

Haverhill's Informal Babysitting Cooperative
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Abstract:

The informal baby-sitting cooperative has been initiated by and for the residents

of Haverhill, Massachusetts. The affordable childcare provided will offer an opportunity for parents to attend scheduled appointments and to seek employment, education and job training. The informal baby-sitting cooperative will give overly stressed parents, free time to stabilize their emotions and reconnect with their lives and the community.

Instead of paying a fee the members will use a points system to pay for childcare. It will not be necessary for the cooperative to be licensed by the Office of Childcare Services (OCCS) as it will remain informal and articles of incorporation will not be filed.

The mission of the Haverhill Informal Baby-sitting Cooperative is to allow parents to work and grow through free dependable childcare. The democratic centralized structure of the cooperative will allow for it to be duplicated and serve the needs of parents in other geographic locations within Haverhill and adjoining communities.

The cooperative is a parent operated baby-sitting service. Each member will assume a staff role at one time during their membership and agrees to care for each others' children. Cooperative members will elect two co-directors to maintain the cooperative bylaws and a secretary to maintain the points system, the phone list, and the dues collection.

The program's success will be evaluated by how many parents stay involved in the cooperative, how many members in the cooperative are able to secure employment, training, education and family stabilization due to their participation within the informal baby-sitting cooperative.

Executive Summary

Affordable, reliable childcare is one of the largest obstacles to identifying and

maintaining employment. This obstacle is even greater for single parents trying to maintain their home, child's safety and their own sanity. For many parents, economic self-sufficiency is an unachievable dream, especially when many of these parents have two or more children who require childcare. The cost of childcare in Haverhill averages \$1100 a month for one child. Rent for a two bedroom ranges from \$1100-\$1300. The median income for a single parent is \$23,280 and a two-parent income is only \$41,500. Therefore a single parent who is only making \$23,280 per year and has to pay \$13,200 per year on child care and another \$13,200 per year for rent alone ends up with a deficit of \$3000 per year. This helps to explain why some 7% of residents in Haverhill live below the poverty level. Economic self-sufficiency is a goal that 40% of the Haverhill community wishes to acquire, especially due to basic living costs, including rent, child care and the median income.

A babysitting cooperative is a group of parents who exchange babysitting services with one another. Babysitting usually takes place in members' homes and no money is exchanged. The cooperative can function with a small group of three or four families or with more than a hundred families. A babysitting cooperative can be organized in a variety of ways, but at its core is the traditional cooperative principal: the cooperative is owned and controlled by the membership so its organization fundamentally reflects the ideals, needs and values of its members. (Coontz, UCA)

The Haverhill Informal Babysitting Cooperative is designed to assist parents living in Haverhill with the ability to obtain affordable, reliable childcare through

a network of parents. The cooperative structure also allows these parents the ability to socially reintegrate with friends and the community where once they may not have been afforded this opportunity. Through this informal cooperative, these parents are able to identify and secure employment opportunities and/or educational opportunities.

The Haverhill Informal Babysitting Cooperative has been formed and currently has four families in its network. The cooperative became functional in December 2003. The by-laws, elections and phone tree list have been established so that parents could initiate babysitting. Now that babysitting has begun, the hope is that the parents involved will now be able to start their employment and or education searches if so desired. The current members will continue to recruit for new members along with participating in fundraising activities and community meetings.

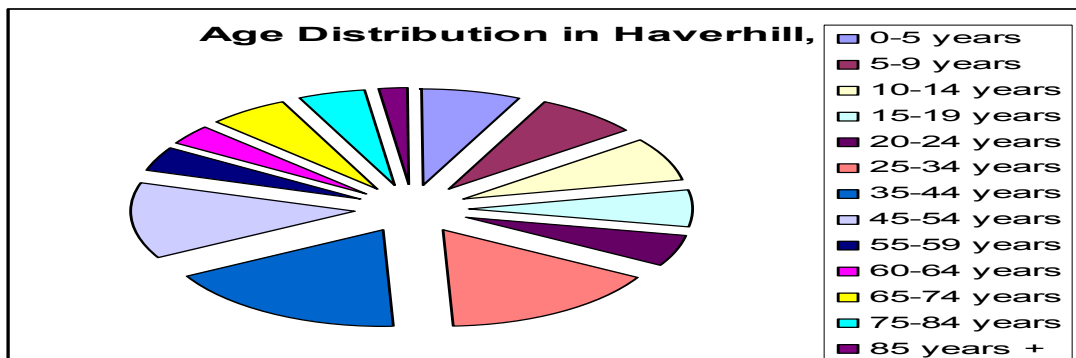
I & II. Community Needs Assessment & The Problem

Quality childcare is in demand now more than ever since the increase of women

returning to the work force due to desire and largely due to need. (LLC, 2002)

Globally women's rates of participation in the labor force were 54% in 1950 and 66% in 1990 and are projected to reach almost 70% in 2010. The average poverty rate among single, economically disadvantaged parents is a startling 45%. (CAI, 2002) Currently in Haverhill 40% of women are of working age and at least 27% of them are either working or looking for work. Of the 58,969 people in the Haverhill community, 23,599 are women over the age of 18 and 12,942 are children under the age of 14 who require some type of childcare. (Census, 2000)

Haverhill, Massachusetts has 132 childcare providers with only 1042 childcare slots and over 12,942 children appropriate for childcare.



(US Census 2000)

Government agencies or private organizations run most basic day-care centers within Haverhill. These centers are likely to be attended only by children over three and have extremely limited coverage with non flexible schedules because of the large investment needed in staff, buildings and equipment, yet childcare is clearly necessary. (Engle, 2000) The majority of these providers hold hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The greater part of Haverhill residents is Management,

Professionals along with Sales and Service occupations. Although many of these positions are 9-5 p.m. there are still a large number of positions that are scheduled outside of the 9-5 p.m. schedule that require childcare for their kids. The need for affordable childcare is understood with 40% of the households in the Haverhill, MA area having children under the age of 14. The median income in two family households is around \$41,500 with over 7% of the Haverhill population falling below the poverty level. The average rate of childcare is \$275 per week for the first child and then an additional \$75-\$100 cost for each child thereafter. Most citizens in Haverhill cannot afford the \$1100 monthly average for childcare, in which many providers only offer an inflexible 8-5:30 schedule. Individuals needing additional hours are charged a fee as high as \$25/15 minutes. There are 22,999 households in Haverhill according to the latest census. (US Census, 2000)

Haverhill Area Household Income

Income Bracket	Less than \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 or more
# of Households 22,999	1,939	1,390	2,411	2,235	3,558	5,211	3,174	2,327	385	369

(US Census 2000)

There are 17% of families involved with the Department of Social Services (DSS) who are open cases of neglect, due to parents leaving their children unattended or without appropriate supervision. Many parents claim these actions are due to the need of affordable childcare that is required to continue educational

advancement, employment and a chance to maintain their sanity with a break from their children. Some parents come into the Department voluntarily requesting assistance only for childcare vouchers. The parents have stated that they are asking for assistance because they cannot afford the cost of childcare and have had to leave their jobs or have been fired from their jobs due to the inability to find a childcare provider. Unfortunately, DSS is only a short-term solution as the Department closes services, such as a day care slot, as soon as a family stabilizes thus leaving the family again without appropriate daycare. The high cost of childcare has resulted in many Haverhill parents resorting to one of three strategies: (1) going on unemployment to stay home and take care of their own children; (2) leaving the children with no supervision and (3) sometimes leaving them in the hands of unfit care providers. Haverhill DSS created a checklist for families that are involved with Family Based Services meetings to capture the amount of families that are requesting the assistance with childcare. The checklist is currently on going for the purpose of this project. The data collected from July 2002-January 2004 has shown that 5 out of 8 Haverhill families per month are coming to DSS requesting assistance with childcare. The majority of parents' first attempt to apply for daycare vouchers is through the Department of Transitional Assistance however; these have many restrictions and are difficult to get. The daycare vouchers that families can apply for at the Department of Transitional Assistance are also limited by time and are financially based. The income eligibility is low. Often times a family are able to qualify for a voucher and maintain a job for a couple of months but then they exceed the financial eligibility criteria and no longer qualify for reduced day care costs provided by the

vouchers.

Income Qualification for Daycare Vouchers

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Bi-Weekly	Weekly
1	\$9,310	\$776	\$358	\$179
2	\$12,490	\$1,041	\$480	\$240
3	\$15,670	\$1,306	\$603	\$301
4	\$18,850	\$1,571	\$725	\$363
5	\$22,030	\$1,836	\$847	\$424
6	\$25,210	\$2,101	\$970	\$485
7	\$28,390	\$2,366	\$1,092	\$546
8	\$31,570	\$2,631	\$1,214	\$607

(DTA 2004)

For each additional Family member add \$61.00 weekly

Haverhill Family Network and Haverhill Family Connections are willing to help in the proposal and implementation of the informal babysitting co-op in the Haverhill community. This co-op will provide quality childcare at low to no cost financially but will require a commitment from the community to work together and to support one another. Starting a childcare co-op will allow members of the community to assist one another in having the ability to go out and obtain a job without the worry of childcare or the cost that must come out of the already limited paycheck. Co-ops help to increase the purchasing power of low-income people through a democratic risk sharing process that also builds skill and creates job opportunities. In this way cooperatives can help struggling families to attain

living wages. (Ziewacz, 2000) A babysitting co-op in the city of Haverhill is a simple concept and its practice has multiple rewards. It will provide the residents of Haverhill, MA with the opportunity to get involved in the community or personal interests and activities. It also carries with it the responsibility for residents to give their time to others, by caring for others children. In addition, their own children will learn valuable social skills through interacting with other children of different ages, along with allowing the parent and child to form lifetime friendships. (Organizing a babysitting coop, 2002)

Addressing the Problem:

A practical solution to this problem is the conception of an affordable, flexible informal babysitting cooperative located in Haverhill, MA. This will afford non-working parents ease of access to a trusted network of babysitters by which they will gain the time and the opportunity for employment, to enroll in job training programs or education by which to obtain employment, or time to socialize within the community.

Project Target Community:

The target community consists of working and non-working parents in Haverhill, MA who are interested in seeking social connections to the community, education and/or employment opportunities. Their children must reside in the home with them and the caregivers cannot possess a tainted criminal record (CORI).

Project goals in CED terms:

An informal baby-sitting cooperative in the Haverhill community enables parents

with the time and ability to obtain employment, education, job training and strengthen family stability that otherwise was compromised due to childcare issues.

A product of the informal baby-sitting cooperative is the positive neighbor interaction that will occur along with connecting with other members within the community. Success is measured on the following criteria:

1. The number of interested members
2. The quantity of members who have secured jobs
3. The sum of members with employment applications submitted
4. How many members completed educational courses
5. The number of evaluations completed

Other benefits that are to occur from the cooperative are fewer neglect claims and reductions in other forms of abuse such as domestic violence due to less financial and emotional stressors. In other words, if people can get time away from their children, it gives them the needed break to cope better with the demands of parenting.

Project Objectives:

The objectives of the project are to provide parents with a reliable/safe caregiver and the time and ability needed to secure employment, job training, education and family stabilization that would not occur or be difficult to obtain due to childcare issues.

Cooperative Stability:

By November 2003, membership of 4–40 participants selected.

By December 2003-January 2004, by-laws, rules and regulations written and implemented.

By January 2004, co-directors and secretary elected.

By January 2004-February 2004, the babysitting cooperative will be operational.

Cooperative Financial Stability:

By March 2004, fundraising to be completed and seed money obtained

Members pay \$25 dues at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Member Stability:

April 2004, expected that 85% of the membership will have obtained employment/education.

May 2004, expected 70% of the membership will be involved in employment/education related activities.

III. Project Design

Review of the Literature:

Published data indicate that baby-sitting co-ops have been around for about fifty years. They appear to be an outgrowth of World War II, when parents had to cope with the baby boom. At that time many young families found themselves with small children and living in the new housing developments, and money was tight. (Terwilliger Meyers, 1976)

The University Place Baby-sitting Co-op near Seattle, Washington was established in the early 1980's and is still in existence today. Terry Highsmith, mother of three and member of the University Place co-op states "We fool ourselves into thinking we can manage but what really happens is we give up. We become housebound. How many of us always call one or two friends at the last minute? What happens when they say no? We have a choice. We either take the children with us and go crazy or cancel our plans." (Myers, 2000) It is countless situations like this that occurred in Seattle, Washington that provoked Judy Phillups, Mary Chapman and Teresa Christenson to start a baby-sitting cooperative. In his book, *Smart Mom's Baby-Sitting Co-op*, Gary Myers states the structure of the babysitting cooperative should be as simple as possible. The purpose of the cooperative, according to Myers, is to simplify the complicated lives of parents. He suggests that a co-director should represent every ten to twenty members and a secretary should maintain all records of point's usage and dues collection. (Myers, 2000)

The Tewksbury Baby-sitting Cooperative located in Tewksbury, MA was formed in 1991 in response to the lack of quality childcare and an increase in working

mothers. According to Kim Ricciardi, the cooperative's co-director, all parents are screened before being accepted into the cooperative. She also states that no one has to rely on a parent to whom they don't relate. The Tewksbury Babysitting Cooperative requires no fees as all payment is in the form of time points. Each member who baby-sits earns time points and those who utilize cooperative sitters spend time points. (Boston Globe, 2002)

Although babysitting cooperatives are generated by mutual child care needs, it is common for the membership to become an important social group for all those involved. Members of babysitting cooperatives often form strong bonds that last beyond essential babysitting years. (Coontz, 2004)

Cooperative Child Care, according to Barry Kitterman is one of the best ways for families to save money and their children to gain social skills. (Kitterman, 2004)

In Tony Palo Alto they had a babysitting cooperative that started in the 1950's and continued until the 1990's. One reason people appreciated this cooperative is that a single written constitution sustained it even though there was a complete turnover of people after about 12 years. There was one general meeting a year to review by-laws and problems. One member stated that "It was pretty cool to have a neuro-surgeon sit your kids on occasion". (Vitia, 2004)

Aviano Air Base in Italy has started its own baby-sitting co-op. Suzann Chambers, one of the parents behind the push for the cooperative, said the project is designed to address a niche that the child development center often has

trouble meeting: short-term child care. Suzann is also quoted saying “The co-op isn’t just for the children; it’s for the adults, too.” (Harris, 2004)

A babysitting cooperative teaches children social skills but they also benefit from their parents having a support network. Parents tend to be more patient and loving with their children when their own emotional needs are met. Studies show one of the most important factors for effective single parenting is having a strong support network of friends. It takes energy and time to build relationships, but it’s worth it! (UNH, 2004)

Babysitting cooperatives save money and sanity. A babysitting coop is a group of like minded mothers (or fathers) who agree to share responsibilities watching each others’ little ones. It allows parents to run errands, go to the doctors read a book, work an extra shift, or simply take a nap. (Childcare directories, 2004)

Program:

The Haverhill Informal Baby-sitting Cooperative will provide parents in Haverhill, MA the opportunity to secure employment, education and job training because they will no longer have the obstacle of high cost childcare. Instead of paying a fee the members will use a points system to pay for childcare. The cooperative will remain an informal cooperative therefore they will not file articles of incorporation. The cooperative will use the workbooks that have been provided by Gary Myers author of the Smart Mom’s baby-sitting co-op. The cooperative has decided however not to register with Smart Mom’s Co. because

this is an extra fee of \$6.00 per person that most of the participants cannot afford at this time.

The mission of the Haverhill Informal Baby-sitting Cooperative is to emancipate parents to further their education; acquire employment, and reconnect with the community through affordable childcare. The democratic centralized structure of the cooperative will allow for duplication of the cooperative to serve the needs of parents in other geographic locations within Haverhill and adjoining communities.

Participants:

Four to forty participants will be chosen from a pool of parents recruited by HFN, HFC, Head Start and interested parents. Members will be selected based on financial need, aspiration for educational and career advancement, geographic location and desire to connect with their community. The babysitting cooperative pilot will encompass a fifteen mile radius that stretches out from the Haverhill Family Network sight. Members will continue to be recruited to address sustainability for the cooperative by the co-op members, HFN and HFC.

Community Role:

The community members involved with the cooperative will be directly affected by the opportunities presented; they will operate the cooperative, and benefit from the services offered. Community based organizations such as HFC and HFN are also involved by donating space, advertisement and assistance in fundraising

and recruitment. The Department of Transitional Assistance will be affected, as any members of the cooperative who may be receiving public assistance will be able to transition off of these services.

The stakeholders are as follows:

- Cooperative members: cooperative members are the largest stakeholders in this project as it's they who own, operate and benefit from the cooperative's services.
- Haverhill Family Network: (HFN) will become well known in the community for their generosity, which could improve their membership participation.
- Haverhill Family Connections: (HFC) will build their relationship in the community along with gain acknowledgement for their work on the development of the cooperative which in turn helps with their maintaining funding.
- CAI/Head Start: Offers CAI/Headstart parent's affordable childcare they might not otherwise be able to achieve.
- Haverhill Area Department of Social Services (DSS): A reduction in voluntary cases due to childcare issues.
- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA): Receives fewer calls for childcare assistance. Due to the newfound ability for single parents to identify and secure employment and education opportunities, their need for state and city financial subsidy decreases.

- The children of the cooperative members: Children gain valuable social skills and make new friends.
- Potential employers/educators: Employers of cooperative members will have fewer instances of absenteeism due to lack of childcare, as will the instructors at educational facilities where members may enroll.

Host organization:

Haverhill Family Network, Haverhill Family Connections and limited assistance from Community Action Incorporated (Head Start)

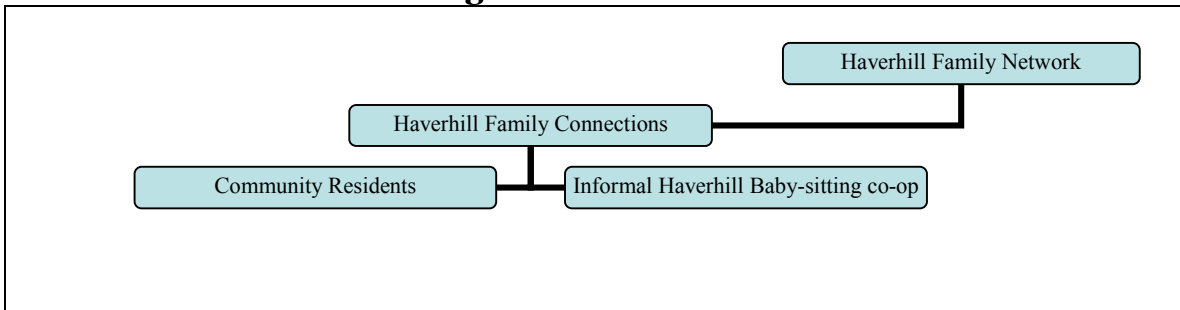
Haverhill Family Network: HFN is a community organization that is funded through grants by the Massachusetts Department of Education and sponsored by Community Action, Inc. and HIACC (Haverhill Interagency Council for Children). Haverhill Family Network has been in existence since 1997. Their mission statement is as follows: “The Haverhill Family Network operates on the belief that family education and support nurtures and protects children by strengthening the families who are responsible for their care. The Programs offered support the growth and development of all family members with the understanding that families are resources to their own members, other families, programs and the community. HFN projects emphasize prevention; build upon the strengths of families and the community to offer service that is culturally sensitive, welcoming and accessible to all Haverhill families with children ages birth through age three.” (HFN, 2002) The HFN will contribute to the baby-sitting cooperative by assisting with advertisement, recruitment and providing us

with space temporarily to hold focus groups and cooperative quarterly meetings.

The Haverhill Family Connections is a wrap around program in the Haverhill community that focuses on low income families in need of assistance with financial, mental health and community resource help. The Haverhill Family Connections is a program that is sponsored by the Department of Mental Health, Health and Education services along with a Fundraiser that occurs once a year called “Walk -n- Wheels/Row”. The Haverhill FC mission is to take a strength based family centered approach to assist families with their concerns and needs with hopes to help empower them to become a self sufficient stable family. The HFC has offered to assist the cooperative with some financial resources if they have available resources at the time to help with start up costs and continue to recruit appropriate members for the cooperative.

Community Action Inc. (Head Start) is invested in the care and education of children in the Haverhill community. No child or family will ever be turned away or not listened to. CAI (Head Start) is a family focused educational program to assist children in their educational development and parents with getting connected to their community. The CAI (Head Start) will assist the cooperative with free educational training’s that they already offer to qualified residents and provide Haverhill residents with information about the cooperative if interested.

Organizational Chart



Method:

The Haverhill Family Network is willing to assist in getting the baby-sitting co-op started by recruiting parents and help with maintaining it by allowing the co-op to hold their board meetings within the HFN facility temporarily along with the use of the copy machine for flyers and informational letters. The Haverhill Baby-sitting cooperative is a parent model childcare cooperative and therefore there are no paid staff. Parents exchange services instead of money. The co-op will not file articles of incorporation, so it is exempt from OCCS licensing procedures. Since all the members of the cooperative will be caring for other's children, each member is expected to produce a clean background check (CORI) if the members deem it necessary, and will be expected to pass a home safety inspection. The parents in the cooperative will participate in baby-sitting and the members will elect those who will keep track of the books and make the schedules. The pre-scheduled baby-sitting dates will allow parents to free up their time to secure an economic venture as previously mentioned.

Products & outputs:

Membership determination: Any parent that is in need of affordable childcare, willing to participate in a cooperative and take a leadership role at least one time during membership of the cooperative.

Fundraising: The cooperative will raise funds to assist with materials needed for operating the cooperative and holding quarterly meetings. The remainder of money will come from membership dues.

Indicators

- Income of cooperative members increase (paychecks)
- Acceptance letters from schools or grade reports
- Job training certificates

Outcomes (measurables)

- Development of the cooperative
- Number of parents involved in cooperative
- By-laws developed
- Elections held for Co-directors and Secretary/Treasurer
- Legal disclaimer discussed and signed by participants
- Children make new friends, work on social skills
- No money spent for babysitting
- Provides free time when parents need it

Outcomes (non-measurable)

- Less Domestic violence reports

- Fewer neglect and child abuse claims
- Family stabilization
- Community socialization

Implementation

- Upon determining membership, assemble members for an introduction meeting
- Conduct pre-implementation interviews to determine if parent is appropriate for cooperative
- Discuss legal requirements of paperwork, registration, information, background checks, etc. – All members must submit information for a criminal background check, and understand that all members of the cooperative have access to this information, and that all members have the right of refusal of a sitter
- Create evaluations with assistance from cooperative members
- Members create by-laws
- Elect Directors and Secretary
- Establish schedule for elections
- Determine budget and funding needs
- Begin organizing and conducting block parties and local fundraisers
- Make phone tree list and begin babysitting
- Discuss possible funding sources with HFN and HFC

Maintenance

- New members are always welcome
- Meet quarterly to welcome new members, and discuss any new business

- Elections will also be held at quarterly meetings

Evaluation

- Begin conducting evaluations at 30 day mark
- Repeat evaluations on 90-day intervals to determine success of the cooperative
- Report findings

The first evaluation will determine the following:

- Has the membership participants been selected in a timely manner?
- Have bylaws been created?
- Have the Co-directors and Secretary/Treasurer been elected?
- Has fundraising started?
- Is Cooperative operational at given date of January 2004?

Second evaluation will determine the following:

- Have participants paid membership dues?
- Have 85% of members begun employment and or education search?
- Is the cooperative continuing to recruit new members?

Third and final evaluation will determine the following:

- Have at least 70% of the participants become involved in employment/education related activities.
- Is the cooperative sustaining itself through membership dues and continuous membership recruitment?
- Has the cooperative made it possible for members to search for

employment and education?

- Has public assistance among members decreased?
- Are the members becoming more financially secure since involvement in the cooperative?

IV. Project Implementation

Implementation plan:

The implementation for this project is steady yet slow. Parents were invited to an informational meeting to educate them in regards to how a cooperative works and discuss how it can be feasible for them. Once parents felt comfortable with this information and were ready to commit to the cooperative a few dinner meetings were held to allow interested members the opportunity to familiarize with each other. Once parents felt comfortable business meetings began, by-laws created, elections held, schedules made and necessary paperwork will be discussed. After the by-laws and elections were completed and the necessary paperwork finalized parents began babysitting. Two months after babysitting has begun the initial evaluations will begin.

See appendix 1 Gantt chart and MS project document for further information

Inputs:

- Interviewed 13 cooperative members
- Create release of information to obtain CORI if the cooperative members deem it necessary. This particular group decided not to do CORI's at this time.

- Obtain CORI related to all potential cooperative members
- Established 4 memberships
- Determine budget and funding needs to be \$100
- Discuss with HFN and HFC funding resources that they can recommend or assist with

Staffing Pattern:

Due to this being a baby-sitting cooperative, each member will assume a staff role at one time during their membership and agrees to care for others' children.

Cooperative members will elect two co-directors to maintain the cooperative by-laws and a secretary/treasure to maintain the points system, the phone list, and the dues collection.

See appendix 2 for details of elected positions.

Budgeting:

The cooperative will fundraise to assist with start up costs. Fundraising will assist with covering the cost of supplies and meetings the cooperative will hold.

The cooperative will attempt to raise \$500 in initial funds.

Operation of the cooperative is measured using a points system rather than dollars. For operational purposes, currency will be measured in time points.

Sustainability will be managed through member fees. This is an issue about which members will vote, however, the initial idea is that yearly dues will cost \$25. The dues will cover all costs as described in the budget.

See Appendix 3 for budget details.

V: Monitoring/Evaluation

Management Information System:

The information needed to begin this project was gathered through community needs assessments, focus groups, surveys and informational sessions.

The main concern for the participants was recruiting and maintaining enough members to start and keep the cooperative operational. Another was how to feel ensured that their children would remain safe under the watch of another parent. These concerns were based largely on their own insecurities and trust issues. Due to this type of behavior, many “get-to-know-you” meetings were planned. Before any babysitting could occur, these parents needed to feel comfortable with one another.

At each meeting, parents were asked if they were feeling more comfortable than the last. The parents that continued to show typically stated that they were. All necessary paperwork and by-laws created are kept in MSWord and MS Excel files.

Evaluations will seek to determine the following:

Employment status before membership/after membership

Education status before membership/after membership

Job/education goals

Steps to address goals

Planning for future development

Number of children to be involved in the cooperative

Childcare options

Household income

Housing status (rent/own/Section 8)

Involvement in state agencies such as Department of Social Services or

Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Mental Health

Self-sufficiency

Demographics such as marital status, age and ethnicity

**The benefits of the cooperative will be measured in three levels:
individual, family, and community.**

Evaluations will measure the parents individually on if they have been able to secure employment and education which in turn helped their financial stability. By members securing and maintaining employment they start to show a great sense of pride and a higher self-image. The evaluations will also ask the parents questions targeting to see if they feel as if they have developed a connection to the other cooperative members which in turn gives the parents a greater sense of community.

The evaluations will measure if the families participating within the cooperative have gained financial stability to the point where they can pay rent and still be able to afford electricity and other basic necessities such as food. The children

involved with the cooperative will be evaluated to see if their social circle has grown due to being around the other members' children. The evaluation will also seek to find out if the families involved with the cooperative feel as if since their involvement they feel a greater sense of family stability due to less financial stressors and more free time for the parents.

The benefits to the community will be measured by the economic growth that will occur with the Haverhill cooperative members being able to put more of their money they are now earning into the businesses within Haverhill rather than dumping it all into childcare. When the cooperative has established itself within the community it is expected to be a model that can be duplicated within other parts of the city and will be recognized as a roadmap for other grassroots organizations. The cooperative will also provide members the ability to network with other residents within the Haverhill community.

Performance Indicators:

The object of this project is to successfully create a babysitting cooperative that enables parents the time and economic ability to work or obtain education. The indicators that this cooperative is successful are the following:

Track: How many parents stay involved in the cooperative?

Survey: Number of participating parents that are able to:

- Secure employment and retain due to cooperative
- Trainings members attend
- Education members obtain

- Family stabilization
- Recruitment of new members
- Achieve a base of at least 4 members who remain in the program for 3 months
- Fundraising cooperative initiates
- By-laws established
- Co-directors elected along with Secretary/Treasurer
- Phone tree list established
- Baby-sitting begins
- Members begin to attend community meetings
- Children begin to socialize

Summary Monitoring Table

Goals	Objectives	Monitoring	Planned timeline	Actual timeline
Member Employment and Education Identified	4 to 15 members selected		November 2003	December 2003
	Fundraising complete	Not yet began	February 2003	Not completed
	Bylaws written,	Attended meeting to write by-laws	December 2003	January 2004
	Co-directors and Secretary elected, Mtg schedule determined, recruiting methods established		December 2003	Not yet completed
	Babysitting begins	Phone tree list established	January 2004	Partial up Feb 2004
	Employment and/or education search begins		February 2004	N/A
	Employment and/or education secured		April 2004	N/A
Community Building	Parents attend Community mtgs.	Parents reported back	September to November 2003	December 2003 to February 2004
	Members communicate with each other	Phone #'s exchanged	November to December 2003	December 2003 to January 2004
	Members begin babysitting	Phone tree list established	February 2004	February 2004
	Members able to recruit new members	Flyers designed and sign up sheet started	March 2004 and continuous	N/A
Socialization	Children are introduced	Play date at HFN	December 2003 to January 2004	January 2004 to February 2004
	Babysitting begins, children interact		February 2004	February 2004
	Children's social skills build		January 2004 and continuous	February 2004

Evaluation Plan & Reporting:

An initial interview will be completed with members and then the first evaluation will be completed within 30 days and will occur quarterly thereafter. The evaluation will be a questionnaire that acquires demographic information the status on securing employment, education, since of community connections along with reductions in state funded services.

The Logic Model (should be read from bottom to top)

Long term outcomes

Decreased Domestic abuse and increase in family stability
Increased employment and income in Haverhill
Financial condition of participants improved by cost savings and higher income
Status of participants is altered through change from unemployment to employment

Intermediate Outcomes

Greater sense among parents of their rights in the childcare process
Increased sense of confidence and assertiveness in childcare
Employment obtained Education obtained
Attitude toward Childcare changed

Initial Outcomes

Less family stress Greater home stability

Output

Secretary reports on activities
25 parents regularly receive and provide baby-sitting

Activities

Baby-sitting offered in approved home

Inputs

List of approved homes
Home safety inspection
Remaining roles identified
Membership dues Current Leaders identified
Develop guidelines
Interested Low-income parents

Summary Evaluation Table

Goals	Objectives	Monitoring	Project Status
Member Employment and Education Identified	4to 15 members selected		4 members acquired
	Fundraising complete	Not yet began	Will be participating in Haverhill Kid Fest on May 15, 2004
	Bylaws written,	Attended meeting to write by-laws	By-laws finalized January 2004
	Co-directors and Secretary elected, Mtg schedule determined, recruiting methods established	Elections	Elections held March 25, 2004
	Babysitting begins	Phone tree list established	January 2004 phone tree list past out
	Employment and/or education search begins		March 2004, members begin and filling out job applications
	Employment and/or education secured		Expected by April 2004
Community Building	Parents attend Community mtgs.	Parents reported back	Parents continue to attend meetings
	Members communicate with each other	Phone #'s exchanged	Phone tree list regularly updated by Secretary
	Members able to recruit new members	Flyers designed and sign up sheet started	March 2004 and continuous
	Children are introduced	Play date at HFN	December 2003 and January 2004
Socialization	Babysitting begins, children interact	Regularly occurs at babysitting dates	Started February 2004
	Children's social skills build	Occurs at babysitting dates	January 2004 and continuous

Sustainability

Field Observation:

The cooperative is partially up and running. Currently interviews with members have occurred and are continuing. The Informal cooperative is discussing further

implementation and meetings are continuing to be held with community based organizations to secure support. The by-laws have been established. *See appendice 5*

Sustainability Elements:

The Haverhill Informal Baby-sitting cooperative will enable Haverhill residents who are members the eligibility to secure employment, education and community relations while returning economic gains that the members have made, back into their Haverhill community.

Although the Haverhill Cooperative member's financial ability may improve the baby-sitting cooperative will remain a democratically run service that membership dues are determined by the cooperative. The by-laws developed by the cooperative will also assist in maintaining how the co-op is run and will be modified if so determined by current members.

The Informal baby-sitting cooperative can remain active as long as the cooperative members continue to educate the community about what and how it works along with continuing to recruit new members.

Institutional Plan:

The Haverhill Family Network and Haverhill Family Connections will continue to recruit and advertise the Haverhill Baby-sitting cooperative. Both Community Based Organizations have ties in the community with schools, churches, and state agencies that they will be able to use in regards to promoting the Informal

Haverhill Baby-sitting cooperative.

VI. Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusion

The Informal Haverhill Babysitting cooperative has currently been slow going. The co-op originally was moving quickly with an advertisement in the Haverhill Family Network Newsletter and sign-up sheets placed in churches and libraries. Haverhill Family Network (HFN) the community based organization that was assisting with the advertisement, space, photo copies, and food had to close down due to temporary loss of funding. Many parents at that time decided to no longer participate due to not being completely comfortable with out having the backing of HFN. Once HFN received their funding back it was decided to start the babysitting cooperative again. Many of the parents involved before no longer were interested in the cooperative or lived in the new location that HFN had been relocated to.

This time around it has been a little slower in getting parents involved with the babysitting cooperative. Since the cooperatives new beginning ten parents in the HFN location attended the focus group and stated their interest in the babysitting cooperative. After the focus group was held and all ten parents still wanted to be part of the cooperative they began to hold co-op meetings. During these meetings the by-laws were established along with the co-directors and secretary elected. The cooperative did not run smoothly however because one of these ten

parents happened to be a licensed day care provider who was only in the cooperative to gain more business for herself. This member then announced that she would offer low cost childcare at her home instead of the other parents needing to donate their time to watch children. Five parents took her up on her offer. At this time there are four parents invested into the cooperative where they have revised the by-laws that can be amended at any time to suit the current cooperative members. The parents are now starting to place flyers up again in churches and libraries. They are also trying to get permission from the schools to pass flyers out for the children to take home. HFN will also be placing another advertisement in their April newsletter. With all of this advertisement the parents are hoping to get an entire new group of recruits. With the HFN moving and loosing their funding over the summer of 2003, the parent with the bad intentions and parents with insecurities about investing into the cooperative the timeline originally established has been revised several times. The cooperative hoped to be established by September 2003 but had to be delayed until December 2003 and then again until January 2004.

To protect the cooperative against dishonest members they are developing a questionnaire to rule out members who may be trying to recruit for their own daycares, although they do realize that this is not a guarantee to keep those types away. The cooperatives desire is to get people in the community to understand their mission and respect their goals of being an affordable reliable childcare provider for parents who otherwise would be without childcare. The current cooperative members have completed the home safety inspection, declined to do

CORI's at this time and have started to baby sit for each other and the children have begun to socialize with others. The members do want the cooperative to expand and have high hopes for that occurring when they set up a booth at the Haverhill Kids fest event in May 2004 located in downtown Haverhill. They are expecting that this event will help them to get their cooperative to be known within the community and to gain more members.

By April the cooperative expects to get at least four more members and finalize their fundraising plans for the May, Haverhill Kids fest event. The members are planning to assign one parent per month to attend a community meeting to learn about what events are taking place within their community and to publicize the cooperative. Due to the members attending community meetings they have learned of a food program called **Served** that all cooperative members qualify for because they technically donate their time to watch each others children. By qualifying for this program the parents can receive a large food package that feeds five people and includes meat, fruit and vegetables for as low as \$18.00. The members have realized by attending these community meetings it not only benefits the cooperative by recruiting new members but informs them of opportunities within the community.

Recommendations

When attempting to support parents in the development of a cooperative, make sure that all parties involved, including any organizations, are in agreement with the proposal and its informal structure. An informal babysitting cooperative will

not operate effectively with an inflexible structure.

Babysitting cooperatives are working effectively all over the country because the model works. To employ a successful cooperative, the parents must be in charge of it and understand that you, the observer, are not. To have a successful babysitting cooperative it is very important to have a strong parent base that is willing to recruit new members and get connected with the community.