

Lincoln Cooperative Preschool



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1. The Lincoln Cooperative Preschool Community Philosophy

Welcome to the Lincoln Cooperative Preschool Community!

The Lincoln Cooperative Preschool is a community of parents, guardians, teachers, and children. As adults in this community, we collectively strive to partake in our children's earliest school experiences. We nurture the children's social, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth so that they will enter kindergarten confident and well adjusted. The Preschool is a place for play and discovery, for new awareness of self and others, for non-competitive and non-judgmental relationships, for developing new abilities, and for just plain fun.

At LCPS we strive to support the healthy development and growth of children.

We promote:

- a curiosity and love of learning;
- respect for self and others;
- playfulness, independence and responsibility;
- a sense of belonging and community.

The Lincoln Cooperative Preschool is a delightful place for children to begin their school years. As a member of a cooperative preschool you and your family are partnering in your child's experience. We provide a loving atmosphere where children are valued, safe, nurtured and respected.

2. Staff & Administration

Staff

The Preschool currently enrolls a maximum of fourteen children each morning and afternoon. We employ one head teacher to create the school's curriculum and direct the day-to-day flow of the preschool. She is accompanied daily by a teacher assistant. Parents are welcome to volunteer in the space at any time.

Board of Directors

Lincoln Cooperative Preschool is a parent-run cooperative. That means that member families own and operate the school, carrying out maintenance, cleaning, classroom helping, fundraising, hiring of staff, and anything else the school may require to run smoothly. At the Annual Meeting each Spring, current and newly enrolled members elect a three to five-member board of directors to carry out the administration of the preschool for the coming year. They also serve as the scholarship committee. All board members are parents of children enrolled in the school for the year during which they are to serve. Families with a parent serving on the Board as one of the three main officer positions listed below will not be assigned an additional job, and tuition for one session will be waived for their child.

The board consists of three main officers—President, Treasurer and Job Coordinator. Two additional at-large members may serve on the board per the 2016 by-laws. Responsibilities may be delegated to at-large members based on skills, experience and interest of the members. The board conducts monthly meetings to discuss all necessary business. Parents are always welcome to attend.

Board Positions:

- **President**: Presides over meetings and oversees all preschool business. Assists staff and families with ongoing day-to-day operations. Assists teacher with enrollment process. The president is the primary contact to the preschool teachers. The president keeps all preschool materials and records organized and current. Works with treasurer to grant tuition assistance and to prepare annual budget and projected budget. President represents the preschool at town meeting, and prepares documents for town meeting. President manages any personnel issues that may arise.
- **Treasurer**: Liaison between preschool and accountant, and has access to QuickBooks. Responsible for communicating with families when past due tuition is owed to the preschool. Sends all State checks and fundraiser money to the bookkeeper. Pays the bookkeeper. Treasurer works with the President to prepare the annual preschool budget. Treasurer is responsible for keeping a record of each family's fundraising throughout the year. Treasurer will communicate with each family about fundraising progress two times a year, in the mailbox and/or via email.
- **Job Coordinator**: Oversees the preschool job system (Building and Grounds, Fundraising, Operations: website, snack schedules, grants) and reports back to Board about their activities. The Job Coordinator creates the calendar for all work days at the

beginning of each year. The Job Coordinator ensures and communicates with families to ensure that all jobs are completed to the satisfaction of the preschool community.

- Secretary duties (to be performed by at-large board member or main board members): Records minutes during all meetings, writes monthly update. Secretary is responsible for emailing notes/minutes from every meeting (Board and All-family) to the preschool community.

3. Member Responsibilities

Participation in Running the Preschool

Each family must:

- Sign up for and carrying out the responsibility of a job (board or job),
- Participate in work parties,
- Bring snacks to the classroom on designated days (usually 2-6 times during the academic year per family) and
- Raise a minimum of \$200 annually in fundraisers organized by the fundraising committee

Families with more than one child at the school are asked to pay tuition for each child, but are treated the same as families with a single child at the school when it comes to the above responsibilities. Details about each are below.

Jobs

Every family is required to sign up for and carry out the responsibilities of a particular job. Jobs include serving on the board or a specific job assignment. Jobs vary greatly, so you can choose one that best fits your strengths. Please talk with the Job Coordinator or President if you need to sign up for or change your job assignment.

- Buildings and Grounds: Organizes annual work days, supervises and maintains records of maintenance projects, carries out or supervises upkeep of building equipment (i.e. regular cleaning of furnace filter, septic cleanout, etc.) tracks building needs and reports on necessary upcoming maintenance projects (short-term and long-term).
- Fundraising Jobs: Oversees specific fundraising events: Wreath sale, Spaghetti Dinner, Seed sale, Mountain Magic Run.
- Operations Jobs: Works to ensure the daily operations of the preschool function - Website, Snack & Cleaning Coordinator, Grant Researcher/Writer.

Fundraising

Fundraising is one of the keys to keeping the Preschool's tuition costs down. All families are required to participate in fundraising activities, as directed by the Board. Each family is

responsible for raising a minimum of \$200 in the fundraisers. If you do not meet this minimum or know you do not want to fundraise you can buy out the remaining amount.

Work Parties

Every year, in late summer and again in spring, the Preschool holds a Work Party, during which member families complete some of the larger maintenance projects needed at the Preschool. Each family is asked to send at least one adult to the “work” portion of the day, which usually lasts for about two to three hours. It’s a great time to meet other families and to do the important projects that our aging building requires.

If your family is unable to attend the Work Party, you must contact the Buildings and Grounds Committee to figure out a project for you to complete at another time. Each family is responsible for approximately 4 hours of work/academic year. A buy-out is available for \$10/hour of work.

Snacks

Depending on enrollment, snack responsibilities consist of bringing in snack for your child’s class between 2-6 times/academic year. On your Snack days, please bring at least 14 portions of a healthy, low-sugar snack to school in the morning. Unless we are celebrating a special occasion and you have discussed it with our teacher, we ask that you do not bring candy as part of snack time.

You will be notified before the start of preschool of food allergies of enrolled children. Parents have the right to keep food allergy information confidential and anonymous or to choose to share that information with all the parents since they are the snack providers. Should one of the children suffer from a peanut allergy, you must take extreme caution in choosing appropriate snack foods. **Accidental eating of peanuts or peanut products by someone with a peanut allergy can be fatal.** Please carefully check labels of snack foods to ensure that they contain no peanuts or peanut oil. There is a \$10 restocking fee if you neglect to bring a snack.

Snack suggestions:

Beverages

100% fruit juices (*Apple & Eve, Juicy Juice and other brands—no “Juice cocktails” or punch. Please avoid grape juice, as it stains*)
Milk
Water (*This is what children mostly drink at school, out of the tap. It’s free and healthy!*)
Cider

Foods

mini bagels & cream cheese (or ¼ bagels)
banana bread, zucchini bread, etc.
pretzels
rice cakes (with cream cheese & raisins)
fresh veggie chunks with ranch dressing dip
crackers and cheese
fresh fruits (watermelon, orange slices, apple)
popcorn (possible toppings—Parmesan, seasoning, cinnamon...)
muffins
raisins, other dried fruit
“Ants on a log” (celery pieces filled with cream cheese or peanut butter, dotted with raisins)
Yogurt with granola or wheat germ

Birthdays and holidays are special events at the Preschool and we welcome parents to send special snacks to celebrate them. There will be sign-up sheets at school for holiday party snacks and treats.

All-School Meetings

Mandatory all-school meetings will be held 1-2 times during the year. The May meeting includes parents of children enrolled for the coming year, so they can meet and elect a board of directors for the coming year, set tuition rates, and conduct all other necessary business.

4. Day-to-day Information

Hours of Operation

The Preschool is in session Monday through Friday. There is a morning and a full day session. The morning session runs from 8:00-11:30 a.m. and the full day session from 8:00-3:00 p.m. You may send your child as many days a week as you wish, depending on space availability and in accordance with our enrollment policy. Unless you have arranged special care for your child, please drop them off no earlier than 7:50 and pick up promptly at 11:30 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. We follow the Northeast Supervisory Union School for holidays, conferences, in-service days, and snow days. You will receive a copy of this calendar.

Snow Days

In the event of snow or foul weather, listen to the following radio stations for information about Lincoln Community School: WFAD 1490 AM, K101 FM, WDEV 96.1 FM. Also local TV stations list school closings. Our school district is the Addison Northeast Supervisory Union. If the Lincoln Community School is closed, we are closed. If LCS opens one or two hours late, we do so as well.

Notices

Please make a habit of checking notices in the Preschool mudroom each time you come to school to keep up-to-date on preschool happenings. Also, check your **mailbox** and your child's cubby for take-home materials. If someone else drops off and picks up your child, ask them to be a messenger for you, or make a point of stopping by after work so you don't miss important information.

Appropriate Clothing

Expect that the children will take part in plenty of active indoor and outdoor play and messy projects and dress them accordingly. Please bring an extra set of clothes to keep at school, and label each piece with your child's name. Check this clothing periodically for size and appropriateness to the season.

Assume that the children will go outside to play each day, regardless of weather, and send appropriate outerwear and footwear. If your child will stay for the afternoon, send plenty of spare clothing, especially in winter and spring.

General Rules for Kids

We have found that a few simple rules help children, as well as parents, create a safe and cooperative environment.

- No running in school building.
- No climbing on the furniture.
- No chewing gum or candy in the classroom.
- Everyone must wash hands upon arrival at school, after using the bathroom, and before snack.
- No weapons or weapons play at school, except when teachers give children permission for hunting play. Small diameter sticks are not safe for outdoor play, large wood pieces may be used for outdoor play props and sculpting.
- We neither encourage nor discourage children to bring personal toys from home. Toys from home are allowed if your child is willing to share the toy with all other preschoolers or keep the toy in his or her cubby at preschool (if sharing is too hard.).
- The parking/gravel area is off limits to children's play at all times.
- No personal sleds or bikes at school. School will provide sleds.

Illnesses & Injuries

Please keep your child home with a severe cold or after any fever, vomiting or diarrhea in the previous twenty-four hours. Notify your child's teacher if your child becomes ill with a contagious disease as soon as possible. All medical information is strictly confidential, parents subbing or aiding at the school are required to maintain confidentiality as well. If your child has any allergies, please notify the teacher at registration time. In case of a lice outbreak the preschool has a no nit policy.

Very basic first aid (Band-Aids, icepacks) will be given to your child as required. For more serious injuries, the teacher will contact you or the emergency contact person on your registration form and contact emergency medical support if necessary.

5. Beginning Preschool – Notes from the teachers

Hours

Morning preschool runs from 8:00 to 11:30. Afternoon preschool is from 11:30 to 3:00. Generally, around 7:50 is a good time for starting arrivals, but if you occasionally need to come earlier that's fine. If you need to come earlier routinely, please let me know and we can discuss it. Please try to be prompt at pick up time, especially in the late afternoon, because we still have work to do preparing for the next day and cleaning the school. If you are running late at the end of the day please try to give us a call and let us know when you expect to arrive. Parents are welcome to hang out and visit and watch their children play outside when they come for pick up but we assume you are in charge of your child once you have arrived.

School Bus

We do offer afterschool bus service from the preschool on the local school district buses. Children are picked up in the “small” bus at the preschool. They go across the street to the elementary school and they may be switched to a bigger bus depending on which bus route they live on. Children who are riding the bus home, to a friend’s house, or another childcare location get picked up by the bus at the preschool at about 2:55. You can contact me if you want to try to find out what time your child would arrive home from the bus, I will ask the bus driver for that information. An adult or teen babysitter needs to be outside to meet the child when they get off the bus. The bus drivers will not drop off a child at a house with no one home. Occasionally the small bus is over full and we are told that preschoolers cannot ride for part of the year. Ridership changes with the local sports seasons. **If your child is going to ride the bus you need to sign in on the BUS RIDERS sheet each day.**

Toilet Training

Children are supposed to be toilet trained before they start school. But, some children just aren't all there yet. It is fine for children to come to school wearing a waterproof "pull-up" pant. Send spares too! Let me know if this is an area of "growth" so we can be working on it too and coordinating our strategies. I let all children know that accidents are no big deal! We change into dry clothes and get back to play. It helps some children's motivation to see their peers using a toilet. Remember SPARE CLOTHES.....

What to Bring

A camera, if you want, for that first day at school picture. **Everyone needs to bring a change of clothes, or two, in a labeled plastic bag** which will stay in your child’s cubby. This is very important because everyone has spills and other mishaps; it is also a regulations requirement. We always have spare clothes available but some children are particular about having their own clothing. Many children keep slippers in their cubbies which are nice when it gets wet and muddy outside or snowy. Children are required by fire codes to have shoes or slippers on their feet in cold weather to facilitate fast exits in the snow. We do go outside most everyday, except when it's raining hard, so please send outerwear. Toys from home are neither encouraged nor

discouraged. Children are asked to share toys from home if they want to bring them in or they can choose to keep them in their cubby so they have the security of their presence without the problems of sharing. Weapon toys and toys that make noises are not permitted.

Arrival Time

I love it when children arrive close to the 8:00 start time and get settled in for the day. Arriving very late routinely, for clean up time for instance, instead of playing time, is not so fun! The first hour of school is an unstructured time which is important for many reasons, particularly, making friends and developing a relationship with the teachers through one on one or small group interactions. Everybody is late sometimes, and it is not a problem, but the goal is to get to school on time. It's good practice for elementary school years too. Try to get in an earlier routine the week before school starts, unless you have one of those children who are up at 5:30 every morning!

Separation Anxiety

This is common and normal at this age. Your child might love going to school (especially once they give it a try), but having to choose between their parent and school... well, wouldn't you expect trouble with that choice? It really helps children to have clear expectations. If you say you will read them a story and then you will be leaving, please try to follow through. Some children will try many strategies to get parents to keep staying a little longer and that actually makes it much harder for the child in the long run. In general, they tend to get more upset the longer you stay, instead of less upset. Some children will not begin making friends, playing, or interacting with the teachers while their parent is still there. We have many strategies for helping children get settled in so let us know if you need help with the morning goodbye and if you are ready to see your child at "the waving window". Also, watch out for this common scenario... you say a nice happy goodbye then hang out talking with other parents for awhile and then you head out the door. Suddenly we hear "I didn't get my goodbye hug!" They are watching you! Separation problems can crop up at different times of the year for children and be affected by different things happening in their lives, new baby, sibling home sick, parent was away for a few days, family stress, overly tired, etc. In my experience, the only children who stay upset are the ones coming down with an illness. I've had parents leave me with their screaming child and call when they get home, they are settled down and doing fine by then, usually within 1 -3 minutes. Please feel free to call and get reassured! Once they know they will be saying goodbye and staying at school they don't feel the need to get upset to show their parent how much they love them and they see that this is a safe place if their parent appears confident about leaving them at school.

Parents

Parents are welcome always. If you want to stop in and have lunch with your child, starting about 11:50-12:00, feel free. Join us for field trips, parties, or come early to play outside with children. Just be aware of separation anxiety and notice if your visiting is making it harder for your child, because that sometimes happens. Watch for postings of specific things you might want to do with us. Let me know if you have an activity, project, talent, or any idea you would like to share with the children at school!

Afternoon Meals and Rest Time

Morning snack is provided at school each day. **If your child stays for the afternoon you should send their lunch food in a lunch box/bag with them in the morning, which gets put into the refrigerator on arrival.** We are willing and able to heat up food you send for lunch. Food and drinks can be in glass containers as well as plastic. You can send silverware but you don't need to as we have it at school. The children usually don't finish all of their food at lunch and we bring it back out for an afternoon snack near the end of the day. If your child has finished all of their food then we will provide snack food.

A labeled bag with a blanket from home for rest time can be kept in your child's cubby if they want one, and most children do. We will provide a rest mat and fitted sheet. Children are not required to sleep and most of the children don't. Children are given quiet activities to do and we actually call it "Quiet Time" instead of rest time. Quiet time is usually for 20-30 mins. Children who fall asleep are allowed to stay asleep until they wake up or get woken up before the end of the day.

Miscellaneous

Please try to let a teacher know if your child has not eaten breakfast, or ate little, if your child slept very poorly, has been ill, or had a challenging morning for any reason. Please check the parent handbook or call to find out if you are unsure if an illness your child has means they should stay home.

There will be a bus flag on the preschool fence if the bus has not come yet. If the flag is up then please try to park on the far side of the parking lot (away from the fence) so the bus has room to pull in and back up.

Please notify a teacher if there are any changes in your address, phone numbers, or emergency contact information. ASAP!

Call or e-mail Kerry if you have questions! 453-5595 Home or 453-3113 preschool, kerrym@gmavt.net or preschool@gmavt.net

6. A Typical Day

We follow a daily schedule at the preschool but time flexibility is the norm. The day begins with a fifty minute, or more, free play time. There are optional special activities such as cooking muffins or making and playing with play dough, which children may participate in as long as they wish. Children have free access to a wide range of art materials, toys, puzzles, books, games, dress-up clothes, and hands-on exploratory materials. Children also pick their “job” for the day in the morning at this time.

After our morning playtime, we all clean up together. Following clean up, children look at books together for a short period, and then we begin “moving time” with a movement and/or music activity together. This may be dancing to music with scarves, circle songs and games, yoga, stretching, acting out stories, pretending to be different animals to music, etc... We then sit down for circle time. Circle time is for talking together, singing, jokes, finger plays, learning centered on themes, and a time to let children know about activities available at the tables after circle time. The children then move to our project tables for age-appropriate arts and crafts exploration, cooking, or science, math, and nature activities. Children are allowed to decide when they are “done” with their work at the table. Children are allowed to work at more than one area each day.

Next comes the ever-popular snack time! The children do their chosen jobs of passing out plates and glasses and serving food. After snack time we settle into the pillows for story time which usually lasts 20 minutes to a half hour. Our morning ends outdoors playing for the last half hour. On very rainy days and cold days we setup an indoor playground with special equipment kept upstairs. We have seasonal parties, field trips, and special event days such as an indoor pool party and pajama day.

In the afternoon, we continue to play outside a little longer then come inside for lunch. After lunch children have 45-60 minutes of free play time, clean up again, then get out rest mats for a half hour “quiet time”. After quiet time children have a snack and then have a choice of activities. We end the day with another story time and outside play.

7. Tuition Information

Tuition is based on “sessions”. Sessions are ½ days. The session rate is \$85/session for sessions beyond the first three. The first three sessions an eligible child attends are paid for by the State’s Public Preschool funding, and thus charged a different rate (currently \$108/session) to match the funding amount (currently \$3092 per child), which is intended to cover 10 hours of preschool attendance each week for the school year. Ten hours is about 1.5 days (3 sessions) at our school. This disparity in tuition rates is intended to both meet the goals of the Public Preschool funding program and to keep out-of-pocket costs to families low.

Example:

If your child is enrolled in 4 session/week (i.e. 2 full days), your tuition payment will be \$85/month, as the first three sessions (\$324 worth) are covered by the State funding. (note: families must apply for State funding each year; Kerry will provide paperwork during registration.)

Families will receive an emailed statement each month from the preschool’s bookkeeper, Davis Associates Business and Tax Services. Each month’s payment, from September through June, is due on the date indicated on the invoice. You are required to pay each month in full regardless of absences caused by such things as personal vacations, illnesses, or public holidays.

Tuition is due to the preschool’s bookkeeper, address below, however **tuition checks should be made out to Lincoln Cooperative Preschool**. *Please indicate on your check what payment is for (for example, “January tuition”).*

Tuition checks should be mailed to:

Lincoln Cooperative Preschool
c/o Beth Davis
Davis Associates Business & Tax Services
PO Box 688
Middlebury, VT 05753

For specific account information, please contact Beth Davis, (802) 388-6603 or mbeth.davis@gmail.com, or her assistant: Kitty Rogers, info@mbdavistaxes.com.

If you alter your child’s attendance schedule, be sure to inform the Treasurer. If you sign up for a preschool or afternoon slot and later decide to drop it, please give one month’s notice before you drop. We need time to advertise the space.

Late Payments

Members are required to pay their bills on a timely basis. If an invoice is over 30 days due, you may receive a reminder notice from the Preschool Board. If a family is having difficulty paying their preschool tuition, they can request a meeting with the President and/or Treasurer to discuss a payment plan. First, the group will make sure that the family has explored all available resources for payment assistance (see below; including our tuition assistance fund). Payment

plans may include partial payments, a work option, a reduction in session enrollment, or a combination of any of these. Whatever the agreement is, it will be notarized and treated as a legal agreement.

If a family with delinquent payments is not reachable by phone or email, the board will send a letter alerting the family that they have 30 days to make a plan with the Board. If no agreement is reached after 30 days, the child's sessions will be reduced to 3 sessions or 1.5 days per week.

We require that families contact the organizations listed below **before** requesting financial assistance from the preschool. You should contact these organizations in the spring, prior to the start of the school year. Please note their eligibility requirements.

- Early Essential Education (“Triple E”) in Bristol often assists families with tuition. “Triple E” can be accessed based on the financial needs of the family as well as special needs of a child. The best way to qualify for this funding is to get your child screened by EEE in the spring when they advertise screenings in different towns. If you have missed the screenings then contact them as soon as possible at 453-3674.
- Mary Johnson Children’s Center (MJCC) Subsidized tuition funding is available from the state Child Development Division CDD. The local contact person to get information and sign up for that funding is Jane Reilly at the MJCC, 388-4304. There are eligibility requirements for this funding, the state requires that parents in the home be **employed** to qualify for assistance. Exceptions might be a parent who is disabled or is attending school.

If you feel that your individual situation is unique please feel free to contact both of these organizations.

Tuition Assistance from the Preschool

When fiscally possible, tuition assistance from LCP is available to any family demonstrating a need for financial assistance. The money for tuition assistance is raised during the preschool fundraisers and is requested from the town of Lincoln at the March town meeting. The money received is applied to the following school year. We base this amount on the need of the previous year. If you are denied assistance from the above organizations, you may apply for tuition assistance through the school. The Tuition assistance committee* may require written proof of denial before considering your tuition assistance application.

Applications are available from the Treasurer, President, at the preschool and for download on our web site. Available funds will be evenly distributed among qualified applicants, regardless of individual schedules or incomes**. As the preschool is a cooperative, we reserve the right to deny tuition assistance money to any family not actively participating in required cooperative tasks.

* The Tuition assistance committee is made up of current board members

**In school years when there are limited funds, tuition assistance will be awarded to only those most in need. The tuition assistance committee will review all applications and determine which families will receive awards. We do not foresee this as a problem but must consider the possibility.

8. Enrollment Policy

Once you have decided to enroll your child at LCP we will work with you to ensure a smooth transition. The following is our enrollment policy for the preschool to ensure equitable enrollment procedures during years of heavy enrollment:

- a) **ENROLLMENT PERIOD FOR CURRENT AND NEW STUDENTS (BEGINS LAST MONDAY IN FEBRUARY AND END 2ND MONDAY IN MARCH)**: By the first of February, application forms will be distributed to families with children currently enrolled and new families who wish to enroll their children in the preschool for the following year.
- b) Application forms shall be submitted to the **Enrollment Committee**, consisting of the preschool's Board and Teachers, and one other graduating member parent to be selected by the President. (The other member shall be selected by taking volunteers, then choosing a name out of a hat). At least three out of five members must be present to call a meeting of the Enrollment Committee.
- c) The **deadline** for submitting application forms to the Enrollment Committee shall be the **second Monday in March**.
- d) The Enrollment Committee shall meet to review application forms and create a **preliminary schedule** with names of returning students and new students based on the following **enrollment criteria**, as applicable (ranked in order of importance):
 - i) Favorable past parental participation in school membership responsibilities
 - ii) Lincoln resident
 - iii) Sibling attended the preschool previously
 - iv) Past record of paying tuition in a timely manner without reminders
 - v) Other special circumstances will be considered if brought to our attention
- e) The Enrollment Committee shall post the **preliminary schedule** at the Preschool by the **3rd Monday in March**
- f) If any slots remain after each child has received two days of instruction, the Enrollment Committee will conduct a lottery for any **returning** students who desire a 3rd day of instruction.
- g) If any slots still remain, the Enrollment Committee will then conduct a lottery for **new** students who desire a 3rd day of instruction.
- h) Should any slots remain, the Enrollment Committee will again conduct lotteries for any **returning** students desiring a 4th day of instruction. And so on.
- i) A **child turning three in the middle of the school year** may enter the Preschool after their third birthday if space is available. (These children would have to spend three years in Preschool, as the cut off for Kindergarten is September 1.) It is suggested that parents submit an application to the Enrollment Committee by the **second Monday in March** and get on the **wish list** to make this possible.
- j) In early March the preschool will conduct an **open house**, inviting new preschool students (children who will turn three before September 1) and their families to become acquainted with the Preschool.

9. Lincoln Cooperative Preschool History

Lincoln Cooperative Preschool is one of the oldest parent-run, cooperative preschools in Vermont. It began in 1972 like so many good ideas, bantered about among friends concerned about the lack of both preschool and kindergarten in Lincoln. In the spring of 1972, a group of Lincoln parents met with school superintendent Keith Hall to discuss the need for a kindergarten. The following spring, they formed the Lincoln Cooperative Preschool, and that fall, thirteen five-year-olds attended the school's first class in the basement of Burnham Hall.

In 1974, parents expanded the program to include an afternoon class for three- and four-year-olds. Both kindergarten and preschool classes continued to meet in Burnham Hall through the spring of 1977—a challenging situation, since the school had to be completely dismantled each weekend so the space could be used for other town functions.

By September of 1977, parents had relocated the school to the Downingsville School, an old, one-room schoolhouse. The following March, at the Lincoln Town Meeting, voters defeated a proposal supported by the Preschool to establish a public kindergarten. With this option eliminated, the Preschool Board adopted as one of its goals the construction of their own schoolhouse.

Thus began one of Lincoln's most creative and successful grassroots fundraising efforts. Spurred on by the offer of an anonymous donor to match any funds raised, parents orchestrated pizza nights in the basement of Burnham Hall. Townspeople dropped by on their way home from work and ordered pizzas. Preschool parents, tutored by parent Mary Isham, the original owner of Cubbers Pizzeria, not only tossed the dough and made the pizzas, but delivered them as well. Pizza by pizza, and with many other fundraisers (like the annual fall craft fair) along the way, parents raised \$20,000, which, when matched, purchased the building supplies for the new schoolhouse.

They were still a long way and many more generous donations away from having a finished building. Mary Gemignani, the Preschool's teacher from 1974-1984, and her husband John, donated a piece of their land for the school to be built on, in a prime location opposite the Lincoln Community School. The preschool hosted a design competition to come up with a pleasing and functional layout for the building, won by John Gemignani. Parents coaxed businesses to donate fixtures and appliances, and townspeople donated all the labor for erecting the building.

All, that is, except for the demolition expert called in to blast a basement hole into solid bedrock. But even then, community spirit prevailed, as preschool dads learned how to set charges, cover them with dirt and heavy metal mesh, and duck while the rocks flew.

By 1979, the preschool building was complete. Parents continued to fundraise to equip the inside of the building, most memorably hosting monthly coffeehouses showcasing some of Lincoln's fine musical talent. In 1986, publicly funded kindergarten classes began at the Lincoln Community School. Since that time, the Preschool has offered morning classes four days a week for Lincoln's three- and four-year olds.

In spring of 2004, the membership decided to undertake the challenge of fundraising and building a larger welcome room for the school. In just over one year's time, a very ambitious group of parents raised funds, made plans, and through a lot of extra effort, built a bigger welcome room that opened in the fall of 2005.

In 2005, kindergarten in Lincoln changed to full days Monday through Thursday, and a half-day on Fridays. This changed our afternoon program to be comprised of mostly preschoolers, with kindergarteners joining only on Friday afternoons.

In 2013 the kindergarten changed to full day Monday through Friday.

Within the community-forged framework of its permanent structure, the Preschool continues to evolve, defined and illuminated by the work and play of the parents and children involved each year.

Lincoln Cooperative Preschool Teachers

Abi Sessions 1973-1975

Mary Gemignani 1975-1985

Dwight Irish 1985-1986

Jane Buck 1986-1989

Karen Manell 1989-1990

Laura Hannah 1990-1994

Nancy Stevens 1994-1997

Kerry Malloy 1997-present