transitions	44
Group Size and Adult/Child Ratio	45
Primary Caregiving	46
Continuity of Care	46
Equity and Diversity	46
Confidentiality	47
Medication Storage and Administration	47

Quality Rating, Accreditation, Regulations, Community Partnerships, & Collaborations	48
Child Care Licensing	49
Child Abuse Reporting	49
Snow/School Closing/Inclement Weather	50
Excessively Hot or Cold Weather	50
Food Allergy Protocols at School	50
Illness Policy - Children	52
Illness Policy - Staff Members	53
Disease Prevention: Bodily Fluids and Employee Hand Washing	53
Demonstration of Knowledge	54
First Aid/CPR and Health Certifications	54
Accidents and Injuries	54
Emergencies	54
Immunization Notification	54
Hearing, Vision, and Dental Screenings	54
Medical Home and Insurance	55
Safety and Health	55
Fire Drills/Emergency Evacuation	56
Lockdown & Active Shooter Procedures and Drills	56
Firearms	56
Insurance	56
Use of DCP Classroom Teachers or DCP Staff as Babysitters, Caregivers or Advisors	56
Translators and Interpreters	57
Home Language Policy	57
<b>Employee Policies and Procedures</b>	<b>57</b>
Discrimination/Harassment Policy	57
Hiring and Recruitment Policy	57
Recruitment	58
Retention	58
Technology (Internet and Personal Electronics) Usage Policy	59
Relationships, Communication and Conflict Resolution	59
Salary Scale	59
2023-24 Annual Salary Ranges by Position	60
Staff Bonuses and Staff Evaluation System	61
Paid Time Off (PTO) Policy	61
Paid Vacation and School Holidays	62
Bereavement	62
Medical Leave	62
Jury Duty	62
Personal Belongings	62
Classroom Budgets/Incidental Expenses	62

Insurance	63
Retirement Benefits	63
Short-Term Disability	63
Life Insurance	63
Family and Medical Leave Act	63
Parental Leave	63
Employee File Information	64
Providing Employee References	64
Continuing Education and Professional Development	64
Children of Employees	65
Staff Tuition Discount	65
Staff Meetings, Planning and Education	65
Summer Camp	65

## Who We Are

Denver Cooperative Preschool, DCP, is a play-based, parent cooperative preschool. The joy, instinctive sense of wonder, and delight that play brings validates it as the most central, natural and important aspect of childhood. Operating under a play-based philosophy is simply accepting that children naturally engage in and enjoy play as a means of learning on their terms and at their own pace. Our job as teachers and parents is to provide a safe, nurturing environment with developmentally appropriate activities and opportunities for children to creatively explore and learn through play.

## History

Denver Cooperative Preschool has a long and interesting history. We were founded in 1960 by a group of parents from the discontinued Colorado Women's College Nursery School. The head teacher of that school, Mrs. Kim Randolph, helped us to get started in a space at Montview Presbyterian Church. By 1962, the preschool had grown and a group of parents from south Denver branched off to establish the University Park Cooperative Nursery School near Denver University. In 1964 the preschool split again: Montview Community Preschool remained at the church and our preschool moved to 8th and Cherry. It was then named the Medical Center Cooperative Nursery School. The name "Denver Cooperative Preschool" was adopted in 1966. We moved to our current location in 1983. As we prepare to celebrate 60 years of excellence in early childhood education in Denver, we are reminded of and thankful for the families who began DCP.

## Mission

Denver Cooperative Preschool guides young children on the adventure of self discovery through play.

## Vision

Denver Cooperative Preschool envisions an active society where children and adults join in the exploration of life, the quest for understanding, and the journey towards wisdom. We believe that a child's early experiences are the foundation for adult potential, that parents are key to a child's unique development, and that play is essential in the learning process of a child.

## Philosophy and Curriculum

DCP strives to provide an environment in which children know that people care for them and accept them as they are. We hope that our children will become confident in themselves and their ability to do things and make appropriate choices as they learn about their world and themselves. To achieve these goals we use the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines and individual student portfolios to assist in curriculum building and student assessment.

### **Children will be learning and growing through:**

Developing an awareness of their current knowledge in a variety of areas

Celebrating their independence and learning how to get their needs met in a group setting

Learning, Practicing and Repeating important skills and knowledge

Developing an awareness of their thinking processes and different approaches to learning

Developing curiosity through investigation and experimentation

Learning how to ask questions and solve problems

Working with classroom teachers (both directly and indirectly) to enhance their thinking and learning through play

Modeling for, and learning from, their peers.

Participating in a supportive class community

**Our preschool day incorporates a balance of guided and self initiated, group and individual, active and less active experiences. Our goal is to encourage growth for each child in the following areas:**

### **Toddler Classes**

- *Social/Emotional Development (peer interaction, social understanding, regulating emotions, self concept)*
- *Physical Development (gross motor, fine motor, & perceptual development)*
- *Language & Literacy Development (receptive/expressive language, communication, interest in print)*
- *Cognitive Development (symbolic play, classification, number sense, spatial relationships, cause & effect)*
- *Approaches to Learning (problem solving, memory, & attention maintenance)*

### **Young and Older Preschool Classes**

- *Social/Emotional Development (social relationships, self concept, self regulation, emotional/behavioral health)*
- *Physical Development (gross motor, fine motor, coordination, self care, healthy habits)*
- *Language Development (receptive/expressive language, vocabulary, comprehension, storytelling & conversation)*
- *Approaches to Learning (initiative, curiosity, persistence, attentiveness, and cooperation)*
- *Creative Arts Expression (music, creative movement & dance, art, drama & theater arts)*
- Cognitive Development is expanded into three additional domains:
  - *Literacy Knowledge & Skills (appreciation of books, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print concepts & conventions, early writing skills)*
  - *Math Knowledge & Skills (number concepts, number relationships & quantities, spatial sense, patterns, measurement & comparison)*
  - *Science Knowledge & Skills (scientific skills & method, conceptual knowledge of the natural & physical world)*

Carefully chosen toys, equipment and activities in all classes allow the children to learn in a relaxed and joyful atmosphere. Through concrete and manipulative material we can refine the child's senses of touch, sight, and sound and ready her/him for future academic learning.

## **Cooperative Model**

As a cooperative preschool, DCP requires participation from all of our member families in order to maintain quality programming for our children and their families. By choosing to be members of our preschool, parents and caregivers commit to be part of a team with the classroom teachers, the administrative staff, our children, and fellow parents in the community.

The following list includes nine areas of responsibility in which each family is required to participate as a member of DCP.

### **1. Classroom Support**

For over sixty years, DCP families have enjoyed the opportunity to support their children's classrooms as a volunteer. Our educators enjoy working closely with parents and caregivers, offering the opportunity to share our educational philosophy while connecting on a deeper level as a community. We remain steadfast in the belief that connecting with children's families in the classroom space is critical to holistically supporting the development of young children.

We invite families to connect with their child's classroom in a way that excites them - our very best moments at DCP occur when members of our community authentically share themselves. This might be coming in to share a book, engage the children in a tradition or activity relevant to their family or the current curriculum exploration, or come in to enjoy lunch or outside time with the children.

Each family is required to volunteer in the classroom each semester according to the following requirements:

- 2-day classes = 2 volunteer times per semester
- 3-day classes = 3 volunteer times per semester

- 5-day classes = 4 volunteer times per semester

Educators in each class will develop a variety of time slots of varying lengths to accommodate family schedules, some as short as 30 minutes.

As a community, we honor a diversity of family structures and welcome parents and caregivers to come in and spend time in our classrooms. Connecting with the adults who are central to your child's life in the classroom setting enriches our community and supports our educators in learning more about your child's experience outside of preschool.

**We believe that spending time in the classroom is supportive to parents and caregivers understanding our constructivist philosophy and our approach to social-emotional education, and therefore request that at least half of the required volunteer time is fulfilled by a parent or caregiver who takes a central role in raising the child.**

We welcome other adults (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. to join for the other required sessions.

While we honor the critical role that nannies, au pairs, and babysitters play in our children's lives, and we welcome them to spend time in the classroom, we respectfully request that required parent volunteer time not be fulfilled by an individual who is employed by your family in a caregiving capacity.

Over our sixty-year history, we have proudly evolved to reflect the families that make up our community. If you would like to discuss our parent volunteer policy please do not hesitate to reach out to the Executive Director.

## **2. Committee Work**

Each family will participate in an assigned committee by attending any and all necessary meetings and executing all assigned tasks as communicated by the assigned committee chairperson. Families have an opportunity to sign-up for a committee on a first-come, first-served basis in the spring prior to the coming school year. Families enrolling in the school during the year will have the opportunity to sign-up for committees with available spots.

## **3. All School Clean-Up Day**

Cooperative member families support the cleaning and maintenance of the DCP building and playgrounds. The classroom spaces and materials are sanitized and disinfected thoroughly throughout the school day and at the end of each day, and our daily janitorial service supports daily cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting as well as maintenance of the school. However, as a cooperative we rely on our community structure to complete more extensive deep cleaning and maintenance of the indoor and outdoor areas at the school.

Each family in the cooperative is required to sign-up for one clean up day during the school day. Dates for clean-up days and sign-ups will be released closer to the start of the school year at the end of August.

## **4. Fundraising**

Each year, our fundraising committees work hard to plan events that aid in the important work of raising funds for our school. This is a vital component to how we are able to provide quality programming, take care of indoor and outdoor spaces, and meet 100% of our demonstrated need for families requesting Financial Aids. There are a variety of ways to participate and all we ask is that each family agree to participate in the events that make sense to their family, and to the best of their ability. We do not seek to place additional burden on our community through fundraising asks. DCP will seek to engage in fundraising activities that are sensitive to the current social and economic climate.

## **5. Community Event Support**

As a cooperative community we look forward to events and traditions throughout the year where we can spend time with one another celebrating the seasons and getting to know families outside of our class.

These events are coordinated by the Family Activities and Fundraising committees, but require a whole community effort to ensure their success. The events that require community support are:

- Fall Festival - October 20, 2023, 5:00-7:00 PM
- Celebration of Light - December 15, 2023, 5:00-6:30 PM
- Annual Admissions Open House - January 17, 2024, 6:00-8:00 PM

- Family BINGO - February 4, 2024
- Auction - date TBD, April, 2024
- Spring Open House and Art Show - May 10, 2024, 5:00-7:00 PM

We ask that all families in the cooperative commit to supporting either set-up or clean-up at one event during the course of the year. The link to sign-up for event support is sent out with enrollment packets.

## **6. Fundraising and Annual Auction**

Each year our fundraising committees work hard to plan events that aid in the important work of raising funds for our school. This is a vital component to how we are able to provide quality programming, take care of indoor and outdoor spaces, and meet 100% of our demonstrated need for families requesting Financial Aids. There are a variety of ways to participate and all we ask is that each family agree to participate in the events that make sense to their family, and to the best of their ability. DCP seeks to engage in fundraising activities that are sensitive to the current social and economic climate, and does not seek to place additional burden on our community through fundraising asks.

As the biggest (and one of the most fun!) fundraiser of the year, our annual auction is a very important event for our school. Our goal is for this event to be a fun night out for all friends and family of DCP. We ask that each family contribute to the success of the auction by providing items/donations as requested by the auction committee each year and perhaps most importantly participating in the event! The auction is typically held in the spring. All staff are expected to attend the event.

## **7. All Parent Meetings**

At least one parent from each family must attend TWO All Parent Meetings every year. The Fall All Parent Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 6:30 PM. The Spring All Parent Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

Please make note of these dates in your calendar and plan to have one adult representative from your family attend. The All Parent Meetings represent the only two times a year where our entire community comes together. This is a valuable time in which we communicate both short and long-term plans for the school, and honor our educators and volunteers. Please plan to have at least one adult representative from your family attend.

As voting members of the cooperative, all staff are required to attend both the spring and fall All Parent Meetings.

## **8. Communications**

Communication between families, educators, and the school administrative team is critical to a thriving community.

Families at DCP are expected to stay current on communications from the classroom teaching teams, the administrative team, committee chairs, and the Governing Board. Classroom teams and the administrative team will use email and Remini to send important updates to families, and the Governing Board and committee chairs will primarily utilize email. Classroom educators will communicate most frequently, providing updates on curriculum, special days or activities in the classroom, and sign-ups for conferences. The school distributes a Weekly Blast via email which contains notices of upcoming meetings and events, relevant announcements and other school news. The school maintains a family resource area inside the building with relevant resources for children and families in the community.

Email is a source for ongoing communication. All staff members may be emailed by their-first-name@dcpplay.org.

Our website, <http://denvercooperativepreschool.org>, also provides parents with important information regarding the preschool including calendars with important dates.

It is our utmost goal for your child's education to be a collaborative process in every way. **We ask that you prioritize communication with your child's teachers for the overall success of your family's experience in our community!**

## **9. Additional Obligations**

As a cooperative community, we rely on the commitment of all stakeholders to maintain a high-quality early childhood program. Over the course of the year, we may ask for volunteers to support programs, events, or initiatives at the school. We ask that every family invest in and support the cooperative to the extent they are able. It is this care for the betterment of the DCP community as a whole

that has resulted in over 60 years of a thriving early childhood space!

Additionally, we ask that all members agree to be bound by the policies and procedures of Denver Cooperative Preschool as they are stated in the school's handbook, including any additions or amendments that may have been voted on by the parent body since its most recent publication, as well as any rules and regulations applicable to DCP as issued by the State of Colorado and the City and County of Denver.

## Governing Board

The preschool is managed by a Governing Board, also known as the Board of Directors. Each position is a two year term, with the exception of the President-Elect, President and Past President which are each held for one year. The members of the Governing Board are voted on annually by the parent body at the Spring All Parent Meeting. You may serve two terms. Anyone interested in being a part of the Governing Board is welcome to join. Every January, the President-Elect will form the Nomination Committee and advertise open positions for the following school year in the Weekly Blast, parent pockets, and/or public posting as deemed appropriate. Nominees are to write a letter to the Nomination Committee that explains why they would like to perform the duties of the specific Governing Board position. Nominees will also ask one DCP teacher and one DCP community member to write a letter of recommendation. In the case of two or more people interested in the same position, the nominees' letters and letters of recommendation will be given to the Governing Board to decide who will perform the duties of that specific position for the following school year. The Nomination Committee consists of the President-Elect, a DCP teacher, and two or three community members.

**President** - Takes the lead on the supervision and management of the business operations of the Governing Board. Chairs meetings of the Governing Board and Town Halls. Serves as chairperson of the Personnel Committee. Takes responsibility for Governing Board development. Make sure all committee chairs are training their committee members. Works closely with the Executive Director to ensure long-term viability of the school. Meets weekly with the Personnel Committee. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Katie Christensen Miller can be reached at [president@dcppplay.org](mailto:president@dcppplay.org).**

**President-Elect** - Supports the President and, in his/her absence, performs the duties of the President. Assumes a "president-in-training" role. Exercises oversight of the Vice President of Communications and Community Engagement Chair. Serves as the Chair of the Nominating Committee. Meets weekly with the Personnel Committee. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **This position will remain open for the 2023-24 school year.**

**Director** - Takes responsibility for program development including curriculum, staff professional development and training, and parent and community education. Oversees the hiring, development, and evaluation of staff. Ensures smooth daily operations of the school and supports currently enrolled and prospective families. Oversees the admissions process. Maintains all records that pertain to students, families, educators, and the facility. Meets weekly with the Personnel Committee. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Mary Nelson can be reached at [mary@dcppplay.org](mailto:mary@dcppplay.org).**

**Secretary** - Oversees and interprets all legal matters to the Governing Board. Records the minutes of the Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. Ensures compliance with bylaws and acts as custodian of the corporate records. Works with Office Manager and community members to track all volunteer hours on a monthly basis to ensure engagement and family cooperative duties are met. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **As of the publication of this handbook this position is open.**

**Treasurer** - Oversees all financial matters to ensure financial stability of the school. Has ultimate responsibility for all funds through chairing the Finance Committee. Takes the lead on developing the budget with staff needs in mind and assists the board in reviewing it for approval. Meets monthly with the Office Manager. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Hilary Rice can be reached at [treasurer@dcppplay.org](mailto:treasurer@dcppplay.org).**

**Vice President of Facilities** - Oversees the work of the Facilities Co-Chairs and Facilities Committee at large. Plans and organizes cleanup days and maintenance of the school. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Leslie Morgan can be reached at [facilities@dcppplay.org](mailto:facilities@dcppplay.org).**

**Development** - Supervises and coordinates all aspects of fundraising. Oversees Social Fundraising, Colorado Gives Day, and Auction Committees. Attends Governing Board and Town Hall meetings as needed. **Katie Fogarty can be reached at**

**fundraising@dcppplay.org.**

**Vice President of Communications** - Responsible for all systems of communication within the Denver Cooperative Preschool parent body as well as managing the marketing and publicity of the school to the broader community. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Jeff Gabel can be reached at [communications@dcppplay.org](mailto:communications@dcppplay.org).**

**Past President** - Supports the President and Governing Board with focused efforts on continuing or special projects for the school. The presence of the Past President also provides greater longevity and context on decisions of the recent past for new Governing Board members. **Jenny Peterson can be reached at [pastpresident@dcppplay.org](mailto:pastpresident@dcppplay.org).**

**Staff Representative** - Represents the staff on the Governing Board. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Julie Spiegleman can be reached at [julie@dcppplay.org](mailto:julie@dcppplay.org).**

**Alumni Representative** - Represents the DCP Alumni on the Governing Board. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Greg Gibb can be reached at [alumni@dcppplay.org](mailto:alumni@dcppplay.org).**

**Community at Large Representative** - Represents the greater Denver community on the Governing Board. Attends all Governing Board and Town Hall meetings. **Dora Esparza can be reached at [dora@denverearlychildhood.org](mailto:dora@denverearlychildhood.org).**

\*\*Whenever a member of the Governing Board has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the board, the affected person shall a) fully disclose the nature of the interest and b) withdraw from discussion, lobbying, and voting on the matter. Additionally, if any parent, staff member, immediate family of a parent or staff member, or organization in which any of these stated parties holds an ownership stake greater than ten percent (10%) enters into a financial agreement with the school in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in aggregate for a financial year, the owner must be disclosed by the Executive Director to the Governing Board. Any transaction or vote involving a potential conflict of interest shall be approved only when a majority of disinterested officers determine that it is in the best interest of the school to do so. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record such disclosure, abstention and rationale for approval.

## Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee consists of the Executive Director, Governing Board President, President Elect, and Past President. Other parents or staff members may be added to this Committee as deemed necessary by any standing member of the committee at any point during the year. This Committee operates as a sub-committee of the Governing Board and may consult on strategic planning, employment matters, financial health of the school, review of school surveys, parent feedback, and recommendations of the Executive Director.

## Committee Chairs

Each position is a two year term and appointed annually by the Governing Board. You may serve two terms. Anyone interested in being a Committee Chair is welcome to join. Every January, the President-Elect will form the Nomination Committee and advertise open positions for the following school year in the Weekly Blast, emails, or public posting as deemed appropriate. Nominees are to write a letter to the Nomination Committee that explains why they would like to perform the duties of the specific Committee Chair position. In the case of two or more people interested in the same position, the nominees' letters and letters of recommendation will be given to the Governing Board to decide who will perform the duties of that specific position for the following school year. The Nomination Committee consists of the President-Elect, a DCP teacher, and two or three community members.

**Technology Chair** - Responsible for the assessment and maintenance of the technological needs of DCP, including information technology services, systems, equipment, and website. Attends all Town Hall meetings. **Clark Wray can be reached at [tech@dcppplay.org](mailto:tech@dcppplay.org)**

**Family Activities Chair(s)** - Responsible for the organization of educational events for the parent body and social events for the families of DCP. Attends all Town Hall meetings. **Jessica McGilvray can be reached at [family@dcppplay.org](mailto:family@dcppplay.org).**



**Social Fundraising Chair(s)** - Responsible for the planning and execution of all social fundraising events. Works and meets with the Vice President of Fundraising regularly. Attends all Town Hall meetings. **Ashley Locke-Smith can be reached at [socialfund@dcpplay.org](mailto:socialfund@dcpplay.org)**

## DCP Staff

**Classroom Teachers** - We are proud of the exceptional teachers who are a part of our DCP community. They delight in the discoveries the children make and have a deep commitment to each student's growth and well-being. By observing the children in group and individual activities, they set up an appropriate learning environment, which encourages children to grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. Within the framework of the class, the specific details and approaches may vary from group to group, individual to individual, and season to season, creating a freshness of program content as unique as the individual children and teachers involved.

### **Role of the Lead Teacher**

The lead teacher is someone who enjoys being part of a team and readily accepts the responsibility of thoughtfully designing an authentic, intentional, play based learning experience for a unique group of children throughout the year. This experience should be responsive and evolving to meet the changing needs of the group. A lead teacher seeks out opportunities to grow their teaching practice through self reflection and learning. At the same time, a lead teacher provides strength, organization, direction and support to their teaching team. A lead teacher is willing and able to give and receive feedback both individually and as part of a team. A lead teacher works enthusiastically and responsively with all families and students, and is a leader in the DCP community.

### **Role of the Apprentice Lead Teacher**

The apprentice lead teacher is an individual who seeks to grow their professional role into that of a lead teacher. Working closely with co-lead teachers on their team, they will gradually take on more responsibility for developing an emergent and responsive curriculum, documenting student learning, and deepening their professional practice. Apprentice lead teachers will support the documentation and conferencing process, recommendations and referrals as appropriate, and participate in meetings with families in the class. The apprentice lead teacher works enthusiastically and responsively with all families and students in the DCP community.

### **Role of the Associate Teacher**

The Associate Teacher is an enthusiastic part of a teaching team, providing reliable and consistent support to the children and the Lead Educators in the classroom. The Associate Educator plays a critical role in the community. An associate teacher provides strength, organization and direction to their teaching team. An associate teacher is willing and able to give and receive constructive criticism both individually and as part of a team. An associate teacher works enthusiastically and responsively with all families and students in the DCP community.

### **Role of the Float Teacher**

The float teacher maintains the critical role of supporting the entire community, including children, parents, caregivers, educational, and administrative staff. They are assigned to support in specific classrooms as needed, or to support all teams in the building depending on area of need. Float teachers may also support administrative tasks within the office. A float teacher works enthusiastically and responsively with all families and students in the DCP community.

**Pedagogical Documentation Coach** - The Pedagogical Documentation Coach is of critical importance in supporting educators and staff in reflecting the learning journey of each child at the school. The Pedagogical Documentation Coach works collaboratively with all members of the educational staff, and under the supervision of the Executive Director. The Pedagogical Documentation Coach will promote reflection, provide guidance and structure when needed, focus on strength, collaboration, and common issues of concern. They are responsible for supporting documentation, learning stories, and reflection in all classrooms through modeling and co-planning and providing feedback to educators. The Pedagogical Documentation Coach will demonstrate a passion for leadership and supporting young children and their families. **Julie Spiegleman can be reached at [julie@dcpplay.org](mailto:julie@dcpplay.org).**

**Manager of Operations** - Manages all accounts payable and receivable and acts as the main point of contact for the school's relationship with the Denver Preschool Program. The Office Manager supports the Director in additional projects on an as needed

basis. **Shandon Wells can be reached at shandon@dcpplay.org.**

**Accountant** - The accountant works collaboratively with the Treasurer and oversees all accounting functions of the school, including budgeting, payroll, monthly P&L, and tax filing and compliance. The Accountant reports to the Executive Director. **Melissa Quirk can be reached at melissa@dcpplay.org.**

**Development** - Development supervises and coordinates all aspects of fundraising. Oversees Social Fundraising, Colorado Gives Day, and Auction Committees. Attends Governing Board and Town Hall meetings as needed. **Katie Fogarty can be reached at fundraising@dcpplay.org.**

## NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

The DCP staff and Governing Board follows the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct for professional guidance. **All staff are expected to review and adhere to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment as a framework of professional responsibilities** in four sections. Each section addresses an area of professional relationships:

- (1) with children,
- (2) with families,
- (3) among colleagues, and
- (4) with the community and society.

**This document can be found by following the link below:**

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSETH05.pdf>

All DCP staff are expected to review and comply with the Colorado Department of Human Services and Office of Early Care and Learning Rules and Regulations for Child Care as they apply to their unique positions at the school, and working in a group care setting. These rules and regulations can be found by clicking on the following link, and a hard copy can be found in the main office at DCP.

*All child care centers must comply with the current "General Rules for Child Care Facilities" 7.701; "Rules Regulating Child Care Centers (Less Than 24-Hour Care)" 7.702; "Rules Regulating Special Activities" 7.719; "Rules and Regulations Governing the Sanitation of Child Care Centers in the State of Colorado" 25-1.5-101(1)(h), C.R.S.; and the USDA CACFP Part 266.20(1.5).*

[http://media.wix.com/ugd/97dde5\\_48385d6738784229b1fc238f5e2a6dc0.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/97dde5_48385d6738784229b1fc238f5e2a6dc0.pdf)

## Non-Discrimination Policy

Denver Cooperative Preschool is a nonprofit, nondenominational preschool that does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families or in its employment practices on the basis of race, color, age, national or ethnic origin, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability or handicap, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, marital status and veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local law. Denver Cooperative Preschool's core values include a commitment to equal opportunity and inclusion. All DCP employees and community members are expected to join with and uphold this commitment. All personnel who are responsible for hiring and promoting employees and for the development and implementation of school programs or activities are charged to support this effort and to respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns that are brought to their attention.

## Classroom Liaisons

The classroom liaison serves as a bridge of communication and support between the families, staff, and governing board at DCP. Each class is assigned one classroom liaison who organizes class socials, communicates class information in the class weekly email, collects winter and end-of-year classroom teacher gifts, and serves as a friendly source of information about the school. This is a committee position.

## Organizational Chart

### **DCP Community**

Students – Staff – Parents

### **Governing Board**

Matters of policy, finance, legality, and community

**Executive Director:** Administration and Admissions, Administrative Staff, Teaching Staff

**President:** Governing Board, Committee Chairs at Large, Personnel, Family Activities

**President-Elect:** Communications, Technology, Nominations,

**Secretary:** Legal and Bylaws, Family Cooperative Duties

**Treasurer:** Finance, Financial Aid

**VP Facilities:** Facility maintenance

**VP Fundraising:** Social Fundraising, Colorado Gives Day, Auction

**VP Communications:** Communications, marketing, publicity

**Past President:** Supports President and new Governing Board members as needed

**Staff Representative:** Represents staff on Governing Board

**Alumni Representative:** Represents alumni on Governing Board

**Community Member at Large:** Represents community at large on Governing Board

### All School “Whom to Contact”

<b>Matters Regarding:</b>	<b>First Resource</b>	<b>Second Resource</b>
Admissions / Marketing	Website	Executive Director
Attendance	Classroom Teachers	Manager of Operations
Billing	Manager of Operations	Executive Director
Child Development/ Developmentally Appropriate Practice	Classroom Teachers	Executive Director
Classroom Activities	Classroom Teachers	Pedagogical Documentation Coach or Executive Director
Conflict Resolution within Classroom	Classroom Teachers	Executive Director
Conflict Resolution within Cooperative	Committee Chair	Executive Director or President
Cooperative Responsibilities	Secretary	President
Early Intervention Resources	Classroom Teachers	Executive Director
Financial Policies/Tuition Questions	Manager of Operations	Executive Director
Fundraising	Individual Chairs of Social Fundraising, COGD or Development	Development
Classroom Support Calendar	Class Liaison	Classroom Teachers
Classroom Support Change Requests	Class Parents	Class Liaison
Resources for Young Families	Parent Resource Area/Weekly Email Blast	Executive Director
School Snack Calendar	Website	Class Liaison Emails
School Calendar and Events	Website	Handbook
School Clean-Up Day	VP of Facilities	Manager of Operations
School Closures (Weather & Safety)	Email communication from Executive Director and Remini communication. Local News and corresponding websites	Special Edition Email Blast Facebook
School Policies	Handbook	Executive Director or President (cooperative policies)
Tuition Assistance/Financial Aid	Manager of Operations	Executive Director
Your Child’s Progress	Classroom Teachers	Executive Director

# The School Day At DCP

## Arrival and Departure

Classes are held from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. Classes will be held 2 or 3 days per week depending on options selected:

**2 day Toddler:** Monday/Tuesday

**3 day Toddler:** Wednesday/Thursday/Friday

**2 day Young Preschool:** Thursday/Friday

**3 day Young Preschool:** Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday

**2 day Older Preschool:** Thursday/Friday

**3 day Older Preschool:** Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday

At the beginning of class, each child is signed in by the adult who brings that child to school. This adult should designate on the sign-in sheet the person who is authorized to pick up that child on that day and the phone number where they can be reached in case of an emergency during class.

At the beginning of class, each child is signed in by the adult that brings that child to school. This adult should notify the classroom teachers if their child will be picked up by someone other than their usual parent or caregiver. Anyone picking a child up must be on the approved pick-up list in the child's file. The adult bringing the child to school will also be asked when the child last had sunscreen applied, per childcare licensing. **Staff members are asked to ensure that each adult bringing a child to school signs their child in to school for the day.**

DCP will only release children to parents or legal guardians or the adult(s) for whom written authorization has been given by a parent or legal guardian. This information is maintained in the child's record. In the event of an emergency or a change in pick up plans, the child may also be released to an adult for whom the child's parent or guardian has given written or verbal authorization. **If the staff member who releases the child does not know the adult, identification will be required to ensure that the adult is authorized to pick up the child, in accordance with the school's policies stated above. Staff members are asked to ensure that each adult picking a child up from school signs their child out for the day.**

If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up a child without prior notification, a school employee will call the parent or legal guardian to get permission to release the child.

Parents must pick up their child no later than when the class is scheduled to end. We ask parents and guardians to be mindful of timing, we are aware that classroom teachers often have obligations after class time has ended. As a school community, we elect to not fine parents monetarily for late pick ups, as we understand that life circumstances do occasionally cause parents of young children to run behind. If parents are running late, we ask them to make every effort to contact the office so that we can let the child know that they are on the way and staff can plan accordingly.

In the event a child is picked up late from the school, or not picked up at all, a staff member must stay with the child until the child's parent or emergency contact comes for him or her. In the event no one can be reached on the contact lists, licensing requires that we notify the authorities after one hour has passed.

## Access to the Building/Parking

All parents and caregivers are welcome to enter the building at any time to settle their child during drop-off, visit the family resource area, speak with the administrative team, or visit the classroom.

During morning drop-off, an educator will be stationed at the designated external door to the building for your child's classroom. Pick-up at the end of the day will occur on the playground or at the designated external door to the building.

The front door code changes before every school year, and will be given to staff at the beginning of the year. Only adults should be

opening the main door to the building, and all children should be accompanied by an adult. Please only share the front door code with those individuals who are authorized to be entering the building.

As we are a community modeling for young children, we ask that all adults practice street safety skills when walking to and from the school from their home or cars, or while on walking excursions through the neighborhood. Holding hands, looking both ways before crossing the street, and using the crosswalk are important skills to teach, practice, and model. All children should be supervised carefully on the sidewalk and hill close to 5th Avenue and Marion Street.

When parking, we respectfully request that you do not park in the no parking areas, even for a few minutes. When cars are parked in these areas, it makes it very difficult for pedestrians and cars to have open lines of sight at crosswalks. Additionally, these spaces are to be reserved for emergency vehicles should the need arise.

Please drive carefully around the school and be considerate of the Marion Street neighborhood when parking in front of the school.

### Clothing and Personal Care Items

DCP embraces hands-on, explorative, and often messy play in the classrooms. We ask parents to dress children accordingly, in clothing that is “okay to play” or easily washable. Parents are asked to provide a dry change of clothes in their child’s backpack, as children will often become wet or messy during classroom activities. The school does keep extra clothing should a change of clothes be unavailable.

Children enjoy daily outdoor play at DCP. Children are expected to come prepared and be properly dressed for outside play in all weather, including inclement weather. The Director will decide if the weather is not favorable for outdoor activity. Should weather prevent outdoor play then outdoor time will be replaced by additional time in the classroom or in the fellowship hall.

Students often have special things that they want to share with their classmates. We recommend to parents and caregivers that any personal objects of value not be brought to school. An adult may bring in the item and take it home immediately. However, children are welcome to bring comfort objects to school (lovies, blankets, etc.) for ease in separation and comfort away from home. DCP provides small cubbies for storage of personal belongings while at school. While we make every effort to keep track of children’s personal items, we communicate to parents that we cannot be responsible for any loss or damage to students’ personal property. Parents and guardians are asked to please not send any extra money to school with their children.

### Hand-Washing Procedure

Children should wash their hands each day when they arrive at school. If parents and caregivers drop off at the door, staff will support children with hand-washing upon arrival. Staff members and adults supporting the classroom should also wash their hands when they arrive for the day, as well as before and after snack preparation, before and after cleaning and sanitizing tables, after coming in from outdoors, after playing in the sensory table, and any other time hands become soiled. Classroom teachers should assist children with hand washing at appropriate times and transitions through the school day. DCP staff, students, and parents supporting in the classroom should practice the following hand washing procedure:

1. Moisten hands with warm running water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub hands vigorously until a soapy lather appears.
4. Continue washing for at least 20 seconds outside of the water, rubbing areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, under jewelry, and the backs of hands.
5. Rinse hands under warm, running water until they are free of soap and dirt.
6. Dry hands with a disposable towel, cloth towel laundered after use, or a mechanical drying device.

### Bathroom Policy, Diapering, and Independent Use of the Toilet

All children will be supervised when using the restroom by a classroom teacher. Supervising adults should seek to have sight lines whenever possible, particularly when changing a child’s clothing or diaper. Only classroom teachers and other staff members who have completed Standard Precautions training will provide bathroom and diapering assistance. Parents supporting in the building will

only be used as a second supervisory presence in the bathroom or to help with the diapering and toileting of their own child. Children are diapered as needed. Classroom teachers will also be responsible for facilitating appropriate hand washing techniques with all students at all times.

Staff members and parents and caregivers diapering their own children in DCP restrooms should follow the procedure below for disinfecting a changing table after diapering:

1. Please dispose of all soiled diapers, wipes, and disposable changing pads in the lidded diaper disposal container provided in each of the children's bathrooms.
2. Please spray and disinfect the table with the provided disinfecting solution (located in a child-locked cabinet next to each changing table).
3. Please allow the disinfectant to sit on the table for one minute.
4. After one minute, dry any remaining disinfectant with a disposable paper towel.
5. Dispose of the paper towel in the lidded diaper disposal container.
6. Please place disinfectant, wipes, and diaper cream back into the child-locked cabinet next to the changing table.

*Wipes, diaper cream, and extra diapers are provided for your use should you need them. Please wear clean gloves when using diaper cream. Gloves, wipes, and diaper cream are in the child-locked cabinet next to each changing table.*

DCP does not require that children use the toilet independently at any specific age or age-group. It is our belief that a child's development is individual and this milestone occurs across a broad age-range. We support each child and their family as individuals. Classroom teachers are a supportive part of this process for children and should communicate with parents to mimic toileting routines at home to the best of their ability.

## Snack Policies and Protocols

DCP is committed to offering nutritious snacks for our children to enjoy. DCP will provide two snacks each day for children attending school.

### USDA Guidelines

It is important that the children receive offerings from at least two different food groups in their snack each day. If a sweet treat is served because of a birthday or other special celebration, two food groups will still need to be represented. The following are the various food groups recommended by the USDA:

- Bread/Cereal/Rice and Pasta
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Milk/Yogurt & Cheese
- Meat/Poultry & Fish
- With the exception of appropriate Field Trips or special occasions, water will be the beverage served.

In order to keep students safe and healthy, DCP provides a monthly snack calendar on our website that takes into consideration the diagnosed food allergies and food sensitivities in each classroom on any given day of the week. Parents and caregivers are welcome to check the snack calendar to see what snacks are being offered on a given day.

*Please note, DCP can only consider medically diagnosed food allergies and sensitivities accompanied by a care plan signed by your child's physician. Due to the number of children in our care, we ask that for any food preferences that are not of medical concern, parents check the snack calendar and provide an alternative selection for their child if the approved snack does not meet their family's preference.*

Due to the nature of how snacks are provided at our school, we cannot *guarantee* that DCP is "nut-free" but we do strongly discourage any nuts or nut products from entering the school.

Classroom teachers are asked to always cross check to see that the snack is free from class-specific allergens.

When setting the table for snack time, places should be set for the classroom teachers, as well as any parents supporting the classroom. The adults in the classroom become role models for the children for conversation, manners, and good eating habits.

Please remember that all staff and parent volunteers must utilize proper hand-washing procedures prior to serving snack. Additionally, they must support the children with hand-washing before they sit down to enjoy snack. Please see the Hand-Washing Procedure section of this handbook for reference.

When preparing and serving snack, staff should always use the food service gloves provided.

As required by the health department, staff members and volunteers must complete the recommended table cleaning and sanitation procedures prior to eating snack and afterward as well. To clean tables, please adhere to the following steps:

1. Remove any debris, playdough, paint, food, etc. from the table.
2. Spray tables down using the provided soapy water solution.
3. Wipe the soapy water solution with a disposable paper towel.
4. Sanitize all tables with a sanitizing solution.
5. Allow the sanitizing solution to sit on each table for one minute before drying any remaining sanitizer with a disposable paper towel.
6. Please use **\*\*DISPOSABLE PAPER TOWELS ONLY\*\***
7. Tables should be cleaned following this procedure **BEFORE** and **AFTER** snack.

## Cell Phone Policy

**When caring for children, all staff, classroom teachers and parents supporting the classroom shall refrain from using personal electronics including cell phones and MP3 players.** Please feel free to provide the number in the office, or the Executive Director's cell phone numbers, to those who might need to reach you during the day. We are happy to come get you in the classroom should you receive a call. The Director or Manager of Operations will relieve you in the classroom so that you may step away to take the call. If you need to make an urgent phone call, we ask that you please arrange coverage for ratio from another member of staff, and step out of the classroom so as not to be a distraction to the classroom community.

Only the Remini program on staff member's personal cell phones should be used for contacting or communicating with parents, or taking photos of children for documentation. Please use the office phone only for contacting parents. Teachers are encouraged to use the provided classroom ipads for documentation. The provided classroom cell phone should not be used to contact parents and caregivers.

Staff are expected to refrain from cell phone use at any time when they should be *actively* caring for children. This includes teaching, assisting students with toileting/diapering, while out on the playground, while supervising snack or meals, or during nap and rest time.

The Office of Early Care and Learning Rules and Regulations for Child Care prohibits adults who are caring for children from using cell phones. Cell phone distraction is not only a detriment to our school and classroom climate, it is a significant safety issue.

Staff members found to be in violation of this policy will receive a write-up by the Executive Director, and this will be placed into your staff file. The Personnel Committee will be notified, and additional disciplinary action may be taken.

## Parent Volunteer Background Checks

Because our school is a parent cooperative community in which parents take an active role in their child's education during classroom support days and committee work, it is our policy to complete background checks on parents and legal guardians who are volunteering with children.

As a community that places an emphasis on valuing our children, we believe in the importance of this policy for the safety of your child as well as all the children we care for. This background check will be strictly confidential, but will look for any history of

violent crimes, sexual crimes, or child abuse convictions. DCP follows the Colorado Department of Human Services list of disqualifying actions for employment in a child care center in determining if a parent or legal guardian cannot volunteer in the classroom.

Background check forms must be completed before a parent volunteers in the classroom. While families may plan for one parent or legal guardian to do all classroom support days, we strongly recommend that families with more than one parent or legal guardian have both individuals complete the check so that families have flexibility should a change in plans arise. Parents/guardians are responsible for their individual background check fee. Should a family notify you that the individual criminal background check fee presents a financial hardship, please have them contact the office.

## Guidelines for Parents Volunteering in the Classroom

Volunteering in your child's classroom is a unique feature of the cooperative nature of the school and serves as a wonderful opportunity for connection between your child, you, and the classroom teachers. As a volunteer parent, you are not only a support to the classroom teachers, but an integral part of the classroom community. Guidelines for helping parents are listed below, however classroom-specific details may be adjusted by the classroom teachers

- The daily presence of parent volunteers in each classroom is a wonderful feature of our cooperative community. We encourage parents to view the role as an opportunity to more fully understand our constructivist, play-based model, emergent curriculum, and the growth and development of young children. You are a vital member of each unique classroom community of teachers, children, and their caregivers. Embracing the parent volunteer experience is rewarding for both you and the children.
- Please be mindful of any symptoms of illness, and do not attend for your support day if you are feeling unwell.
- Please be sure to notify the classroom educators and the office if you are unable to attend for the volunteer time you have signed up for.
- Siblings are not allowed to attend class with you while you are volunteering per state licensing regulations.
- Parents supporting in the classroom are expected to follow DCP's school policy and procedure with regard to classroom guidance and discipline. Generally, the classroom teachers will handle any behavioral challenges that should arise in the classroom, and the supporting parent should defer to the teachers. The classroom teachers are responsible for behavioral intervention consistent with our guidance and discipline policy (see **Guidance and Discipline** and/or **Developmentally Appropriate Guidance Techniques** sections in this handbook).
- Special skills, interests, and hobbies are a rich and wonderful addition to the classroom. Both professional and personal interests appeal to the children. Playing an instrument, potting plants, playing special games, doing crafts, job-related skills, etc. are all important in the classroom. At all times, however, the responsibility for daily planning rests with the classroom teachers. Please clear special activities with him or her in advance of your parent helper day.
- Free play or choice time is an unstructured time when the classroom teachers and parent helpers act as facilitators of activities. Parents supporting during free play or choice may be engaging on a one-to-one basis with a child, assisting restless children in guided play, helping a child who is alone to find a companion, sitting with children and observing, helping children to put names on their artwork, or talking with a child about their work and deepening their connection and understanding. Jump right in and enjoy this busy and engaging time in the classroom!
- During cleanup time, help support children in finding an area of the classroom to clean up. Becoming involved with the children and providing choices can often inspire reluctant children: "How fast can we put these blocks away if we all work together? Which size blocks would you like to take care of?"
- Snack time offers a change of pace and a chance to renew the children's energy after busy play. The experience of eating at preschool with peers is an important step in the social development of the child. Snack time provides an opportunity for relaxed conversation with the children, parent, and classroom teachers. Parent volunteers may assist the classroom teachers during snack by helping to serve and sitting with the children at the snack table. Parents and classroom teachers together model appropriate eating habits and cleanup routines and facilitate language and conversation. After snack, the parent volunteer may support by cleaning the tables and sweeping the floor. Please read the Snack Procedures and Protocols section above to know the parent's specific responsibilities regarding setting up snack, and the procedure for cleaning and sanitizing tables.
- In preparation for outside playtime, the parent volunteers may help children with boots, jackets, hats and mittens, when necessary. State licensing requires that one adult be on the playground with the children at all times and that children are accompanied to and from the classroom by an adult.
- Only members of DCP staff who have completed Standard Precautions training are allowed to diaper and assist with toileting of children. Parent volunteers may only diaper and assist with toileting of their own child. Parent volunteers may be asked to serve

as a second set of adult eyes during diapering and toileting (See **Bathroom, Diapering, and Independent Use of the Toilet**).

## Playground

### **Age Limitations**

The West (front) playground is approved for children ages three and up. The East (back) playground is for children three and under. Parents and caregivers are asked to be mindful of age guidelines when enjoying the playground with younger siblings.

### **Pets**

We love pets and believe they are part of the family, but in the interest of health and safety families are asked not to bring family pets onto the playground.

### **Usage**

During school hours the DCP playgrounds are in use by our classes. Both the toddler and preschool playgrounds are open and available for families to enjoy after school hours and on weekends. The Community of Christ Church asks that the DCP community refrain from playing on the playground on Sunday mornings during worship. Families enjoying the playground are asked to dispose of any trash and support our community in keeping the playground spaces tidy.

## Visitors

DCP welcomes visitors to our school. All visitors must sign-in on the visitor's log in the front of the school. If parents wish to visit a classroom other than their child's, they need to make prior arrangements with the classroom teacher.

Visitors providing services to students (e.g. speech or occupational therapy, medical personnel, etc.) are welcome in classrooms. If a family is interested in coordinating such a visit, please have them do so in collaboration with the Executive Director.

Parents are welcome to show friends our school by making prior arrangements with the Director. Formal tours for interested families are coordinated through the office. Please contact the main office for more information on these tours.

On occasion, the Director will be contacted by a college student needing to observe in an early childhood classroom for a course requirement. Permission will be granted with proper documentation of coursework and the agreement that actual student names will not be utilized or any other personal identifying information. Students conducting observations will need approval from the Director and follow the visitor protocol. The classroom teachers will also be informed of the observation taking place.

At times, parents may give permission for an early childhood professional from Child Find or other agency to observe his or her child. If this decision is made, the parent should contact the Director and classroom teacher. Professionals entering DCP for this purpose will also need to follow the visitor protocol. Written authorization will need to be obtained for any sharing of information about a child.

## Media Use/Viewing of Television and Video

DCP does not generally view television or videos in the classrooms. An iPad may be utilized in the classroom as an extension of learning or to support discussions. An example of this might be a group discussion of the ocean and the creatures who live there. A classroom teacher may then use the classroom iPad to show students images of ocean life.

## Discipline and Guidance

Our policy is to interact with each child in a way that promotes a sense of self-worth, while reinforcing classroom guidelines and behavioral standards. The underlying goal of discipline is to help a child make more appropriate choices and learn better skills for interacting with others and their environment.

Our approach is to have an enriching environment for children, establish classroom guidelines that are reasonable and promote a safe environment, and interact with children in a manner that promotes positive self-esteem.

A positive approach to discipline recognizes the development of children at varying ages and stages. Expectations for a two-year-old differ from those for a four-year-old. This is taken into consideration in the planning of the environment, the activities offered, and implementation in the classroom of such times as transitions, cleanup time and group time.

We prohibit the use of physical touch as a method of discipline except in the case of needing to restrain a child from injuring himself or herself or others. Spanking or physical punishment is an unacceptable method of discipline and will result in immediate expulsion or termination (please see Article V. Number 5 of the bylaws). Discipline that blames, criticizes, discourages, and creates barriers to the development of a positive self-image is not appropriate.

The role of both the lead and associate classroom teacher at DCP is unique. She or he is assisted in the classrooms by the parents who volunteer to support the classrooms throughout the year. The role of the classroom teachers is particularly important as they are the primary adults in the classroom everyday. To assure consistency in approach, the classroom teachers have the responsibility to model appropriate discipline for children and parents alike.

Classroom teachers utilize formal and informal observations, Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines, formal and informal family conferencing, and the ASQ to assess student development. If the classroom teacher notices a child is having difficulties with behavior or is causing extreme disruption in class, the parents will be notified by the classroom teacher or the Director. The Director, classroom teacher, and parents will then work together to develop a strategy to address the areas of concern. If repeated behavior challenges or disruptions cause concern that a child is showing signs or symptoms of a physical or developmental delay or an emotional, social, or behavioral challenge, DCP Staff will support the parent with contacting the appropriate agency for further observation and evaluation. (See the section of this handbook on Early Intervention and Enrollment of Students with Special Needs).

### Developmentally Appropriate Guidance Techniques

- Helping children to identify and label emotions
- Helping children learn to identify the emotions and feelings of others (empathy)
- Helping children to learn to identify body cues such as facial expressions
- Utilizing puppets or dolls or other props to act out common situations
- Utilizing photos, books, and/or posters to discuss feelings
- Working towards building the child's emotional vocabulary
- Creating opportunities for role playing
- Offering a cozy corner/private space when a child wants some alone time to work out his or her feelings (space in complete view of the classroom teacher)
- Teaching children the steps to calm their bodies down
- Teaching the children the 3 basic safety rules: I will keep myself safe, I will keep my friends safe and I will keep our things safe
- Redirecting children to other activities when appropriate
- Coaching children in social situations when necessary
- Using words of encouragement to build self-confidence
- Facilitating regular class meetings to discuss common problems
- Encouraging children to brainstorm ideas
- Teaching the children the five steps of peaceful conflict resolution: What is the problem? What can I do? What might happen if I...? Choose a solution, use it and ask: Is it working? If not, what can I do now?

### Violent Pretend Play

Experimenting with pretend play using guns, shooting, and violence can be developmentally appropriate and typical behavior for young children, and it can be healthy to explore this play in a safe space. Some children find this type of play to be very frightening and become uncomfortable when it is present in the classroom or on the playground. Our classrooms are safe places for all students, and therefore DCP has chosen to practice a policy that pretend play involving guns, shooting, and other weapons is best explored outside of school. We will redirect the children when we see pretend play involving weapons and remind them that this play is not appropriate for the classroom or playground. We strongly encourage families to discuss violent play and answer their child's questions.

Classroom teaching teams as well as the Executive Director and Instructional Coach are here and available to serve as a resource and address any questions or concerns.

## The School Year At DCP

### DCP 2023-24 Important Dates

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
	August 7-11	Regular office hours resume
Monday	August 7	Staff Retreat
Tuesday	August 8	Staff Orientation
Wednesday	August 9	New Staff Orientation
Thursday	August 17	Staff Medical Training and Delegations for the 2023-24 School Year
Monday	August 21	New Parent Orientation - 7:00 PM
Tuesday	August 22	Class Meet and Greets
	August 23-25	Home Visits
Thursday	August 24	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Monday	August 28	First day of school!
Monday	September 4	NO SCHOOL - Labor Day
Thursday	September 7	Fall All Parent Meeting - 6:30 PM Fall All Parent Social! - 7:30-9:30 PM
Wednesday	September 20	Town Hall Meeting - 7:00 PM
Thursday	September 28	Parent Education Night Kindergarten Information Night - 6:30 PM
Thursday	October 5	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Friday	October 20	Fall Festival
	October 26-27	NO SCHOOL - Parent/Teacher Conferences
Monday	October 30	NO SCHOOL - Staff Professional Development Day
Thursday	November 2	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Wednesday	November 15	Town Hall Meeting - 7:00 PM
	November 20-24	NO SCHOOL - Fall Break
Thursday	December 7	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM

Friday	December 15	Celebration of Light!
-	December 18 - January 1	NO SCHOOL - Winter Break
Tuesday	January 2	NO SCHOOL - Staff Professional Development Day
Wednesday	January 3	School Resumes
Thursday	January 4	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Monday	January 15	NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Wednesday	January 17	Lottery Opens for 2024-25 School Year - 5:00 PM
Wednesday	January 17	Annual Admissions Open House - 6:00-8:00 PM
Wednesday	January 24	Town Hall Meeting - 7:00 PM
Friday	January 26	Lottery Closes for 2024-25 School Year - 5:00 PM
Thursday	February 1	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Friday	February 2	Lottery Results Posted for 2024-25 School Year - 5:00 PM
Sunday	February 4	DCP Family Bingo - 3:00-5:00 PM
Friday	February 16	2024-25 Intent to Enroll Fee DUE - 5:00 PM
Monday	February 19	NO SCHOOL - Presidents' Day
Friday	February 23	2024-25 Financial Aid Applications DUE - 5:00 PM
Thursday	March 7	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Friday	March 8	NO SCHOOL - Staff Professional Development Day
Wednesday	March 20	Town Hall Meeting - 7:00 PM
	March 25-29	NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
Thursday	April 4	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Thursday	April 11	Spring All Parent Meeting - 6:30 PM Spring All Parent Social! - 7:30-9:30 PM
	April 18-19 and April 22	NO SCHOOL - Parent/Teacher Conferences
Wednesday	May 1	20% Tuition Deposit for 2024-25 School Year - DUE
Thursday	May 2	Governing Board Meeting - 7:00 PM
Friday	May 10	DCP Annual Spring Art Show and Open House- 5:00-7:00 PM
Wednesday	May 15	Town Hall End of Year Celebration - 7:00 PM
Thursday	May 23	Last Day of School

Friday	May 24	Older Preschool Graduation Celebration
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## DCP Annual Events

### **Class Meet and Greets**

This event occurs before school begins in order for children to have a chance to see their classroom and meet their new teachers. This event serves as the first formal opportunity for the classroom educators to hand out back to school information, check contact information, and have families sign up for home visits. The focus of this event is for the children, families, and educators in the class to make an initial connection and begin getting to know one another!

### **Home Visits**

Home visits have been a tradition at DCP for quite some time, and have become an integral part of our program. At the class meet and greets, families will sign up to receive a home visit from one of the lead classroom teachers. This visit lasts 20 minutes and is a chance for each child to become more comfortable with one of his or her new teachers before the first day of school. This is also a wonderful opportunity for teachers to connect with students and their families right from the start. During this visit, children might want to show their teacher his or her favorite place in the home, a favorite toy or game, or a family pet.

### **New Parent Orientation**

This event is a chance for new parents to learn all about what it means to be part of the DCP family and to gain information they need to begin the school year. The Executive Director is responsible for leading this event.

### **All Parent Meetings (Fall and Spring)**

All Parent Meetings occur once in the fall and once in the spring each year. During these meetings, the Executive Director gives a state of the school address. Any new Governing Board members and/or changes in by-laws are voted on by the DCP community. These meetings are important to ensure that all families receive important information regarding the school budget and any planned changes. This is also an opportunity for each family to use their voice in the governance of DCP. DCP asks that at least one parent from each family attend **both** the Fall and Spring All Parent Meetings. Families who are unable to attend the All Parent Meeting should notify the Executive Director. **All staff members are expected to attend both the Fall and Spring All Parent Meetings.**

### **Class Socials**

Class Socials are ideally held within the first month or two of school and are an opportunity for the members of the classroom community to connect outside of the school setting. The date, time and location of the class socials will be scheduled and planned by the Classroom Liaison. **Staff attendance at the first class social is mandatory. If any additional class socials are planned, attendance is strongly encouraged.**

### **Kindergarten Information Night**

The Executive Director and Older Preschool lead teachers will present information to parents about the process of choosing a kindergarten program for their child. Many questions will be answered such as, “What questions should I ask the school about their kindergarten program?” and “What is the process of enrolling in public and private kindergarten programs?” This event is open to all families in the school, not just those with a current Pre-K student.

### **Fall Festival**

One of the favorite socials and traditions of the year, the DCP Fall Festival is an opportunity to gather as families display their Halloween costumes, play games, enjoy treats, and end the event with a trick or treat walk from teacher to teacher around the block. **Staff members are strongly encouraged to attend and support this community event.**

## Annual Open House

Every year before the lottery opens, DCP opens its doors to its community and interested parents who would like to learn more about the incredible programs. Governing Board members support the classroom teachers by meeting prospective families and sharing the magic of DCP. Current families are encouraged to attend if they would like to spend time learning more about the classroom their child will be joining the following year. Lead teachers will set-up their rooms like a typical school day and then meet, greet, and answer questions from prospective and current families. **Attendance for lead teachers is mandatory.**

## Spring Open House and All School Art Show

Another beloved DCP tradition, student artwork from throughout the year is proudly displayed at the All School Art Show at the end of the school year. Families and staff come to see the creations, have a picnic, and enjoy this community gathering. Families who will be new to the school for the coming school year are welcomed to the community. **Staff members are strongly encouraged to attend and support this event.**

## Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall meetings are open to the community and occur four times during the school year. Town Hall meetings are generally held virtually. The Governing Board and Committee Chair members gather to discuss important information regarding DCP. Each of the lead teaching teams will present at one town hall meeting during the year. Each Town Hall will end with a parent education topic. Parents are highly encouraged to attend these meetings. The meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of the month from 7:00pm-9:00pm. For the 2023-2024 school year, the schedule is as follows: September 20, 2023, November 15, 2023, January 24, 2024, and March 20, 2024.

## Cleanup Days

The Cooperative Agreement that each parent signs prior to enrollment requires that each DCP family participate in the cleaning and maintenance of the building and facility. Every family is asked to sign-up for one clean-up day for each child enrolled. If a family has two children enrolled, they are asked to participate in two clean-up days. These may be scheduled simultaneously or separately.

The facilities committee will compile a list of clean-up tasks and projects both inside and outside the school. Every family in the community is asked to sign up for at least one clean-up day. Clean up days are anticipated to last two to three hours.

Maintaining our school is very important to the quality of our program and it is a core value of our community to work together on this endeavor. DCP hires a year-round maintenance service to take care of daily cleaning. However, we ask parents to spend a few hours at the school setting up or cleaning specific areas and toys that are not taken care of thoroughly by the daily cleaning service. In keeping with the cooperative nature of DCP, we need parents to carry out this important task to help keep our school safe, clean and healthy.

## Fundraising

In keeping with the cooperative nature of the school, a portion of the balance of the annual operating budget is to be raised by parents, guided by the Colorado Gives Day, Social Fundraising, and Auction Committees. There are several fundraisers each year, one of which is the Annual Auction. Parents are expected to donate items for the auction and to support fundraising efforts however possible. These events are not only profitable, they are fun. Any fundraising income above what is budgeted will be used to directly enhance the school program or to keep tuition low. It is important to note that fundraising helps to support our operating budget. Every year, there is a financial gap between the amount collected from tuition and other fees and the school's operating budget. By filling this gap with financial contributions, DCP is able to keep tuition affordable. A variety of fun community events that support our fundraising efforts occur throughout the year. Fundraising events include:

**Colorado Gives Day:** This annual statewide movement celebrates and increases philanthropy in Colorado through online giving. The

\$1 Million Incentive Fund supported by Community First Foundation and FirstBank is one of the largest giving-day incentive funds in the country. Donations can be scheduled ahead of time at [www.coloradogives.org](http://www.coloradogives.org) beginning the middle of November. Donations support DCP's tuition assistance program, DCP classroom teachers' professional development opportunities, and closing the gap between the amount collected from tuition and fees and the amount it costs to run DCP annually.

**Dine Outs:** Dine outs will occur throughout the year. These events are hosted by neighborhood restaurants that invite our community to gather together for a meal while gifting a percentage of the meal's cost to DCP. These events support gathering as a community and supporting DCP. S

**Give-back Opportunities:** DCP partners with businesses who donate a portion of every purchase back to our school community. Currently, we have partnerships with Mabel's Labels (custom labeling for clothing and household items), Ridwell (home recycling for hard to recycle items), and Minted (holiday cards, greetings, and gifts). Giveback codes will be shared with the community, please contact [fundraising@dcpplay.org](mailto:fundraising@dcpplay.org) should you need a code.

**DCP Annual Auction:** Each year, DCP's community, friends, and families gather together for an adult party to celebrate DCP. Food, drinks, fun games of chance, a silent auction, and a live auction all make this event a night to remember!

**Grocery Cards:** Raise funds for DCP without spending an extra dime of your own through purchases from these partners:

- King Soopers - Please register your loyalty number and community rewards with King Soopers. Everytime you use your loyalty number a portion of your purchases will be received by DCP! Please visit the Social Fundraising page on DCP's website for additional details.
- Safeway provides easy-to-use, reloadable grocery gift cards that you can manage when you buy your groceries. Using these cards gives 5% of your purchases back to the school! Start by making a one-time purchase of a \$10 reloadable gift card in the school office and then add funds at the store from there.

## Field Trips

Field trips can be organized by classroom teachers or as whole school experiences as learning opportunities for the children away from the school grounds. The intention of field trips is to enhance students' experiences at DCP. Since these experiences take place outside the classroom, parents are responsible for transportation to and from the field trip and a minimum number of parent volunteers is required to support the class depending on the nature of the field trip. Classroom teachers are not permitted to transport students to and from field trips. Classroom teachers are responsible for planning and communicating prior to the trip, as well as facilitating the learning process during the trip. Classroom teachers will communicate whether siblings are able to attend field trips, depending on the location of the field trip and the plans during the experience. On field trip days, the children's regularly scheduled class will not meet in their classroom. Parents will have to make other arrangements for their children should they choose not to attend the field trip.

## Transportation

DCP does not provide transportation for children to and from school or for field trips, and it is each family's responsibility to provide for the transportation of their children. It is against school policy for a DCP staff member to transport a student for any reason.

## Birthday Parties and Special Events

Birthdays are a special time for young children and sharing this milestone with their classroom community is important. Each classroom teaching team will come up with a way to celebrate and honor children's birthdays that feels unique and integral to their classroom culture. In classrooms where children have allergies or dietary restrictions, teachers may ask that birthday celebrations do not include food so that all children can be included.

Parents are asked to refrain from bringing party or favor bags to distribute to classmates for their child's birthday. These items often create distraction, remove the focus from the birthday child and the celebration in the classroom, and can provide challenges at extended programs such as lunch bunch. Families are encouraged to enjoy these items at celebrations outside of school.

When planning birthday celebrations outside of school, families are asked to be sensitive to a culture of inclusion. If all members of the class are not invited to the party, parents are asked to refrain from distributing party invitations at school.

## Parent/Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent/Teacher Conferences are held in the fall and spring for all classes, as noted in the school calendar. Typically, the Fall Conference takes the form of a goal setting meeting to outline both the parent and teacher's collective goals for the child. All teachers will introduce each child's portfolio during this time, and should plan to discuss strengths and challenges, as well as set goals for development and learning as we look forward to the rest of the school year. The second conference of the year will include a portfolio review, and teachers will plan to discuss progress toward the established goals and age-appropriate objectives, areas of strength, significant growth, challenges, goals and plans for the future for each student. Teachers may choose to include a narrative summary of their reflections. **The scheduled conference dates for the 2023-24 school year are October 26-27 for fall conferences, and April 18, 19, and 22 for spring conferences.**

Sign-ups for conferences will be coordinated through the office so that parents with more than one child enrolled in the school can schedule back-to-back conferences in different classrooms. The conference schedule will be made with consideration to a variety of family schedules and needs.

Fall conferences are held separately as divided up by the lead teachers, but may be held jointly if the team prefers. Spring conferences are held jointly by both lead teachers for all teams.

Parents are welcome to schedule additional conference time with their child's classroom teacher or with the Director at any time during the year.

## Health Screenings

Annually, DCP will offer developmental health screenings, which may include vision, hearing, and developmental screenings. These screenings will be arranged through third-party organizations, and parents will have the opportunity to decide whether or not their child(ren) will participate.

As outlined in our Early Intervention and Special Needs policy, DCP is committed to identifying physical and developmental issues that may affect a child's success in school and later in their adult life. Early intervention is key to mediating any issue that may arise for a child. For this reason, DCP works to make physical and developmental screenings available and easily accessible to its families.

## Communication

Communication between parents and staff members is of the highest importance. Parents are asked to call the office if they need to get information to staff members. The office phones are answered from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We check voicemail messages often throughout the day.

Parents are asked not to call staff members at home about DCP-related matters. Our valued teaching staff gives their all at work. Please respect their private time so that they can rejuvenate and be 100% present for their families.

Parents may also email staff members. Please note that educators are fully present with children during the day, and may not have the opportunity to check email. Please utilize your classroom's group email alias ( [toddler@dcppplay.org](mailto:toddler@dcppplay.org) ; [youngpreschool@dcppplay.org](mailto:youngpreschool@dcppplay.org); [olderpreschool@dcppplay.org](mailto:olderpreschool@dcppplay.org)) to ensure that urgent messages are received.

Drop off and pick up times can be a great time to communicate pertinent information that may affect a child's day at school. Parents are asked to leave a note or phone message stating that they would like to schedule a time to talk if they would like to converse with one of the classroom teachers longer than a quick exchange.

Governing Board members and your classroom liaison can be wonderful sources of information about the school. Contact information for classroom liaisons will be distributed early in the school year.

## End of Year Parties

The last day of school is a special time for the classroom community as it marks the closing of the school year and our time together. End of year celebrations will be held in the classroom. In some cases, parents and caregivers may be asked to join the class for a portion of the day. Teachers are asked to communicate specifics about last day plans three weeks prior to the last day of class.

The Older Preschool end of year party will immediately follow graduation. Teachers are asked to communicate information about this event at least three weeks prior to graduation day.

# Enrollment and Admissions Policies

## Enrollment

Denver Cooperative Preschool is licensed for students ages 12 months to 6 years of age. Specific age guidelines for each class are published annually in this Handbook (see [Admissions](#) below).

If a class enrollment is not sufficient, as determined by the Executive Director and the Personnel Committee, the preschool reserves the right to cancel the class.

No child can begin preschool until all of the required enrollment paperwork is submitted, including medical forms. Parents are asked to complete forms in a timely manner, turning them in by the due date specific in enrollment packets.

To withdraw your child from DCP you must notify the Executive Director. This notification should be made in writing or in person 45 days in advance of the child's departure from school. All tuition payments due during this 45 day period are due to the school. The child may attend school during this time. No remaining tuition will be due after the 45 day period. Deposits and fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Registration for the following school year's classes occurs at the end of January through our annual lottery.

## Admissions Policies

### Age Guidelines for the 2023-24 Classes

<i>Class</i>	<i>Birthday Ranges</i>
Toddler	23 months-35 months by September 1, 2023
Young Preschool	36 months-47 months by September 1, 2023
Older Preschool	3 years, 6 months by October 1, 2023 <sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup>*The cutoff date for Older Preschool moves back to October 1 to align with Denver Public Schools. Local kindergartens have varied cut-off dates for starting. Parents are encouraged to explore their options.*

**Children who will turn six-years-old before the end of the DCP calendar year cannot enroll as our program is only licensed for children up to age 6.**

## Lottery

The method for placing children into classes at DCP is a lottery system. The lottery is held each January in order to fill classes for the following school year. A lottery form for each student (including twins) must be completed and submitted in order for that student to participate in the lottery. A non-refundable lottery fee will be collected with each form. See Fees and Tuition Rates for more information.

A family currently enrolled at DCP must be in good standing with regard to financial obligations and the terms of the Cooperative Agreement prior to participating in the lottery. If a family is delinquent to either of the above, the Executive Director will contact the family to make sure they are aware of their obligation.

Online lottery forms, with specific age guidelines, will give families the opportunity to indicate a first, second, and third choice for class placements for each child. If a student does not get his or her first choice in the lottery, he or she will be placed in the second choice and put on a waiting list for the first choice. If the second choice is also not available, he or she will be placed in the third choice and put on a waiting list for both the first and second choice. If only one choice is indicated on the lottery form and it is not available, the student will be put on a waiting list for that class.

Upon entering DCP, each student receives a preference status designation which determines the order in which that student will be

chosen during the lottery. Current students and children of staff are granted the highest preference (1), followed by siblings of current students (2), students from DCP alumnae families (3\*), students from families belonging to the church where the preschool is located (4), and students who are new to DCP (5).

*\*In order to receive DCP alumnae status in the lottery a family must have left the school in good standing with regard to financial obligations and the terms of the Cooperative Agreement and completed the most recent school year in attendance at DCP. Disenrollment mid-year from the program will reduce your preference status for following years without prior Executive Director-approval.*

Children who are age-inappropriate may lottery for a specific class only with prior Executive Director-approval. With Executive Director-approval, a family may request that an age-inappropriate child with a birth date close to the class cutoff be placed on a separate waiting list for that specific class while they are enrolled in an age-appropriate class. If a spot should become available for that child, the Executive Director and current classroom teachers along with the child's family will make the determination of whether it is appropriate for the child to move to the age-inappropriate age group. All licensing regulations must be taken into consideration, and the ultimate determination rests with the Executive Director.

Families who are considering placing their child in the Older Preschool program for a second year may lottery for this placement only with prior Executive Director-approval. The Executive Director and current classroom teachers along with the child's family will make the determination of whether it is in the best interests of the child to complete another year in this program. Only upon mutual agreement will an Older Preschool placement be offered. Depending on enrollment numbers for the rising Older Preschool class, placements for repeat Older Preschool students may be limited, at the discretion of the Executive Director. Priority will be given to current DCP students enrolling in Older Preschool for the first time.

Families who have participated in the lottery may subsequently request placement on any additional waiting lists. The lottery number assigned to the child during the lottery or waiting list process will be used to determine placement on the waiting list. Families who miss the lottery may request placement on any waiting list of their choice. They will be assigned a lottery number as a waiting list family and be placed into their status category using that lottery number to determine placement.

Following the lottery, class lists and waiting lists will be available on the DCP website and new families will be notified as to whether or not their children were placed in classes. Posted lists will include the child's name, preference status designation and the number representing the order in which they were chosen in the lottery. Please note that lottery numbers do not dictate future movement on waiting lists.

In order to secure a spot in a class, families must complete all necessary forms and pay all fees by the due dates.

Each year, the incoming Board President is guaranteed his or her first choice for classes for any children he or she has enrolled at DCP for his or her upcoming year as President, as voted on by the Governing Board. The incoming President-Elect is placed at the top of any waiting lists for his or her first choice for classes for any children he or she has enrolled at DCP for his or her upcoming year as President-Elect, as voted on by the Governing Board.

## Waiting Lists

A waiting list for each class will be maintained for the purpose of filling openings as they arise.

As with the lottery, preference status designations apply to all waiting lists. Current students (those students who have attended school and satisfied all appropriate financial and cooperative requirements) and children of staff (1) are granted the highest preference, followed by siblings of current students (2), students from DCP alumnae families (3), students from families belonging to the church where the preschool is located (4), new current students and, finally, new families (5), who are defined as those new students who are on a waiting list but have not yet been offered a placement in a class.

When there is an opening in a class, the spot will be offered to the student at the top of the appropriate waiting list.

When a student from a new family is placed in a class, any siblings of that student who are on waiting lists for other classes will be changed from new status (5) to sibling status (3). The siblings will then be moved into the last position on any waiting list given this

new preference status designation.

If a family from the waiting list declines to take a spot when offered, they will be asked if they wish to be taken off the waiting list. If they choose to remain on the waiting list, they will continue to be offered spots until they request to be removed.

If a current student participating in the lottery does not get their first choice and chooses not to commit to the spot in their second choice (by paying appropriate fees); they will be changed to alumni status on the waiting list for their first choice upon the end of the current school year or upon withdrawal from the school.

Denver Cooperative Preschool is committed to identifying developmental issues that may affect a child's success in school and later in their adult life. Early intervention is key to mediating any issues that may arise for a child. Families with children with special needs are welcome to apply for enrollment. Denver Cooperative Preschool is an environment that strives to accommodate the needs of all children. In some cases, the administrative staff in consultation with our nurse consultant will determine if we are able to meet the child's needs and if the child will benefit from the program. Denver Cooperative Preschool makes every effort to accommodate children with special challenges or disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). Child care programs are required to make "readily achievable accommodations" for all children with disabilities. "Readily achievable" is defined as being "able to accomplish easily and without much difficulty or expense, or increasing safety or crime considerations."

Each child who has identified special needs and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individual Education Plan (IFSP), or other documentation related to diagnosis from a medical professional must provide a copy of the plan to the Executive Director of the Denver Cooperative Preschool. This form must be filled out by agency staff (Child Find or other) or physician and clearly state a child's diagnosis, special instructions for care, and necessary medication. Each parent is responsible for giving this form to the administrative staff at the time of enrollment. The DCP administrative team will be responsible for sharing the plan with the child's classroom teaching team. The administrative team and school nurse (if necessary) will develop a plan for care while the child is at school.

If the parent or teacher of an enrolled child has a concern that a child has or is showing signs or symptoms of a physical or developmental delay or an emotional, social, or behavioral challenge, the DCP staff will support the parent with contacting the appropriate agency for further observation and evaluation. After an assessment from a physician or other professional, the parents and agency representative will develop a plan for the services the child needs, working with the DCP administrative and teaching teams for appropriate accommodations in the classroom setting. If, at any point, a parent refuses to seek the additional support recommended by the physician, referring agency, or Denver Cooperative Preschool Staff, or chooses not to participate in meetings or conferences regarding their child's care, this may indicate to the administration that the parent is not willing or ready to work cooperatively with DCP at that time and the family may be asked to find alternative care.

It is important to note that although Denver Cooperative Preschool will work with all children to address a variety of disabilities, our staff does not have specialized degrees or expertise that may be needed to address every disability or health need. In the event the parents or the classroom teachers have a concern regarding any one child's development, the parents and the classroom teachers will meet and discuss all available options that will provide the child with necessary help and interventions. This is a collaborative venture; participation and cooperation of all involved parties is required.

If it is determined that the child is not progressing as expected or that the child needs more comprehensive services than the Denver Cooperative Preschool is able to provide, the family will need to find an alternative educational placement.

### Early Intervention and Enrollment of Students with Special Needs

Denver Cooperative Preschool is committed to identifying developmental issues that may affect a child's success in school and later in their adult life. Early intervention is key to mediating any issues that may arise for a child. Families with children with special needs are welcome to apply for enrollment. Denver Cooperative Preschool is an environment that strives to accommodate the needs of all children. In some cases, the administrative staff in consultation with our nurse consultant will determine if we are able to meet the child's needs and if the child will benefit from the program. Denver Cooperative Preschool makes every effort to accommodate children with special challenges or disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). Child care programs are required to make "readily achievable accommodations" for all children with disabilities. "Readily achievable" is defined as being "able to accomplish easily and without much difficulty or expense, or increasing safety or crime considerations."

Each child who has identified special needs and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individual Education Plan (IFSP), or other documentation related to diagnosis from a medical professional must provide a copy of the plan to the Executive Director of the Denver Cooperative Preschool. This form must be filled out by agency staff (Child Find or other) or physician and clearly state a child's diagnosis, special instructions for care, and necessary medication. Each parent is responsible for giving this form to the administrative staff at the time of enrollment. The DCP administrative team will be responsible for sharing the plan with the child's classroom teaching team. The administrative team and school nurse (if necessary) will develop a plan for care while the child is at school.

Classroom teachers utilize formal and informal observations, Colorado's Early Learning and Development Guidelines, formal and informal family conferencing, and the ASQ to assess student development. If through these means, the parent or teacher of an enrolled child has a concern that a child has or is showing signs or symptoms of a physical or developmental delay or an emotional, social, or behavioral challenge, the DCP staff will support the parent by contacting the appropriate agency for further observation and evaluation. After an assessment from a physician or other professional, the parents and agency representative will develop a plan for the services the child needs, working with the DCP administrative and teaching teams for appropriate accommodations in the classroom setting. If, at any point, a parent refuses to seek the additional support recommended by the physician, referring agency, or Denver Cooperative Preschool Staff, or chooses not to participate in meetings or conferences regarding their child's care, this may indicate to the administration that the parent is not willing or ready to work cooperatively with DCP at that time and the family may be asked to find alternative care.

It is important to note that although Denver Cooperative Preschool will work with all children to address a variety of disabilities, our staff does not have specialized degrees or expertise that may be needed to address every disability or health need. In the event the parents or the classroom teachers have a concern regarding any one child's development, the parents and the classroom teachers will meet and discuss all available options that will provide the child with necessary help and interventions. This is a collaborative venture; participation and cooperation of all involved parties is required.

If it is determined that the child is not progressing as expected or that the child needs more comprehensive services than the Denver Cooperative Preschool is able to provide, the family will need to find an alternative educational placement.

### Withdrawal of Enrollment

Although Denver Cooperative Preschool makes every effort to avoid discontinuing enrollment for a child and their family, occasionally the Denver Cooperative Preschool is not able to provide for children with needs that are beyond the scope of the experience and education of our staff. As detailed in this handbook, there are many practices and policies in place for the Denver Cooperative Preschool to work with families and outside agencies to keep a child in our program. If for some reason it is necessary to discontinue enrollment for a child in our care, we will provide as much notice as possible. If a child will no longer be placed in our program, we will make every effort to assist with placement in a program that is better able to continue working with outside support agencies to assist the child.

At any time during the school year when the relationship between the preschool and the family is not found to be mutually satisfactory, continued enrollment shall be reviewed jointly by the family and involved representatives from Denver Cooperative Preschool. The final decision rests with the Personnel Committee (comprised of the President, President-Elect, and Executive Director). Parents will be notified in writing if preschool services are to be withdrawn.

## Financial Policies

The DCP Governing Board is responsible for setting the financial policies of the preschool. Several of these policies follow. These policies are carried out by the Treasurer, who serves for two fiscal years, beginning August 1st.

### Reimbursements

Reimbursement is made for actual cash expenditures on behalf of the preschool. All reimbursement checks must be approved by the Executive Director.

Reimbursement requests must first be submitted to and approved by the Executive Director or the Board President. Requests are then submitted to the Manager of Operations. Reimbursement forms are available in the office. Any items purchased for use by the school must have receipts submitted with them, even if the intent is to donate the item. Please collect your receipts throughout the month and submit one reimbursement request, but please itemize your expenditures on the request form and make clear on the form the reason for the expenditure and the name of your committee.

We are a tax-exempt organization and our tax-exempt number is 98-00723. Please use this number when making purchases for the school.

### 2023-2024 Fees

<b>Description</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Lottery Fee	\$100 per child
Intent to Enroll Fee	\$500 per child
Waiting List Fee (after lottery closes)	\$100 per child
Late Payment Fee	\$20 per month late
Returned Check Fee	\$20

2023-2024 Tuition Schedule and Payment Options

SCHEDULE	2 days/week	3 days/week	5 days/week
<b>ANNUAL TUITION</b>	<b>\$7,990.00</b>	<b>\$11,950.00</b>	<b>\$19,855.00</b>
<b>Intent to Enroll Fee</b> \$300 of this fee is applied to the deposit  Due Feb 18, 2022 Non-refundable, Non-transferable	<b>\$500.00</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>	<b>\$500.00</b>
<b>OPTION 1:</b>			
<b>20% Deposit</b> Please note \$300 from Intent to Enroll Fee has been deducted from this deposit total  Due May 2, 2022 Non-refundable, Non-transferable	<b>\$1,306.00</b>	<b>\$2,088.00</b>	<b>\$3,665.00</b>
<b>OPTION 1:</b>			
<b>80% Balance</b> Due on or before September 1, 2022, or with enrollment contract for rolling admission  Payment by check or ACH only. Non-transferable	<b>\$6,384.00</b>	<b>\$9,562.00</b>	<b>\$15,890.00</b>
<b>OPTION 2:</b>			
<b>Tuition Installment Plan</b> 7 installments: September '22-March '23  Due on the 1st of each month. Late after the 10th of each month  Payment by check or ACH only Non transferable	<b>\$912.00</b>	<b>\$1,366.00</b>	<b>\$2,270.00</b>

\*Tuition for both the Young and Older Preschool classes is eligible for tuition credit through the Denver Preschool Program.

Checks are payable to Denver Cooperative Preschool or ‘DCP’. Families may make tuition payments monthly through direct debit (EFT), or they may drop a check in the tuition box at school. Families may also elect to prepay tuition at any time. The monthly tuition fees are prorated over the year to account for holidays, staff professional days, and partial months.

Tuition payments are due on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of each month (September through March) and are considered late after the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) of the month. If late, a \$20 late fee should be submitted with the tuition check or it will be added to your family’s account. If tuition and late fees are not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month, this may impact the family’s enrollment status at DCP. If you have any problem concerning payments, please contact the Manager of Operations at [shandon@dcppplay.org](mailto:shandon@dcppplay.org).

Tuition checks should be dropped in the outside mailbox of the school, or sent to the Manager of Operations: DCP, Attn: Shandon Wells, 480 Marion St., Denver, CO 80218

### Late Entrants

When a family enrolls at Denver Cooperative Preschool after the official start date of the school year, tuition payment and registration paperwork requirements will be as follows: Once a verbal acceptance is made, the family has 48 business hours to pay their enrollment confirmation fee unless stated otherwise in their enrollment contract. The tuition deposit and the facilities fee must be paid within two weeks of the enrollment confirmation fee. All required enrollment paperwork must be completed and submitted to the school prior to the child’s first day in the classroom.

The cost for the month the child enters the school may be prorated. This will be done based on the number of classes remaining in the month the child enters the school. Fees will not be prorated. If a family fails to provide the necessary paperwork and payments during the stated period, the spot for their child will be forfeited.

### Delinquent Fees

A late charge of \$20 per month for delinquent fees will be assessed. A family may not register for the next preschool year until all current tuition fees and any other fees due have been paid. A child may not begin the second semester classes if first semester fees are outstanding. In the event of a financial problem during the year, it is the responsibility of the parents to contact the Treasurer or the Executive Director to make arrangements for payment. (Also, see Financial Aids, below). Tuition is non-transferable. Any unpaid tuition, fees or assessed fees will be billed on May 31, 2021 to the EFT and/or credit card on file.

### Discontinuing Enrollment

It is extremely important for DCP’s planning purposes to have the commitment of our students and families for the 2021-22 school year. As a non-profit, parent cooperative community, we rely on the commitment of our families to maintain the school’s operations, and execute our mission and educational philosophy. The school will incur expenses in reliance on the commitment of enrollment, and those expenses are not reduced by the withdrawal of students from our program.

In consideration of the above, the following provisions shall apply regarding the payment of tuition:

1. The intent to enroll fee is **non-refundable and non-transferable**.
2. The 20% registration deposit is **non-refundable and non-transferable**, although it will be applied to the full amount of annual tuition owed.
3. The Enrollment Agreement may be canceled within 45 days if written notification is received by the Executive Director of the School. Tuition installments due during the 45 day period after notification will not be refunded. The student may attend school during the 45 day period after notification. Parent(s) or Guardian(s) will be released for any further liability of payment or tuition installments after the 45 day period. As previously indicated, the 20% registration deposit is **non-refundable and non-transferrable** in all circumstances.

## Refunds

Type of Fee	Amount	Refund Available
Intent to Enroll Fee	\$500	No
Lottery Fee	\$100.00	No
Waiting List Fee	\$100.00	No
Tuition Deposit	20% of tuition	No
Sept - March Tuition	Monthly tuition	The Enrollment Agreement may be canceled within 45 days if written notification is received by the Executive Director of the School. Tuition installments due during the 45 day period after notification will not be refunded. Parent(s) or Guardian(s) will be released for any further liability of payment or tuition installments after the 45 day period.

DCP does not refund or prorate any tuition or fees for planned or unplanned absences. Tuition and enrichment fees are non-refundable regardless of absences. We do prorate tuition for families who are accepted after school begins and experience a late start date (see 2023-2024 Tuition and Fees, Late Entrants). **We do not prorate any fees.** Tuition and fees are non-transferable.

## Financial Aid

The policy of DCP is that a percentage of fundraising and private donations be placed in a Financial Aid fund for confidential awards by a Financial Aid Committee to families in need. This fund is designed to assist families who might otherwise not be able to enroll and to support preschool families who encounter financial difficulties during the school year. Financial Aid does not include any discount of lottery, enrollment/registration, or any other fees or any enrichment program.

In the event a need for Financial Aid arises during the school year, it is the responsibility of the parents to contact the Manager of Operations at [shandon@dcpplay.org](mailto:shandon@dcpplay.org) or the Executive Director at [mary@dcpplay.org](mailto:mary@dcpplay.org) for a Financial Aid application. The Financial Aid application is also available on the DCP website.

If Financial Aid needs within a fiscal year exceed the amount budgeted, variances can be made to accommodate such requests by appeal to the Governing Board by the Financial Aid Committee.

# School Policies

## Transitions

The Denver Cooperative Preschool believes strongly that stability and consistency are important for a child's development. Our program follows a school year schedule, with school beginning in September and ending in May. Children are placed into age-appropriate classrooms according to the following guidelines:

### Age Guidelines for the 2023-24 Classes

<i>Class</i>	<i>Birthday Ranges</i>
Toddler	23 months-35 months by September 1, 2023
Young Preschool	36 months-47 months by September 1, 2023
Older Preschool	3 years, 6 months by October 1, 2023 <sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup>*The cutoff date for Older Preschool moves back to October 1 to align with Denver Public Schools. Local kindergartens have varied cut-off dates for starting. Parents are encouraged to explore their options.*

**Children who will turn six-years-old before the end of the DCP calendar year cannot enroll as our program is only licensed for children up to age 6.**

DCP does not transition children to classrooms designated for older children when they celebrate a birthday. Rather, all children placed into a classroom will fall within the specific age range, remain in the classroom for the school year together, and transition to the next age group the following school year.

All families participate in our annual lottery in January and February to determine class placement for the following school year. Class lists for each age level will be posted at the school and shared with families via email. Staffing announcements for the following school year are typically made in late May/early June of the school-year prior.

If a child's birth date is within one week of the age-cutoff, they may be considered for an older classroom if the determination is made that it would be a more developmentally appropriate placement. Input from the parent, classroom teachers of both classes, and the directors will be considered. The decision for an age-ineligible placement will ultimately rest with the directors. Should a child be placed in an age-ineligible class, the child's parent will need to plan to attend class with them during the one week period of ineligibility due to licensing and fire code.

As children prepare to transition out of DCP to attend kindergarten, DCP classroom teachers and directors offer multiple supports to both ease and inform the process. A Kindergarten Information Night is scheduled every fall, and is open to all families in the program. Older Preschool classroom teachers are available for one-on-one conferencing regarding the transition to elementary school, and typically offer additional conferencing opportunities outside of the regularly scheduled fall and spring conferences. PreKindergarten classroom teachers are also available to complete kindergarten recommendation forms for programs that require them. The Executive Director is available for individual meetings with families to discuss the kindergarten transition process. Resource materials are available in the office, including a list of families who have graduated from DCP and are currently attending elementary schools in the Denver metro area. These families have offered to be an additional resource for families transitioning a child from DCP.

Should a child leave DCP mid-year due to a move, family transition, or enrollment at another school, DCP will work to support that transition in the best interest of the child. Classroom educators and the administration are happy to work with educators and administrators at the school the family is transitioning to through a transition meeting, providing student portfolios with family permission, and the sharing of any relevant or requested information. Permission from the family may be required before sharing any personal documents with the new school.

## Group Size and Adult/Child Ratio

DCP supports three teachers in each of our classrooms, two lead teachers and an associate teacher. Additionally, educators are supported by a parent helper each day, though this individual is not counted for ratio.

By maintaining a consistent teaching team with all three educators in the classroom, children are supported should a regular member of the classroom team be absent due to illness or paid time off. DCP also has float educators in the building most days of the week. These individuals support all classrooms and are familiar to the children should they need to support a classroom during the absence of a regular member of the classroom teaching team. Finally, DCP sources substitute teachers, when needed, from our own internal substitute list, ensuring that children are familiar with each of the adults in the room whenever possible. Children develop relationships with these individuals over the course of the year. Substitute teachers covering staff absences also remain in the classroom for the duration of the session, just as the regular educator would.

DCP maintains group size and adult:child ratios that are aligned with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). The following staff-to-child ratios are suggested best practice according to NAEYC. DCP exceeds the NAEYC recommended staff-to-child ratio in all classes:

Age Category	NAEYC Ratio	DCP Ratio	NAEYC Maximum Class Size	DCP Class Size
Toddler	1:6	1:4	12	12
Younger Preschool	1:10	1:5	20	15
Older Preschool	1:10	1:7	20	20*

*\*In some years, the total group size in Older Preschool may exceed the NAEYC recommendation of 20 to accommodate students returning to DCP for a second-year of PreK due to being young to begin Kindergarten. DCP will make every effort to balance our two PreK classes to keep the total group size in each as close to 20 students as possible. In this case, the staff-to-child ratio will always exceed NAEYC recommendations.*

## Primary Caregiving

DCP practices the primary caregiving model in all of our classrooms. This means that a set team of educators is allocated to each classroom and group of children, and this educational team remains consistent throughout your child's day at school, from the time they arrive until the end of their preschool day. In all of our classrooms, we have two lead teachers and an associate teacher. This same educational team will remain with the same group of children for the entire school year.

The primary caregiving model reduces stress and is supportive of the emotional well-being of the children. It enables young children to form a secure attachment with an individual who will support the child and their needs when they are away from their parent or guardian. Maintaining consistency for the children allows them to develop a secure attachment with the educators, achieved by sharing loving and respectful care routines or moments. Care routines and moments may include playful interactions, activities, support during separation, diapering or toileting, and comforting a child after they have hurt themselves.

By maintaining a consistent teaching team with all three educators in the classroom, children are supported should a regular member of the classroom team be absent due to illness or paid time off. Finally, DCP sources substitute teachers, when needed, from our own internal substitute list, ensuring that children are familiar with each of the adults in the room whenever possible. Children develop relationships with these individuals over the course of the year. Substitute teachers covering staff absences also remain in the classroom for the duration of the session, just as the regular educator would.

## Continuity of Care

DCP recognizes the value and importance of continuity of care in early childhood settings. Classroom teaching teams remain with the same group of children for the entire school year.

Due to the way we staff each year, we cannot guarantee that a staff member will remain with a group of children for two school years. We do take continuity of care into consideration when making our staffing plan for the school year, and try to create continuity of care when possible. Currently, we practice continuity of care from our toddler to multi-age older preschool classes, as an associate teacher from the Toddler class in 2022-23 will follow the children as an apprentice lead teacher in Older Preschool in 2023-24.

Additionally, DCP practices continuity of care in our transition practices with age ranges of children. Students at DCP do not transition to the next age group when celebrating a birthday, but rather fall within an age range and transition once a year with their entire peer group to the next age group.

## Equity and Diversity

While diversity may include different faiths, gender roles, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, it is not limited to just these areas. Diversity also includes the different physical, cognitive, and social abilities that one possesses. The Denver Cooperative Preschool values and welcomes the diversity of the community, families, and children we serve and offers classrooms that are equitable and inclusive of all children and inclusive of all children and families. We strive to create a developmentally appropriate classroom environment that not only reflects each child's unique abilities but also encompasses their home culture and experiences.

One of the most important things we do to help ensure our program reflects the diversity of our community and is responsive to their needs, as well as the needs of the children we serve, is to conduct annual self-assessments in various areas. These include Family Engagement, Inclusive Teaching and Learning, Culturally Responsive Practices, Reducing Bias, and Trauma Informed Programming. Other ways we work to ensure that Denver Cooperative Preschool remains sensitive to the diversity of our families and children is we ask families to complete a Developmental Questionnaire and Family Enrollment Form which will give us insights into your families traditions and needs. If you or your family is experiencing trauma or other adversity or challenges and needs the support of a community-based resource or service, we can help you connect with those supports.

Our teachers have also received training on trauma informed practices, as well as training on equity and anti-bias teaching practices. The diversity of our community and society is also reflected in the classroom curriculum and in the materials found in classrooms (e.g. books, music, props). We warmly invite families, staff, and members of our community to share their traditions and customs with the program and the children in the classroom. These stories and experiences will be valued and respected as part of the children's learning experience.

## Confidentiality

As advocates of both students and families in our community, we are dedicated to respecting the privacy of all members of DCP - students, their families, and staff as well. Parents supporting in the classroom may notice, make observations, have thoughts, opinions, or questions about behaviors they observe from children in the classroom. Out of respect for the children in our care and their families, parents are asked to please refrain from asking classroom teachers and staff to engage in private or sensitive conversations regarding children other than their own. Likewise, staff are expected to maintain confidentiality and refrain from discussing children in the class with parents outside of a conference, meeting, or private conversation with that child's parents. If parents have questions or concerns of a sensitive nature that need to be addressed, please feel free to direct them to speak with the Executive Director in the office. It is not appropriate to gossip about a child, ever.

Through employment or committee work for the school, staff and parents may have access to a substantial amount of confidential or personal information regarding donors or prospective donors to the school. We ask that staff and parents refrain from using any confidential or personal information regarding any donor or potential donor to the school other than for the purpose of fundraising for the school. Transferring, sharing, or in any way divulging (directly or indirectly) any such information under any circumstances or by any means to any third party other than other members of the committee specifically involved with soliciting the donor or potential donor in question will not be tolerated.

Employees, volunteers and board members of DCP may be exposed to information which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the policy of DCP that such information must be kept confidential both during and after employment or volunteer service. Staff and volunteers, including board members, are expected to return materials containing sensitive, privileged or confidential information at the time of separation from employment or completion of volunteer service.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this policy and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate action, including removal/dismissal.

## Medication Storage and Administration

In Compliance with the Nurse Practice Act, all prescription and non-prescription medication given in preschool settings require a written authorization from the child's health care provider, as well as parent written consent. This is a child care licensing requirement. The medication authorization forms are available from the Director and must be completed by both the parent and the physician. The instructions from the health care provider must include information regarding the medication, reason for the medication, the specific time of administration, route of medication, and the length of time the medication needs to be given. All medication must be brought in the original labeled container.

Preschool staff members involved in medication administration receive special training and are supervised by a nurse consultant. Preschool staff is not authorized to determine when an "as needed" medication is to be given. Specific instructions are necessary. For children with chronic health conditions, this can be determined in collaboration with the consulting registered nurse.

The use of medication at school for non-emergency purposes is discouraged. Since most medications are available in longer acting forms, parents are encouraged to administer such medication at home. Non-prescription medications are not to be brought to school (including cough drops). In the rare instance that a child needs to take a non-prescription drug at school, it requires the same prescription medication form signed by both the parent and the physician.

Only medications that are in the pharmacy container, with a current prescription label that matches the physician's medical directive will be accepted at school. Any medication dispensed will be done by staff members who have completed medication training required by the state and have been delegated to do so by our school nurse.

Staff members should not receive medication or care plans directly from parents. All medication and supporting documentation needs to be received by the Executive Director. Please direct parents to the office regarding all medications, prescription or over-the-counter.

## Quality Rating, Accreditation, Regulations, Community Partnerships, & Collaborations

### **Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) Rating**

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters - the classroom interactions between teachers and students that boost student learning. The CLASS™ tool...

- focuses on effective teaching
- helps teachers recognize and understand the power of their interactions with students
- works across age levels and subjects

The CLASS™ tool has been shown to increase teacher effectiveness. Students in classrooms with higher CLASS™ scores achieve at higher levels than their peers in classrooms with lower CLASS™ scores.

The CLASS™ assessment is conducted in our Pre-Kindergarten classroom every other year through the Denver Preschool Program (DPP) and teachers receive coaching to help with continuous improvement. Our Pre-Kindergarten teachers most recently participated in the DPP CLASS™ assessment in March, 2018, receiving one of the highest overall scores in the Denver Preschool Program, with an average rating of 17.39. DCP will voluntarily participate in CLASS™ ratings for our Threes-Fours and Twos-Threes classrooms to support educators in professional development and growth.

### **Colorado Shines**

Colorado Shines, Colorado’s quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), is required for licensed childcare providers supporting children prior to entering kindergarten and helps early learning programs offer high-quality care. It offers support and resources to child care providers so they may support each child’s learning and development. Research shows this kind of assistance helps providers improve the quality of their programs. When more young children are ready for school, we all benefit.

- Colorado Shines rates the quality of programs on a scale of 1 to 5.
- At level 1, licensed child care programs must meet Colorado’s licensing requirements for health and safety.
- Programs with higher ratings have strong classroom instruction, training for staff and family engagement to support children’s success.
- Participants who are working on or who have been rated Level 2 are recognized as “Participating in Quality Improvement.”
- Child care programs rated at Levels 3, 4, or 5 are recognized as having achieved “High Quality.”

Denver Cooperative Preschool underwent a Colorado Shines rating in March, 2019 and received a score of 4. Denver Cooperative Preschool is scheduled to undergo a Colorado Shines rating in October, 2023.

### **Denver Preschool Program**

Denver Cooperative Preschool is a proud participant in the Denver Preschool Program (DPP). DPP is a voter approved initiative that provides tuition credit to parents and quality-improvement grants to participating preschools for professional development and program improvement. The DPP program is open and optional to all families living in Denver county to help with preschool tuition the 12 months prior to a student beginning kindergarten (Older Preschool students). For the 2021-22 school year, DPP is also piloting tuition credits for three-year-olds (students enrolled in Young Preschool). Tuition credit amounts are determined by the school’s quality rating, family size, and income.

The DPP tuition credit calculator, application, and other valuable information about the program is available online at [www.dpp.org](http://www.dpp.org). Families also have the option of donating their monthly tuition credit to the preschool their child attends. Should you have any questions about the DPP program and how to sign up, please see the Director.

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children**

Denver Cooperative Preschool is an active member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as well as the Colorado chapter, known as CAEYC. While maintaining this membership, DCP is not accredited by NAEYC at this time.

### **Quality Improvement Plan**

Denver Cooperative Preschool maintains an ongoing quality improvement plan and coordinated strategic plan to ensure that we are providing the best experience possible for our children and families. This includes program improvements, long-range goals, and ongoing development of our staff. A hard copy of our quality improvement plan is always available for viewing in the office by parents and caregivers upon request.

## **Child Care Licensing**

### **Colorado Department of Human Services - Child Care Licensing**

The Colorado Department of Human Services licenses Denver Cooperative Preschool. Our licensing reports, fire inspections and other documentation are conveniently located in the Director’s office for your review. DCP is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. Please feel welcome to address any and all concerns with the Director or Board Member. Parents may also contact: Colorado Department of Human Services 1575 Sherman Street Denver, CO 80203 303-866-5700

To review provider files: 303-866-5088

To file a complaint or report licensing violations: 303-866-3755

To obtain licensing information: 303-866-5958

DCP’s license number is 47126.

The Office of Early Care and Learning at the Department of Human Services sets regulations that maintain standards related to the safety, health, protection, and well-being of all children. To verify compliance with the standards, the Department requires thorough and ongoing annual audits of child care facilities and persons working in the childcare profession. For more information about

licensing, please visit the website at [www.cdhs.state.co.us](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us).

In addition, the Denver Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing Division requires that all employees submit to a background check through the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as well as a background check through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). In addition, a prospective employee must submit to a check through the Central Registry for the Prevention of Child Abuse (TRAILS check). The employee must receive clearance and remain in good standing from both sources to be employed by the school. The school requires satisfactory personal and professional references as well as written proof of education and experience prior to the start of employment.

### Child Abuse Reporting

Under the “Child Protection Act of 1987” (C.R.S. 19-3-301) in the Colorado Children's Code, child care center workers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The law at 19-3-304 states that if a child care worker has “reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department or local law enforcement agency.”

“Abuse” or “child abuse or neglect” means an act or omission in one of the following categories which threatens the health or welfare of a child: skin bruising, bleeding, tissue swelling or death; any cause in which a child is subjected to sexual assault or molestation, sexual exploitation or prostitution; in any case in which a child is in need of services because the child's parents, legal guardian, or custodian fails to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision that a prudent parent would take.

If at any time a staff member reasonably suspects child abuse, it is the responsibility of that staff member to report or to cause a report to be made of this suspicion to the local county department of social or human services at 720-944-3000 or the police department. It is not the staff's role to investigate suspected abuse, only to report it. Persons who make a good faith report are immune from civil and criminal liability. Additionally, laws provide for the protection of the identity of the reporting agency.

A child care worker who fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect commits a class three misdemeanor and will be punished as provided in section 18-1-106, C.R.S. The staff person could also be liable for damages “proximately caused thereby.”

Staff members are not required to notify the Executive Director prior to reporting suspected abuse. The Director serves in a role of support in this area, and is prepared to assist staff with reporting as requested.

### Snow/School Closing/Inclement Weather

When Denver Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, DCP will also be closed. The parent body will be notified via local TV, local News websites, an all school email, and Facebook posts. Since the families and staff of DCP live in many different zip codes throughout metropolitan Denver, the Director might close the school due to dangerous driving conditions during inclement weather, even if Denver Public Schools does not. The Director will use the same communication methods as stated above in this situation to notify the DCP community. In the event DCP closes for other reasons, these same forms of communication will be used.

### Excessively Hot or Cold Weather

Children will be given the opportunity to be outside whenever possible. If the outdoor temperature is excessively hot or cold, children will remain indoors. Sun in Colorado is intense at all temperatures. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen to children prior to coming to school. Staff members are asked to be mindful of sun exposure when taking students outside. Staff members can only apply school sunscreen (Rocky Mountain Sunscreen) to children if a permission form has been signed. Parents may provide their own sunscreen labeled with the child's name.

At all times common sense will be used when determining if it is appropriate for children to play outside. On days when the temperature or wind chill is too low, the children will participate in active learning indoors.

## Food Allergy Protocols at School

At DCP we do everything we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children in our program. In consideration of both life-threatening allergies and food sensitivities that may affect any of our students, DCP has developed the following allergy policies and procedures;

### **If a Child Has a Life-Threatening Allergy**

The parent(s), along with the child's health care provider will need to fill out the appropriate health care plan for your child's allergy. These forms are available through the Executive Director at [mary@dcppplay.org](mailto:mary@dcppplay.org).

The parent(s) will need to provide the medications necessary for DCP to keep on site. Please refer to the guidelines in the "*Medication Storage and Administration*" section of this handbook for further information regarding medications that are to be kept on site for allergies.

The Parent(s) will need to provide a recent photo of their child to accompany their care plan paperwork.

Parent(s) of the child with the allergy or an appointed guardian will be required to check the monthly snack calendar and to also visually check the snack brought in each day that the child is in class to approve of the ingredients.

Optional –The parent(s) along with the child's medical care provider may provide a letter with additional information regarding the nature and any additional details of the allergy that they would like DCP to be aware of. In the case of more severe allergies, it can be helpful for the Executive Director and the classroom teachers to have a list of symptoms that signify an allergic reaction, the child's behaviors surrounding an allergic reaction, and specific, prohibited food ingredients/allergens, including any alternative terminology that may be used to describe the allergen on food packaging. This will be included in the child's file and will be shared with all appropriate DCP staff members so that they may be fully aware of the nature and scope of the child's food allergy/sensitivity.

Distributing a list of suggested pre-packaged foods to parents in the child's class is NOT allowed, as the manufacturing process and ingredients can frequently change. The Executive Director will provide support in sharing food suggestions with the child's class.

Please be aware, there are certain times during the year where families may bring in homemade treats. It is up to you if you would like to share approved recipes for certain homemade items with other parents in your class. You may also provide an alternate snack for your child on these days, if you would prefer. Parents are asked to notify staff members before bringing homemade treats to the class so that accommodations may be made for children with allergies.

Before school begins, our school nurse reviews and authorizes all allergy and school health care plans for our students based on the information provided.

**\*\*No child will be allowed to attend school until the office has received and reviewed the child's completed allergy care plan along with all required medications.**

### **Allergies and Classroom Materials**

DCP classrooms use homemade play dough that does typically contain white flour. If your child has a gluten sensitivity that will also prevent them from being able to play with our usual homemade play dough, please let us know so that we can make the proper arrangements.

### **If a Child Has a Minor Allergy/Food Sensitivity/Personal Dietary Preference - But Does Not Require Medication**

In the case of minor allergies, food sensitivities or personal dietary preferences, the enrollment forms must accurately reflect the nature of the child's sensitivity/allergy/preference.

Because life threatening allergies need to remain a top priority for the health and safety of our students, we cannot guarantee accommodations for minor allergies, food sensitivities or personal dietary preferences unless they are accompanied by care plans and/or medication orders that have been filled out and signed by a healthcare provider.

In some cases, we may require a *Medication Opt Out* form from the family stating that the child's allergy is non-life threatening as well as the family's choice to "opt-out" of keeping any medications on site. This is especially important in cases where the family's

choice not to keep medications at school is contraindicated by your child's health care provider. Alternatively, a signed letter from the family stating the above is also satisfactory.

DCP has a *Medication Opt-Out* form that can be provided for this purpose. Please see the Executive Director if you would like a copy at [mary@dcppplay.org](mailto:mary@dcppplay.org).

No additional paperwork will be necessary other than making sure that the enrollment forms accurately reflect the nature of the child's sensitivity.

The optional step above, in reference to life threatening allergies, also applies to minor food allergies, food sensitivities and personal dietary preferences.

### **Allergies and Snacks at School**

Due to the nature of how snacks are provided at our school, we cannot *guarantee* that DCP is a "nut-free" school, but we do strongly discourage any nuts or nut products from entering the school.

In all cases where a child has a minor allergy, food sensitivity, or personal dietary restrictions and medications are NOT required to be on site, reasonable efforts will be made by the Executive Director to accommodate these needs on the monthly DCP Snack Calendar.

At times, it happens that certain foods are medically necessary for some students. In these cases, those foods will be made available on the monthly DCP Snack Calendar with the exception of those foods that could potentially cause any severe allergic reactions.

In the case of a food allergy, food sensitivity, or voluntary dietary restrictions, parents are *strongly* encouraged to provide a small Tupperware container of a few acceptable snacks labeled with your child's name and class in the event that the snack provided by the parent helper is deemed inappropriate or if the ingredients cannot be verified. Please provide this container to the Executive Director upon the start of school.

In classrooms where there are several life threatening and major allergies, the classroom teachers may elect to set up snack with the assistance of the helping parent. Classroom teachers will be in charge of preparing snack for any children who are specifically providing their own snack due to allergies and/or medical conditions.

### **Celebrations, Food Sharing, and Allergies**

Please be aware, there are certain times during the year where families may bring in homemade treats. It is up to you if you would like to share approved recipes for certain homemade items with other parents in your class. You may also provide an alternate snack for your child on these days if you would prefer. Parents are asked to notify staff members before bringing homemade treats to the class so that accommodations may be made for children with allergies.

The DCP staff will discourage children from sharing food as an additional safety measure while in our care and we will always encourage awareness and acceptance of inclusive practices for the different needs of children.

The health and well-being of our students is a top priority at our preschool. The above list of procedures will help us work together to maintain this priority. Please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director at [mary@dcppplay.org](mailto:mary@dcppplay.org) should you have any questions regarding allergies and how they are handled at DCP.

## **Illness Policy**

Young children frequently become mildly ill. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers can experience an average of six respiratory infections (colds) and can expect one or two gastrointestinal infections (vomiting and/or diarrhea) annually. Deciding whether or not to keep your child at home when they are not feeling well can be difficult. Clearly there are instances when it is necessary for a child to remain at home. Four reasons to keep sick children at home:

1. The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in usual activities, (such as; extreme signs of tiredness, unexplained irritability or persistent crying).
2. The child is unable to manage symptoms independently (i.e. an excessively runny nose, an uncontrollable cough).
3. The child requires more care than program staff is able to provide, without affecting the health and safety of the other

children.

4. The illness is on the list of symptoms or illness for which exclusion is recommended.

Illness	Is Exclusion Necessary?
Diarrhea – frequent, loose or watery stools as compared to child’s normal pattern; not caused by diet or medication	Yes – If child looks are acts ill; if child has diarrhea with fever and behavioral change; if child has diarrhea with vomiting
Fever – With behavioral changes or illness	Yes – until 24 hours after there is no longer a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine*
Coughing – severe, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, rapid or difficulty breathing	Yes - note: children with asthma may be cared for in school with a written health care plan and authorization for medical treatment
Mild respiratory or cold symptoms – stuffy nose with clear drainage, sneezing, mild cough	No – may attend if able to comfortably participate in school activities
Vomiting – two or more episodes of vomiting in the past 24 hours*	Yes – until vomiting resolves or a healthcare provider decides it is not contagious
Rash without a fever	No – body rash without a fever or behavior changes usually does not require exclusion from school
Rash with a fever	Yes – any rash that spreads quickly, has open, weeping wounds and/or is not healing
Strep Throat	Yes – until 24 hours after treatment, has been fever free for 24 hours, and the child is able to participate in usual activities
Conjunctivitis “Pink Eye” – pink color of the eye <i>and</i> thick yellow/green discharge	Yes – until 24 hours after treatment. If your health provider decides not to treat your child, a note is required
Fifth’s Disease	No – child is no longer contagious once symptomatic rash appears
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie Virus)	No – may attend if able to comfortably participate in school activities, unless the child has mouth sores and is drooling

*\*Please note, during times of increased illness, DCP may increase our exclusion period from 24 to 48 hours at the advice of our school nurse, and/or the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services*

Please contact DCP when your child is ill and describe the illness. If a specific diagnosis is made, e.g., strep throat, conjunctivitis, Flu, etc., let the school know so that other families may be notified (without giving the name of the child). The Director and with the assistance of our school nurse will report any of the reportable communicable diseases to the State Department of Public Health and Environment.

Please help us provide a healthy environment and be respectful of children who come to school healthy by keeping your child at home when necessary. If your child sounds or appears “sick” but has seen a doctor and that doctor has evaluated the child as non-contagious and able to go to school, please let the classroom teacher know.

Remember, being exhausted makes a child more susceptible to germs and may even be a sign of impending illness. Also, a child is most contagious right before and the 24 hours after the onset of a symptom.

## Immunization Notification

In accordance with child care licensing, DCP tracks and reports our immunization rates annually. Immunization rates are available in the office. Parents of children who are exempt from immunizations for either personal or medical reasons will be asked to complete the appropriate paperwork.

## Hearing, Vision, and Dental Screenings

DCP documents that each child enrolled in the program has received a hearing, dental, and vision screening within the last twelve months. Parents and caregivers are asked to attest to screening on the emergency form that is completed with enrollment paperwork. DCP maintains resources for vision, hearing, and dental screenings for young children. Parent and caregiver responses to whether children have had screenings are tracked in the office, and the program will reach out to families to offer resources for children who have not received vision, hearing, or dental screening in the last twelve months.

## Medical Home and Insurance

DCP documents that each child enrolled in the program has a medical home (pediatric and family care offices) and insurance coverage. Parents and caregivers are asked to attest that their child has a medical home and medical insurance coverage on the emergency form that is completed with enrollment paperwork. DCP maintains resources for medical homes, pediatric dentists, and insurance coverage for young children and their families. Parent and caregiver responses to whether their child has a medical home and medical insurance coverage are tracked in the office, and the program will reach out to offer resources to families who do not have medical homes or medical insurance for their children or family.

## Safety and Health

Child safety at DCP is of utmost importance. All classrooms are continually monitored visually for identification of children.

At the beginning of class, each child is signed in by the adult that brings that child to school. This adult should notify the classroom teachers if their child will be picked up by someone other than their usual parent or caregiver. Anyone picking a child up must be on the approved pick-up list in the child's file.

The classroom teachers should take attendance and note the number of children present on that day. The classroom teachers should count the children before going outside for play and again when they return to the classroom. Children are also counted during each transition time within a class schedule. At the end of class, classroom teachers should check the sign-in/out sheet to make sure each child is accounted for. DCP will not release any child to an unauthorized person. (See Arrival and Departure Policy). The adult who picks up the child should also remember to sign the child out on the attendance roster at the end of class.

At the close of each school day, the Director or her/his assigned substitute, will review the attendance sheets, walk through the school and confirm with each lead teacher that each child has been picked up by a parent, legal guardian, or other authorized adult.

If a child becomes lost at DCP, each classroom will be immediately alerted and staff members will spread through the school and areas surrounding the school to locate the child. If the child is not found immediately, then 911 will be called as well as the child's parent/guardian. If the child's parent/guardian cannot be reached, then the child's emergency contact will be called. DCP exercises a strict child supervision protocol to prevent such an incident.

Should the tornado sirens sound, the children will be removed from the upstairs classrooms and taken into the basement rooms of the church. Children will also be gathered in the hallway near the basement bathrooms. Staff members will accompany children at all times and will keep the sign-in/out sheets with them. The children will be counted and any missing children will be located. Any necessary emergency medications and supplies will be available.

If there is a fire, the building will be immediately evacuated according to the emergency exit map. Staff members will accompany

children at all times and will keep the sign-in/out sheets with them.

Should the staff be directed by authorities to relocate the children from the school because of an emergency, we will walk to the nearest safe location, as outlined by our emergency plan. In such an event, ALL staff and volunteers, the attendance sheets, appropriate supplies and emergency contacts will be with the children. Parents and caregivers will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so, and pickup will follow the reunification procedure as outlined by our emergency plan.

Per child care licensing, staff members regularly practice safety drills including fire, tornado, lockdown, shelter in place, and active shooter. Licensing requires all drills to be practiced with students to familiarize them with the process and our emergency routes. This is a sensitive topic for many families, and could present a frightening experience for young children. When practicing lockdown, shelter in place, and active shooter drills with children we use developmentally-appropriate language and experiences. We do not refer to these practice drills using the words lockdown, lockout or shooter. We support children in practicing to remain in the classroom, or follow evacuation routes (depending on the drill) and use familiar routines. All staff are trained on and aware of all emergency protocols, and practice quarterly.

When a child becomes ill at school, DCP will contact the parents or legal guardian first, and then (if the parent or legal guardian cannot be reached) the emergency contact. The ill child will be isolated from the rest of the class until the child is picked up. When a child is hurt or injured at school, DCP will administer first aid to the child and fill out an accident report.

Depending on the severity of injury, the child will either be returned to the class or the parent or legal guardian will be called to pick up the child. If a staff member feels that calling 911 is necessary, then an emergency call will be placed to 911 and then the parent or legal guardian will be called. If the parent or legal guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will then be called. Parents and legal guardians are asked to specify a preferred hospital choice on their emergency form. However, please note that in the event of an emergency, the first responders and emergency personnel will make the ultimate determination of where to transport the child.

**There is a no-smoking policy in and around the school building.**

### Firearms

DCP is a gun free zone unless it is required for a parent's profession that they carry a firearm. If this is the case, they are asked to notify the office. Individuals with a concealed carry permit are to be aware that, as a private school, guns are not allowed on the premises.

### Insurance

DCP carries insurance protecting the property of the preschool and the children against negligence. It is assumed that all parents carry medical insurance to cover accidents that happen during school hours.

### Hiring and Recruitment Policy

Denver Cooperative Preschool is a nonprofit, nondenominational preschool that does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families or in its employment practices on the basis of race, color, age, national or ethnic origin, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, disability or handicap, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, and veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state, or local law. Denver Cooperative Preschool's core values include a commitment to equal opportunity and inclusion. All DCP employees and community members are expected to join with and uphold this commitment. All personnel who are responsible for hiring and promoting employees and for the development and implementation of school programs or activities are charged to support this effort and to respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns that are brought to their attention.

Aligned with this anti-discrimination policy, our mission and vision statements, our recruitment and retention policies are as follows:

## Recruitment

Denver Cooperative Preschool aims to recruit and retain highly qualified educators, administrative staff, and directors who are passionate about early childhood and committed to our mission and vision. Open staff and educator positions are posted on our website, the Healthy Child Care Colorado job board, the Buell Early Childhood Leadership Alumni network website, the ECE Colorado page, Chalkbeat, and relevant employment sites (Indeed, Craigslist, etc.) We also strongly encourage word-of-mouth referrals for our open positions and will share openings with the community as many of our educators and staff have come to our community through personal connections.

Our employee recruitment and selection policies outline our process for attracting and selecting job candidates. We are committed to an equal opportunity policy at every stage of the hiring process, and hiring teams aim for a well-planned and discrimination-free hiring process.

Hiring teams are typically comprised of the Executive Director, and may also include the Board President, Board President-Elect, Instructional Coach, current educators, and/or members of the administrative staff, as determined by the Executive Director.

The recruitment and selection process typically follows the steps below:

1. Identify the need for an opening.
2. Determine whether to hire internally, externally, or both.
3. Review the job description and compose a job ad when appropriate.
4. Select appropriate sources (external or internal) for posting the opening.
5. Decide on the selection stages and possible timeframe.
6. Review submitted resumes as well as those kept on file.
7. Shortlist applications/resumes.
8. Proceed through the selection stages. Typical selection stages include:
  - a. Resume screening
  - b. Phone Screening
  - c. In-person interview
  - d. Background check
  - e. Working interview
9. Select the most suitable candidate
10. Make an official offer
11. Inform all candidates who interviewed and were not chosen that they were not selected for the position.

Steps in the hiring process may overlap, and directors may add or remove steps as appropriate.

## Retention

DCP believes strongly that our staff is our greatest resource and works diligently to retain those employed by the school. Aligned with our mission and vision statement, the following include elements of our retention strategy:

- Competitive compensation, paid in salary (9 or 12-month payment option available)
- Full benefits package offered to employees, including:
  - Paid holidays
  - Paid time off (sick, vacation, personal)
  - Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance
  - Life Insurance
  - Disability Insurance
  - Retirement plan with employer match
  - Employee Child Discount
- Ongoing staff-wide professional development
- Individual professional development budget for all employees, renewed annually
- Holiday bonuses
- Performance-based end-of-year bonus

- Staff representation on the Board of Directors

## Translators and Interpreters

Denver Cooperative Preschool understands that some families speak languages other than English in the home, and we are sensitive to those needs. Should a family require it, Denver Cooperative Preschool will provide translated versions of our parent handbook and all registration and enrollment forms.

Should the need for an interpreter during a parent meeting or conference arise, Denver Cooperative Preschool will make every effort to assist families with interpreter resources. Interpreter services may be provided in person or over-the-phone, depending on requirements and availability. Families who speak languages other than English are also welcome to bring their own interpreter to any preschool functions, conferences, or phone calls.

The Denver Cooperative Preschool will fund any need for interpreters or translated documents that may arise at no cost to the family.

## Home Language Policy

DCP believes in honoring a child's home language whenever possible. Should more than 50% of children in any given class speak a language other than English at home, DCP will hire at least one bilingual educator for the room who is fluent in the dominant language.

## Staff Gifts

We have a tradition at DCP of collecting gifts for our staff to show appreciation for all that they do for our children and our community throughout the year. The primary goal is to convey gratitude in ways that are individually meaningful for each family. DCP is an inclusive school that prides itself on appreciating the diversity of its school community. Anything from a handmade card, homemade or store-bought item, or gift certificates from a single family to a group collaboration is greatly appreciated.

In advance of the winter break and end of school year, your class liaison will share a staff wish list to give families staff preferences and a starting point for gift giving. As a community we are very intentional about creating an environment centered on celebrating young children and families. We ask that gifts also embrace this philosophy and kindly request that families refrain from gifts of alcohol, marijuana or other items in conflict with this cultivated environment.

## Use of DCP Classroom Teachers or DCP Staff as Babysitters, Caregivers or Advisors

Should parents, family members or friends of DCP students (the "Requesting Party") request that a DCP classroom teacher or DCP staff member provide any sort of care, supervision, guidance or activity for a child or children outside of the DCP standard classroom hours established for that child or children, and that DCP classroom teacher or staff member agrees to the request, such an arrangement (the "Arrangement") will be an independent contractor relationship between the classroom teacher or staff member and the Requesting Party. During any Arrangement between the Requesting Party and a DCP classroom teacher or staff member, that classroom teacher or staff member is acting as an independent contractor and not as an employee, agent or representative of DCP. Any manner, method, and means used by the classroom teacher or staff member to perform babysitting, supervision or other guidance or activity during the Arrangement shall be under the classroom teacher or staff member's sole discretion and control, and in the capacity as an independent contractor. DCP is not responsible for the classroom teacher or staff member's conduct during any such Arrangement and the Requesting Party assumes all risk associated with the Arrangement, including, but not limited to, property damage, and physical or mental injury to any person or animal. DCP does not necessarily condone or recommend staff members as babysitters.

