



FORT HUNT PRESCHOOL, A COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY

Why choose our parent cooperative preschool?

At Fort Hunt Preschool, parents and teachers work together to create a caring and supportive community because we believe that children learn best in a safe, nurturing environment, supported by a cooperative partnership of parents and teachers.

As a member of our cooperative community, you will:

- Be actively involved in your child's education;
- Make the transition from home to school easier for both you and your child because you take part in it;
- Gain a greater understanding of your child by sharing his/her classroom experiences;
- Learn alongside your child from our experienced teachers and through our parent education program;
- Share your expertise, skills, and talents to support and enhance the school for the benefit of all;
- Develop life-long connections and friendships for you and your child; and
- Demonstrate to your child the value of and your commitment to education by your active participation in his/her earliest education.

What are my responsibilities as a member of FHP's cooperative?

Parent Helping:

Each family is required to "Parent Help" in the classroom on a rotating basis (usually 1 to 2 times a month, depending on class size). As "Parent Helper" you help the teacher supervise the children inside and outside, assist with projects and activities, provide and serve snack, and clean up after school. You will have the opportunity to observe and interact with your child in the classroom and learn from our teachers while having fun with the children. On the day you Parent Help, your child is the "Kid Helper", with special responsibilities like being the line leader, ringing the bell, and helping with the snack. Helping in the classroom is usually a favorite with both parent and child!

School Job:

Each family is assigned a school job for the school year. School jobs, each of which is essential to the smooth running of FHP, cover a wide range of positions and skill sets. After joining our cooperative, families receive a list of job descriptions (e.g., class parent, art assistant, fundraising assistant). Each family provides job preferences to our Vice President/Family Liaison, who matches family preferences, interests, and skill sets with available school jobs.



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Service Hours:

Each family participates in school fundraising and maintenance by working 10 service hours per year. Service hours must include assisting at one maintenance day to maintain and better our school building and grounds, assisting at one community building/fundraising event, and assisting at classroom opening or closing. Service hours are usually a family event, with parents and children participating. FHP families have the option to buy out of 4 service hours by paying a set fee.

Parent Education:

Each parent helper is required to complete 4 hours of training related to the development and safety of preschool children each school year (between June 1 and May 31) by our Virginia Department of Social Services license. As a parent cooperative, we consider parent education part of our mission and therefore offer opportunities for meaningful training at FHP, in addition to apprising members of worthwhile opportunities throughout the greater community. FHP usually offers two on-site trainings a year, one at our Fall All School Meeting and one in the spring, as well as on-site CPR/1st Aid Certification.

Parent Helper Requirements:

Each Parent Helper is required to pass two background checks (Finger Print Based Criminal Background Check and the Virginia Department of Social Services Central Registry Search) and execute a Sworn Statement before assisting in the classroom. The background checks (finger print, central registry, and sworn statement) are valid for 5 years. Each Parent Helper also must attend New Family Orientation (first year only), obtain CPR/1st Aid Certification, and complete an online training in the recognition of child abuse and neglect (first year only) prior to assisting in class. All of these trainings count toward the required 4 hours of training each Parent Helper must complete each school year.

We believe that the efforts required of our members to make FHP function properly and to flourish play a valuable role in each child's education and each family's experience. We recognize that our cooperative preschool requires more of families than a traditional drop off preschool -- and that the benefits and rewards from these efforts also differ from those of a traditional preschool:

Fort Hunt Preschool is a magical place The teaching staff creates the perfect environment of joy and learning that teaches students and parents alike. The heart and soul of the FHP community supports this magic.

FHP parent member