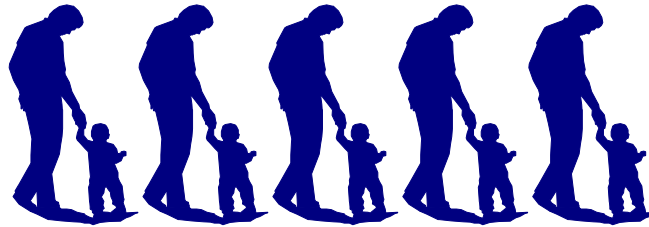




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Employer Assisted Cooperative Child Care: The Parent Model

E. Kim Coontz

- Co-op Members are the parents.
- Policies are guided by an elected board of directors. Representative of agency, employer or others may also hold minority positions on the board.
- The board of directors hire a director and staff who run the day-to-day operations of the child care center.
- It is not essential that parents actually work in the classroom. The parents and/or elected parent board determine the obligations of parents. The cooperative may operate similar to other non-profit child care centers. The major difference is that, in a cooperative, parents are making the major policy decisions.
- The cooperative model is cost effective because it is non-profit and because operating costs can be cut by parent participation. Parents can reduce operating costs by:
 - **participating in the classroom**
 - **providing lunch supervision, relieving staff for lunch break**
 - **contributing their specific expertise, for example: clerical, bookkeeping, accounting, carpentry, etc.**
 - **helping with class preparation, and routine light maintenance**
 - **organizing and facilitating fundraising activities**
- It is not essential for parents to miss work to perform routine child care center commitments. They can be completed during non-workday hours, during flex option time (if available), or through other methods.

Advantages of Parent Cooperative Model

1. Well established model.
2. Greater likelihood of meeting needs of parents and realization of immediate child care center enrollment goals.
3. More “bang” for the buck, a higher quality program for less cost.
4. Parent involvement has long term positive outcomes for children.

5. Parent's sense of empowerment can be applied to other areas of their lives.
6. Environment that offers sympathetic, responsive support systems for parents and their children
7. Contributes to strengthening families and the community.

*When parents work together to address common
needs—the community responds*