

The History of Bigelow Cooperative

In the spring of 1983, five families founded the *Bigelow Play Group*. In the early days, parents alternated in taking care of each other's children in a house on Bigelow Street. They established a working cooperative, in which each family worked with the children a few hours per week. They made decisions collaboratively, and the administrative as well as housekeeping tasks were equitably shared. Parents met on a monthly basis to discuss issues. These meetings were consensus-based, and filled with discussions about, e.g., how children learn, how to get them to take naps, how to assess the performance of assistant teachers, and how to set policy.

Bigelow's first year was September 1983 through August 1984. The children from this first class formed a very close-knit, interactive group that surprised parents who had read about how young toddlers can only "parallel play." In 1984-85, with the arrival of one more girl and the birth of two younger siblings, families expressed the wish to provide the same Bigelow experience to those children as well. To meet this need, the parent group spent months working on the administrative tasks of forming a licensed childcare program. The families drafted by-laws, budgets, and administrative procedures, acquired necessary materials and equipment, and recruited new families as well as teachers.

Bigelow incorporated in the summer of 1985 and moved the center to its current location at Zero Garden Street, Cambridge. Parent committees were formed to perform additional administrative activities. The administrative structure and institutional culture remains mostly intact today, with the natural adaptations that come with time and a larger community. Bigelow has grown and is licensed for 2009-10 to accommodate 32 children at a time.

Fees 2009-2010

Classes

Rainbow One (RB1) - 11 to 23 months
 Rainbow Two (RB2) - 24 to 36 months
 Rainbow Three (RB3) - 3 to 5 years

Monthly Tuition and Fees

All fees are subject to change

¾ Day (8:30-3:30)

| Class | 5 days | 4 days | 3 days | 2 days | 1 day |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Rainbow 1 | \$1759 | \$1445 | \$1132 | \$819 | n/a |
| Rainbow 2 | \$1583 | \$1304 | \$1026 | \$748 | n/a |
| Rainbow 3 | \$1358 | \$1125 | \$892 | \$660 | n/a |

Extended Day (3:30-5:30)

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Rainbow 1&2 | \$440 | \$356 | \$269 | \$181 | \$90 |
| Rainbow 3 | \$291 | \$234 | \$178 | \$120 | \$60 |

Early Drop-off/Late Pick-up (8-8:30/5:30-6)

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| All Classes | \$231 | \$185 | \$140 | \$92 | \$46 |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|

Diaper Fee

| | | | | | |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| All Classes | \$27 | \$22 | \$17 | \$10 | n/a |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|-----|

Application Fee: \$40 (nonrefundable)



Applicants for Voucher or Community Partnership slots are exempt from the application fee. Please request the income guidelines from our administration.

Striving for a diverse community of families and teachers

**Zero Garden Street
 Cambridge, MA 02138**

Tel: 617-354-7335

Fax: 617-354-0891

Visit our website at Bigelowcoop.org,
 or e-mail us at info@bigelowcoop.org

Quality Education and Care

We provide high quality education and care for toddlers and preschool-age children. We are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and are committed to its high standards for quality education. As a small cooperative, we rely both on a committed staff and parent involvement to give the children caring individual attention.

Staffing Pattern

There will be three classes at Bigelow in 2009-10: Rainbow 1 (11-23 months), Rainbow 2 (24-36 months), and Rainbow 3 (3-5 years). For 2009-10 we are licensed to have 32 children at a time. With nine full-time teachers, two administrators, and parent helpers, Bigelow offers an excellent child/teacher ratio that often exceeds the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and meets NAEYC guidelines.

Approach to Learning

Bigelow's program emphasizes each child's individual development and learning in a loving and nurturing environment. Each room has a routine which provides time for personal choices of play as well as more structured activities. Teachers emphasize age-appropriate social interactions, cultural awareness, and learning non-violent problem solving skills – all with an eye towards enhancing a child's positive self-image. By following the Creative Curriculum model we encourage creative development and offer anti-bias, emergent curriculum.

The Bigelow Community is committed to active policies of affirmative action and outreach to families of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Non-English speaking children are welcome.

The Physical Space

Located at Christ Church, across the street from the Cambridge Common, Bigelow's facilities consist of three classrooms, an indoor play-space, a kitchen, an office, and an outdoor playground. The children play outside daily, weather permitting, and often use the public playground on the Cambridge Common. They also take frequent walks around Harvard Square and go on more adventurous field trips by using public transportation or inviting parents to drive. Field trip destinations include the Swan Boats, the Children's Museum, Drumlin Farm and Honey Pot Hill Farm.

Parent Involvement

As members of a cooperative, all families at Bigelow are involved in the operation and governance of the Center. Each family participates in the classroom on a regular schedule, 2.5 hours per week (for 4 and 5 day enrollment) or every other week (for 2 and 3 day enrollment). Single parents are exempt from the work-time requirement. All families belong to one committee (such as admissions, food, finance, physical space, etc.) and these committees perform support services for the Center.

As members of the Bigelow community, parents and teachers meet together once a month to converse and set policy, ranging from questions of curriculum and building plans to staffing and budgetary issues. Two administrators take care of the day-to-day operations of the Center and implement community decisions.

Meals

Bigelow provides three healthy snacks during the day. Children participate in the communal lunch program or bring their own lunches. In the communal lunch program parents take turns cooking lunches for their child's group.

The Schedule

Bigelow is open year round on weekdays with the exception of the week before New Year's Day, the week before Labor Day, and 11 holidays. Bigelow is also closed on St. Patrick's Day for a Staff Development Day.

Children enroll in the Center for a twelve-month period, typically from September through August. Bigelow does not have a separate summer program. Children can attend 2, 3, 4, or 5 days per week. We offer the following schedules on a full or part-time basis:

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Full Day | 8:30-5:30 |
| Regular Day | 8:30-3:30 |
| Early Drop-off | 8:00-8:30 |
| Late Pick-up | 5:30-6:00 |

Diapers

Disposable diapers are provided for a monthly fee.

Tuition and Fees and Deposits

Parent members pay all tuition fees on a monthly basis. A non-refundable deposit equal to one month's tuition is required at the time of signing a twelve month contract. It will be applied towards the August tuition.

Voucher Slots

In coordination with the Child Care Resource Center and other agencies, Bigelow offers voucher slots for eligible families. To qualify for a voucher slot, the total family income has to be at or below the median State income guideline. If you think you are eligible for reduced tuition, please call the Child Care Resource Center at 617-547-1063, or contact our office and ask for a copy of the eligibility scale. Families who apply for a Voucher slot do not need to pay an application fee.