

Nature Explore Classroom

Poe Cooperative Nursery School

Welcome to Poe Cooperative Nursery School!

Formation of the Cooperative

In the early 1970's, enrollment at [Poe Elementary](#) declined dramatically in response to the court-ordered integration of HISD schools. Poe parents approached then Superintendent George Garver with their concern about declining enrollment and loss of neighborhood children to private schools. He suggested a preschool program as a way of attracting community families to Poe.

The founding parents worked to establish a preschool program that would be comparable in its quality and scope with other preschools in the area. They were greatly aided by the support of the Principal and Parent-Teacher Organization of Poe Elementary School, the advice of the Beehive Parent-Child Center Project and the assistance of the Laboratory Nursery School in the Department of Home Economics at the University of Houston.

Poe Co opened its doors with a pilot program on February 4, 1974. The University of Houston's Laboratory Nursery School staff provided a professional teacher for the pilot; they also assisted in setting up the physical facility at Poe Elementary and aided in establishing the general curriculum and goals of the program. HISD provided classroom space, utilities and nominal maintenance. Parents coordinated the administrative details of the program and participated as parent helpers in the classroom. The program was successful and for the 1974-1975 school year Poe Co expanded to offer two class sessions daily.



Revitalization of Poe Elementary

Enrollment at Poe Elementary began to increase almost immediately. On numerous occasions the next HISD Superintendent, Billy Reagan, credited Poe Co with being the magnet that turned Poe Elementary from a school with rapidly declining enrollment and little parent participation into HISD's model for community development and integration.

By the 1976-1977 school year crowding at Poe Elementary necessitated that the kindergarten classes use the "temporary" building that had housed the preschool. Poe Co parents raised \$5,000 to supplement HISD's contribution of \$15,000 to purchase the red building that housed the nursery school for the next nine years. During this period Poe Co offered a class for 3 year olds. In 1977, Poe Co began a summer camp program that has served many families who are not Poe Co members, thereby familiarizing them with public school facilities.

Working with HISD

Poe Co has made significant contributions to the community and the school district over the years. The great majority of Poe Co children have gone on to Poe Elementary or other HISD schools such as the Vanguard program at River Oaks Elementary. Parents who become involved with their children's education continue that involvement after the children finish preschool. Former Poe Co parents now fill many leadership roles in the PTO and parent volunteer programs at Poe Elementary, Lanier Middle School and even Lamar High School.

Scholarships

Poe Co has provided scholarships that have enabled many students to attend preschool whose families otherwise could not have afforded to give them that opportunity. Most of these have been non-English-speaking children who have been prepared to enter an English-speaking classroom after a year or two at Poe Co. Poe Co has been a model for high-quality preschool education at low cost.

A New Home at Poe

In 1985, an exciting new era in the history of Poe Co began. A new wing was added to Poe Elementary. The temporary buildings, including the red Poe Co building, were removed from the campus and two rooms in the north wing of the school building were converted to house the nursery school. Poe Co now offers morning classes for both 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. Optional extended day programs are also available. These changes have enabled Poe Co to better meet the needs of its member families and have ensured the continued success of the nursery school.

Recognition

In 1991, Poe Co became the first Parent Cooperative preschool in the country to earn N.A.E.Y.C. accreditation. The school has renewed its accreditation successfully since then.

In November of 1992, Poe Co was visited by Amy Driscoll, a leading early childhood education expert who highlighted Poe Co in her book: Cases in Early Childhood Education, which was published in August 1994.

Continued Investment

During the Spring 2000, Poe Co and Poe Elementary parents, grandparents and alumni raised over \$25,000 to completely redevelop the playground. This new playground with additional climbing structures, biking paths and music and theatrical areas was inspired by the teachers and built by parents.

Poe Co Entryway

The chain link fence surrounding the school was replaced with the current black wrought iron fence and decorative key pad entry way gate in 2012. The Poe Co board along with current and past Poe Co families and the community raised the funds needed to complete the project.



Apple Trees

To the right of gate inside and out two apple trees as shown in this photo were planted in honor of a teacher that worked at the school for 13 years.

The potting bench inside the fence is used as a table for the families to sign their children in and out daily.



Wide open spaces for large-motor activities



Climbing Area

Poe Cooperative Nursery School is located in Edgar Allan POE Elementary School, a Houston Independent public school. The elementary school has their own Spark Park playground, Poe Co (the nursery school) has a second playground of their own. The playground is maintained by the nursery school. The elementary school provided the climber or super ship as it is known at Poe Co.



You'll be able to climb up there when your
body is ready





Messy Materials Area



Mud Kitchen

The mud kitchen was one of the more recent areas created in the outdoor classroom. An old wood stove was given a facelift with wood bracket to hang pots and pans and measuring utensils. A whole was sawed into a board to place the metal sink (bowl) supported by crates.



Building Area





Nature Art Area

wire hanger for drying artwork is attached to the storage barn for easy access to and from the art table



Nature Art Area

In this photo the children are making clay candle holders for the Festival of the Lights Celebration. They allowed them to dry then painted their clay pot.



Grandmother and mother (parent helper) working with the children to make newspaper hats





Nature explore walk around Poe Co, an annual event; the children make binoculars out of toilet paper tubes so that they can observe the birds on the playground; the children identify the type of birds, record the count followed by a walk around the elementary school looking for signs of birds , nests, woodpecker holes... This year we observed a woodpecker in the large oak tree on the playground.



Music and



Movement



Garden Area -beds were relocated and built in an area on the playground that receives necessary sun



Vegetable Gardens



Bluebonnets, the Texas state flower were planted in a metal bin, they bloom every year



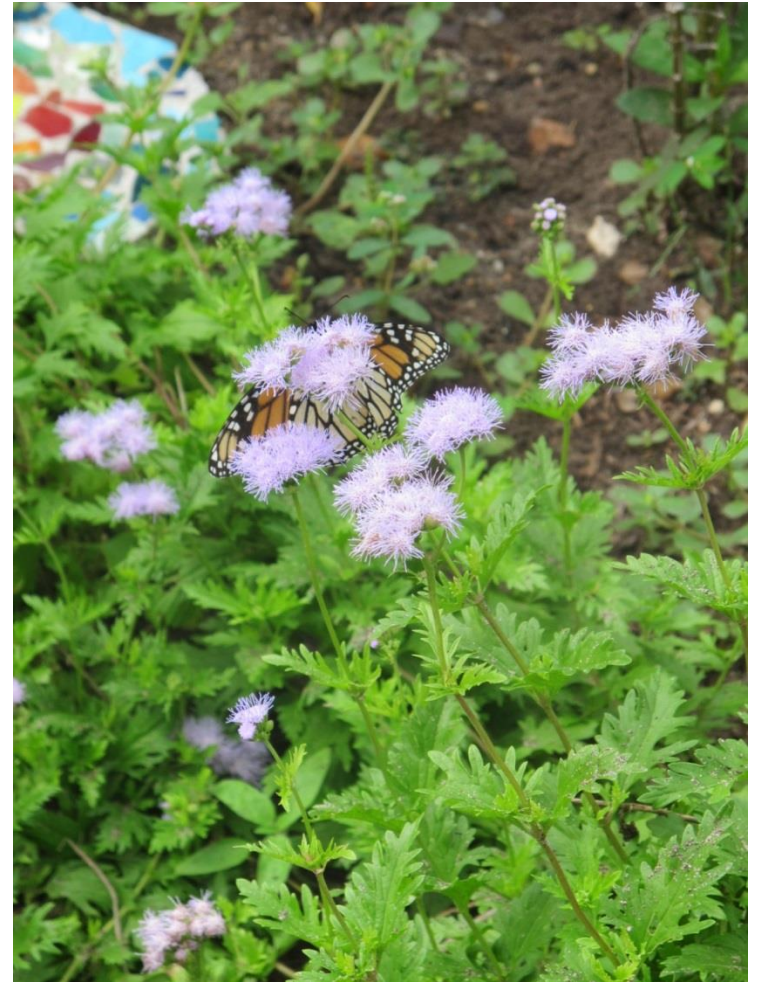
Dwarf Sitsu Mandarin Orange Tree

The children help water and care for the tree; the children are learning what color the fruit should be before picking and that there is fruit without seeds.



Certified Butterfly Garden

Poe Co worked to create and now maintains a certified butterfly garden; the garden is cared for by the children, teachers and families.



The children plant the seeds, water, weed and enjoy eating their harvest



Green beans are planted along the back fence

The children enjoy
picking the beans
and eating them
raw and or cooked.
They also enjoy
eating the
tomatoes they
helped to plant in
the clay pots and
this year we tried
planting potatoes.



We have a small compost container in each room; the parent helper and their child place the compost in our large compost tub daily. Once the compost breaks down it is used as fertilizer in the gardens.



A wood root view was built by parents and placed in an area that the children can plant carrot seeds and observe the growth of “tops and bottoms”



Gathering area - one of our fathers built this wooden pergola to cover the rock storytelling area this year.





We enjoy snack and lunch around this table under the oak tree, it is another place for us to gather



Storage Areas

The red playhouse is used for play and to store sand toys, art misc., chairs and other items the children clean up daily and that which we store on weekends. The bikes are stored in a drive-through at the back of the playhouse.

The locked red shed is our main storage for tools, shovels, brooms, gardening misc., additional toys and manipulatives used throughout the year.



Water Area



Dirt-Mud digging Area



Sand Area



Sand Area



Pathway for wheeled toys



Swinging and other dynamic equipment- tire swing



Quiet areas from which a child can observe, tell a story, draw a picture of a leaf or write about nature



Community Connections-Fire station #16 is our local community fire station; we visit their station every fall and when they drive by the school they honk and wave at the children.



Exploring wildlife during outside classroom time



Nibbles is our resident rabbit, she was rescued from the ASAPC. She stays at Poe Co during the day and goes home with a Poe Co family at night and on weekends





POE COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

PROUDLY ANNOUNCES EARNING
2013-2018 NAEYC RE-ACCREDITATION



"THE MARK OF QUALITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS"

PoeCo.org