

AMAZON

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who want to do it."

Melody Yusuf, an art education major, has had her 5-year-old son enrolled in the co-op for a year and one term. As a single parent, Yusuf said the low cost provided one of the biggest initial benefits.

By helping with art projects at the co-op, Yusuf reduces her child care costs to \$75 per month. Yusuf said the cost is only one of many benefits for her and her son Omar.

"I really like being a part of my son's education," Yusuf said. "When he comes home and tells me what's going on at school, I understand what he's talking about because I've been there."

Currently, Yusuf puts in her time at the co-op by making alphabet books. She and Omar work on them at home, and she can do it at her convenience.

Sometimes, Yusuf and her son help clean the co-op to make up her time. She said it is important to her that her son see the work side of it.

"Omar understands our financial situation because he's experienced this, here with me," Yusuf said. "A lot of par-



Photo by Vince Ramirez

The 32 children enrolled at the center decide how they will spend their free time, either playing outside or doing art projects indoors.

ents bring their kids when they come to work."

Yusuf said the support system created by the co-op is an important benefit for her. Teachers and parents work together to solve child care problems and share parenting tips, she said.

Not only does the co-op ben-

efit parents, but children receive the opportunity to make choices for themselves. The children have choices all day long, Blanchard said, adding that they can be inside doing art projects or outside playing on the playground.

"We let kids decide what they want," Blanchard said.

"This week we're doing whales and wolves, and they'll decide what we're going to do with it."

The type of education system used at Amazon is called "developmentally appropriate," Blanchard said.

Because of the type of teaching, the co-op may appear to be

a little disorderly, but Blanchard and Yusuf agreed that it's been very successful for all involved.

"When I first looked at this place, I thought it was total chaos," Yusuf said. "I wanted to get this place organized. I've seen other parents do that too. I learned to relax and so do most of the others."


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