

Westcoast Moms' Babysitting Co-op Program Organizer Handbook

So you've decided to start a Babysitting Co-op Program in your community or are looking to find out all about organizing a program. We'll we're here to shed so light on the subject. We've provided the structure and instructions of how to get the program started all you have to do is the initial organizing.

As an Organizer, you are responsible for:

- attracting parents to the Babysitting Co-op
- organizing meeting that all members can attend with or without children
- collection of monthly dues from all members
- distributing handouts and member contact information (forms are provided)
- overseeing that all members have completed a criminal record check
- handling any complains or problems that arise that members cannot resolve themselves
- overseeing babysitting co-op point totals on a monthly basis
- providing a fun, safe, and rewarding program for your communities children
- HAVING FUN

As an organizer once the Babysitting Co-op is underway in your community, you can expect to put in about 5-10 hours per month handle any administrative duties. Depending on the size of the babysitting the position of the Organizer can rotate among members on a monthly basis. The current Organizer can receive an extra 5 points for volunteering if agreed upon by the members.

The babysitting co-op concept is simple and its practice is multi-rewarding. Your children will learn valuable social skills through their interaction with other children of different ages. And both you and your children may form lifetime friendships.

Attracting Members

Finding members for the program can come from various sources from your local parenting group, a posting on a church bulletin board, community recreation centre or a local coffee shop frequented by young families. Most times just mentioning that you are starting a Babysitting Co-op will be peak interest in your circle of parents.

General Babysitting Co-op Guidelines

Each member begins with 60 points and is charged two points for one child per hour and an additional point for each additional child per hour. Members are required to keep track of their own debits or credits on the Members Tally Form (Form 04). Please see the Babysitting Co-op Guidelines (BCG) for detailed list of guidelines.

Points will be exchanged as follows:

- two points per hour of sitting for one child per family
- three points per hour of sitting for two children per family
- four points per hour for sitting for three or more children per family

- Add one point per child for if a meal is given during the sit

Criminal Record Checks

All members as well as anyone living in a home who is 18 years or age or older where babysitting will take place must complete a RCMP criminal record check.

Criminal record check forms can be picked up at the local police station by the Organizer before the first meeting. At the time this document was prepared there is no fee charged to obtain a criminal record check as a Babysitting Co-op is a volunteer program.

Organizing Meetings

After you've attracted initial interest in the program it's a good idea to organize two initial meetings. The first two meetings can take place at the organizer home and then rotate amongst members.

As the Babysitting Co-op membership grows seek space at your local recreation centre or church that provides meeting space for non-profits free of charge or at a discounted rate. Fees for meeting space can be included in the yearly dues charged by the Babysitting Co-op. (See Section 1 in the BCG)

First meeting- Duties of the Organizer:

- introduce members to each other (provide name badges).
- distributes the Babysitting Co-op Kit and reviews the guidelines and forms.
- request that members review the Babysitting Co-op with their partners and spouses then bring any new questions to the next meeting.
- requests that all the forms including the criminal record check be completed for next meeting.
- choose a location and time for the next meeting.

Second Meeting- Duties of the Organizer:

- introduces any new members
- answers any new questions that arise
- collects all the forms from the members including the criminal record check if not mailed to the Organizer
- picks an official start date for the Babysitting Co-op

After the two initial meetings, meeting can be held upon the discretion of the Organizer. Suggestions could be to hold meetings once a month, every second or third month. It's a good idea to get members together at least 4 times a year to welcome new members, have children meet each other and parents as well to celebrate holiday occasions and/or parties. (optional)

Materials Provided

Pdf forms are available on the website for downloading. The following forms are:

1) Westcoast Moms Babysitting Co-op Guidelines

- Section 1 Memberships
- Section 2 Responsibilities of Members
- Section 3 Babysitting Procedures
- Section 4 Point System

2) Forms

- Form 1 - Members Information
- Form 2 - Contact Information and Emergency Contact Information
- Form 3 - Consent Form
- Form 4 - Members Tally Form
- Form 5 - Members Availability Schedule
- Form 6 - RCMP Police Record Check (Obtain from your local police station)
- Form 7 - Organizer Point Totals Form
- Form 8 - Member Contact Information Sheet (Word Doc)
- Form 9 - Babysitting Co-op Poster

Organizing the Babysitting Co-op Kit

When starting your Babysitting Co-op it's a good idea to be as organized as possible for All concerned

- 1) Start by organizing all the forms in neatly in colored duo-tangs or clear plastic covers so the pages remain together and can be removed.
- 2) Members are asked to complete all the forms except Members Tally Form (Form 4) which they keep for their own record-keeping.
- 3) Once all the forms are collected the Organizer will compile all the forms in binder divided by the families' last name. These forms will stay with Organizer, should the position rotate amongst members the binder will go with the new Organizer.

Before the Co-op Begins

After all the forms are completed and distributed to the Organizer. The Organizer has to compile all the information provided by each family in a condensed version and given to the members. The list will provide all the member information in an easy format that can be posted on their fridge for easy access to members' names, schedule availability and contact information when requiring a babysitter. See Members Contact Information Sheet (Form 8).

Weekly or Monthly Management

After the initial setup, the Organizer is responsible for monitoring the embers total points per month. This can either done by having members contact you with their point totals via email or by phone, and then entering the information on the Organizer Point Total Form (Form 7).

It is up to the discretion of the Organizer when members should submit their point totals either every two weeks or once a month are the suggested time periods. (See Section 3 #5 of the BCG)

Join the Westcoast Moms Babysitting Organizers Café

Have any question? Provided on the Westcoastmoms.ca website is a section dedicated to Babysitting Co-op Organizers. Expect to find discussion on the guidelines as well as tips that well help you and your group successfully launch a Babysitting Co-op in your community.