

Financial problems face Amazon nursery

By DINA MILES
Of the Emerald

Jackie Nordlof, membership director of the Amazon Co-op nursery school in the University-funded Amazon family housing project, reclined in her sofa with her three-year-old daughter nearly asleep in her arms. She contemplated the financial problems besetting the co-op which result from a decline in enrollment, and commented, "We have three alternatives. We can try to increase enrollment, get more fund raising projects, or raise tuition — as a last resort."

The Amazon nursery is one of few cooperative child care centers in Eugene, and while a majority of families who participate in the co-op live in the Amazon project complex, Nordlof explained, membership is always open to families in the community.

The nursery operates five days a week for two and a half hours each morning during the academic year. Three-year-olds attend Tuesday and Thursday

sessions and four-year-olds attend Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The hours are 9 to 11:30 a.m.

As part of the co-op plan, parents are asked to participate in the operation by working three or four times per term, but if the parent is unable to work, a substitute may work instead. Parents help with various activities in the nursery, such as supervising the crafts table, helping with snacks, telling stories or cleaning the nursery after the day's session.

Nordlof says this participation is one of the most satisfactory aspects of the nursery because parents feel they are in close touch with their children in what they do and learn in the nursery.

"I like participating," she said. "But that's one of our problems with enrollment. Some parents don't have the time, or they have other children to take care of. The people who enjoy it most are those who don't have to work or don't go to school."

The nursery sessions don't operate on a formal routine, although the teacher, Jan Soloos, plans the

week's lessons and participating parents may help with any lesson they wish. Soloos is a certified instructor and Nordlof said the teaching can be done cooperatively because parents may suggest to Soloos lessons they would like to include.

"She wants to do what the parents want," Nordlof commented. "The parents are good about giving her ideas."

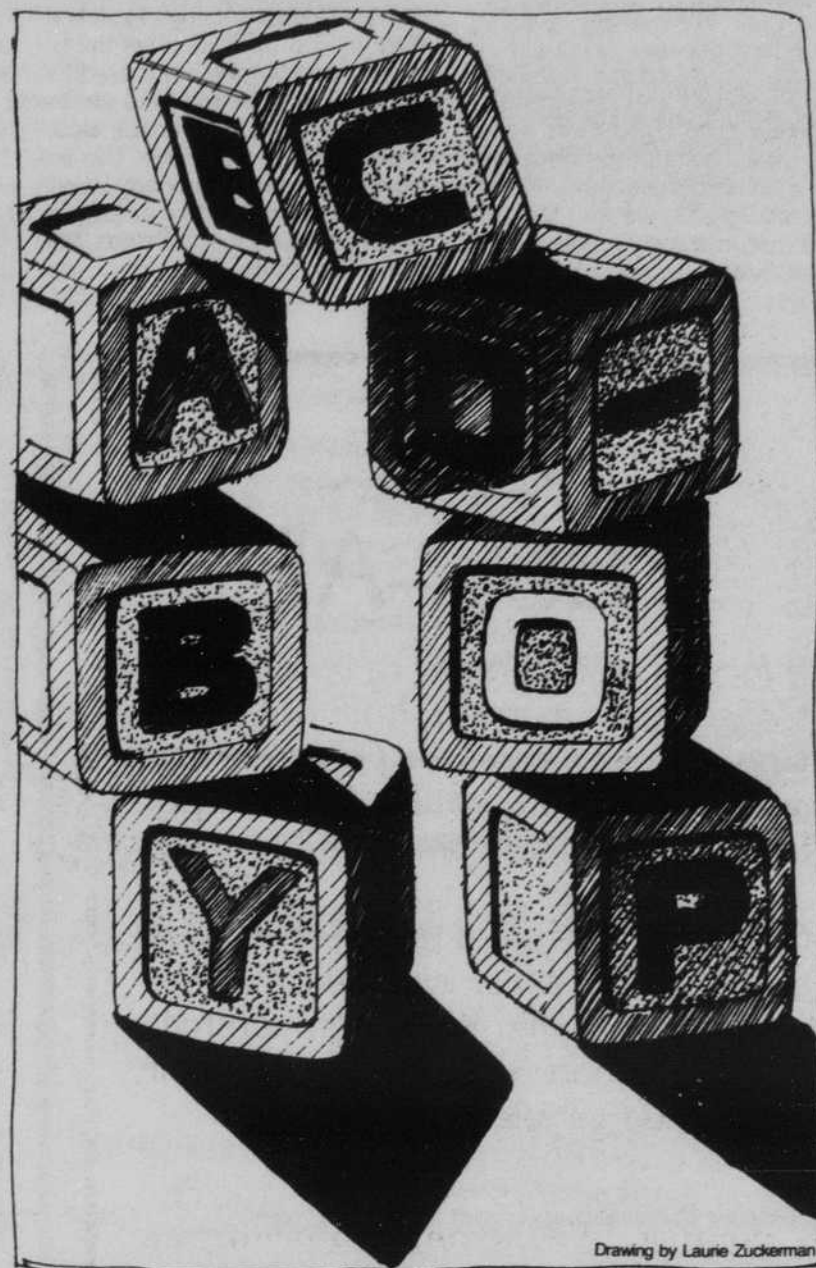
In addition to participating, all parents are asked to attend a meeting once a month. Led by Jeannie Groesz, co-op president, these meetings give all parents the opportunity to discuss activities and plans for the school.

Current tuition is \$12 per month for each three-year-old child, and \$15 for each four-year-old. The enrollment is at capacity level for the four-year-old class, with a total of 15 children, but the three-year-old class is down to only seven students. The tuition helps to pay for the teacher's salary and maintenance of the nursery; the University pays rent and utilities.

Nordlof says parents need not wait until the beginning of a term to

enroll their children but may begin at any time. Before signing up, parents are asked to fill out general information and health care information forms, and a permission slip for field trips.

Interested parents may call Nordlof at 342-6779 or see her at 2160-1 in the Amazon family housing project located on Patterson Street behind South Eugene High School.



Drawing by Laurie Zuckerman

CCDC to organize cooperative

By BRENDA TABOR
Of the Emerald

Some University students have a difficult time getting away for a weekend on the coast or a few hours Saturday night. The difficulty and cost of obtaining child care can even make attending classes difficult.

The Child Care and Development Center (CCDC) found a need for alternative forms of child care in a survey early this term. Their solution — form a childcare cooperative to allow parents to trade services without exchanging money.

A meeting to establish operating by-laws and gain input will be held at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Child Care and Development Center, 15th Avenue and Moss Street. The cooperative won't be limited to students. Preliminary plans call for it to serve University students, as well as faculty and staff. The co-op could open to the community if enough interest is

shown, says Gerri Dennis, University Year in Action appointee at CCDC.

Dennis says the CCDC Co-op will be modeled after Willamette Child Care Cooperative and run by students.

Another student co-op is already operating successfully at the University. Amazon Child Care Co-op, in its fourth year of operation, serves 28 families with 45 children, according to bookkeeper Mary Gillan.

The service isn't limited to Amazon, but just hasn't grown beyond it. Gillan says the co-op is run informally. When a member parent babysits, he or she phones in the information to Gillan. She figures the amount of credit the parent will receive according to the organization's by-laws.

Members are asked not to accumulate over 70 hours of credit monthly, because this would deprive other parents of the chance to "sit" and earn credit. They are

also asked not to go into debt over 16 hours.

As the co-op's only officer, the bookkeeper is reimbursed with one hour of child care per member, monthly. There are no dues. Gillan says the only cost is printing lists of babysitters available that members receive.

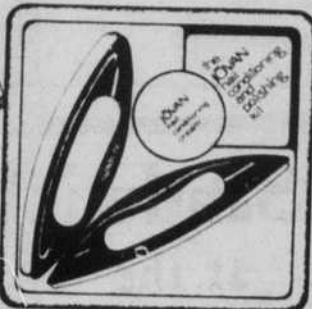
She says the system works well. "It's really nice to have so many people to call on whom you can trust," she says, "and it's a good way to get to know people."

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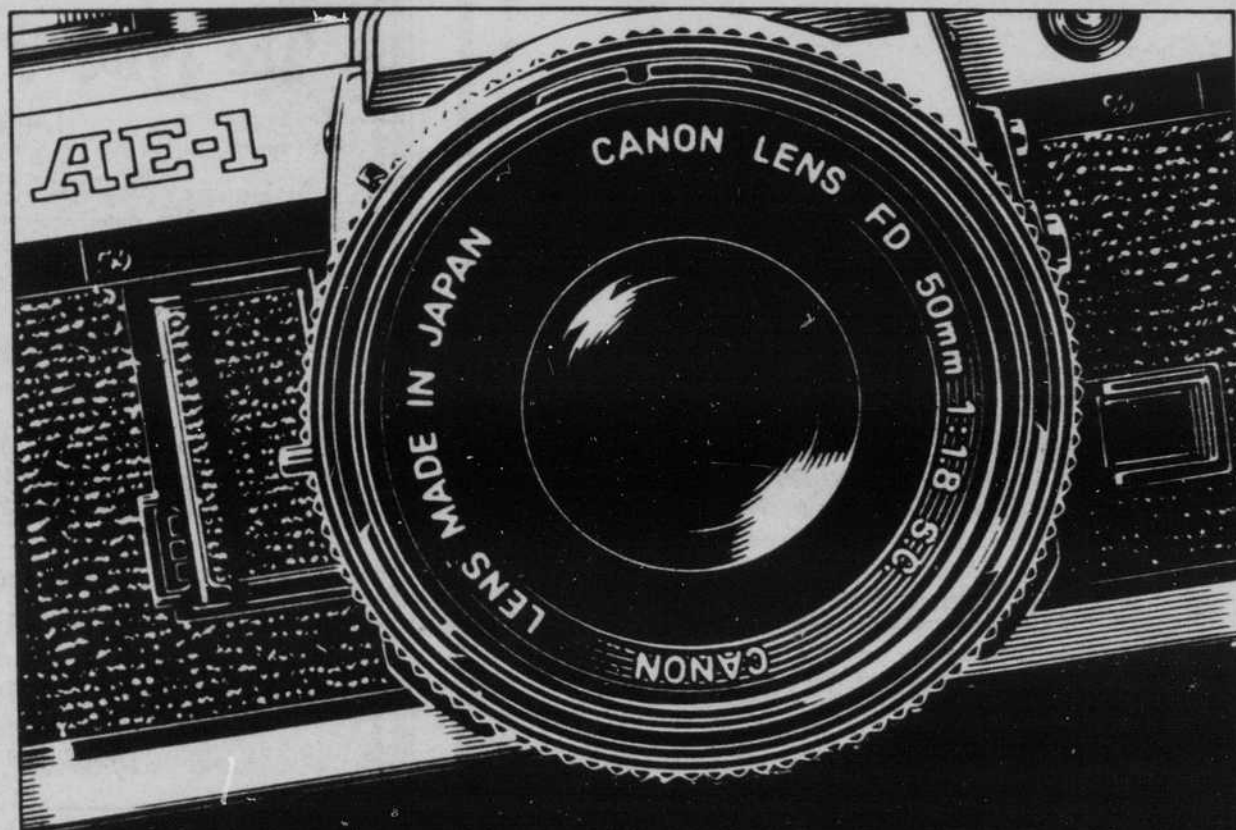
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