



February 2024

Dear Prospective OPEPO Family,

Thank you for considering OPEPO as an educational option for your child. OPEPO is a multi-age, parent-supported program within the public school system.

Here is the OPEPO Enrollment Packet for the 2024-2025 school year. This packet includes:

- * This Cover Letter
- * OPEPO Overview
- * Application

This year's OPEPO open-enrollment period runs from March 1, 2024 through April 10, 2024.

Please follow these steps to apply for enrollment:

Step 1: Complete and return the **Application Form**

Completed applications can be turned in to the Salish Coast Elementary front desk or emailed to enrollment@opepo.org by the end of the day on April 10, 2024.

Step 2: Attend an **Orientation/Observation**

Select a date from those listed below and RSVP to enrollment@opepo.org to hold your spot.

- **Tuesday, March 26th from 10:30 - 11:30am** — This orientation is in-person during school hours and includes an overview of the program, opportunities to ask questions, and a short classroom observation.
Please note: Children are not permitted at the in-person orientation.
- **Thursday, March 28th from 6:00 - 7:00pm** — This evening orientation takes place in the OPEPO classroom and includes an overview of the program, opportunities to ask questions, and a visit with one of the OPEPO teachers.
Please note: There are no student-focused activities at this evening meeting.

If the orientation dates have already passed, please contact Shelly Little at enrollment@opepo.org to make other arrangements.

Both steps must be completed during open enrollment to be eligible for placement in the class or on a wait list. Those completing the application after the enrollment period will be added to a wait list, in the order received.

If you have any questions about the application process or general questions about OPEPO, please check out our website <https://www.opepo.org>. Also, feel free to contact enrollment enrollment@opepo.org.

Thank you for your interest in OPEPO!



Optional Education Program



What is OPEPO?

OPEPO is a 1st-4th grade multi-age program within the Port Townsend School District, where students work cooperatively with each other and two teachers/facilitators. OPEPO is located on the Salish Coast Elementary School campus in a double classroom. The continued success of OPEPO relies heavily on parent/guardian/family involvement both inside and outside of the classroom.

Mission Statement

OPEPO is devoted to cultivating the whole child in an engaging, respectful, multi-age environment with an emphasis on community and parent/family involvement.

Educational Philosophy

Our approach to learning is supported by time-honored educational principles and current research on child-centered learning environments. Several important features distinguish the OPEPO program from the conventional classroom:

- Multi-age classroom structure
- Inquiry based learning time
- Emphasis on active parent/family participation

Learning in a Multi-age Classroom

Staying in the same program for up to four years has advantages for families, teachers, and students.



For families, year by year they connect to a community of parents, siblings, and grandparents through shared goals and visions, through working together in the classroom and going on field trips, by completing special projects, and by building connections and friendships.

As students progress through the years, they gain confidence in themselves and discover the benefits of being mentored and mentoring. In every subsequent year, teachers gain knowledge about individual students and can therefore most effectively advance their learning.

As a component of the program's inquiry based learning time, OPEPO teachers are facilitators of learning, asking open-ended questions such as:

- What do you wonder about?
- What problems do you wish you could solve?
- What resources do you need to help you find out what you want to know?

Over time, children engaged in this way become independent learners who approach learning with confidence and joy while exploring their interests, skills, and learning styles. The critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills developed through the process of inquiry will serve them all of their lives."

Among OPEPO students, strong classroom culture emerges as values like friendship, kindness, sharing, positive communications, and mentoring are strengthened every day through classroom routines. Each student has the opportunity to contribute to the class through daily activities, with rotating responsibilities, with which there is a strong sense of cooperation and pride in self-management. The overall feeling in the classroom is one of caring, sharing, and supporting each other.

The students, teachers, and families are all essential parts of what makes OPEPO work so well. Each family is expected to contribute volunteer time per month.



Responsibilities

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

By enrolling in OPEPO, each family commits to volunteering time towards the program, with a goal of six hours a month (3 hours/month for single-parent families), including meetings. There are many ways to do this, including regular in-classroom work, field trips, enrichment activities, home projects, etc.

Parent responsibilities also include:

Attending monthly parent meetings: These are held one evening a month and last roughly 2 hours. Parent meetings are a forum for community dialogue and sharing of information; decisions are made by consensus. Child-care is available during parent meetings.

Regularly attending meetings of at least one committee or special project task force: Standing committees include: Enrollment, Vision, Fundraising, and Enrichment. Committees typically meet monthly for roughly an hour.

Being aware of and involved with your child's program: This happens through frequent contact with OPEPO staff, by attending parent conferences, and by talking with your child about school.

Every home situation is different, and we understand that meeting the requested hours of volunteer time per month can be a challenge for some families. It's true that the enrichment and family-connection activities available in the OPEPO program are planned by parents, and so sometimes require a great deal of volunteer time and effort. However, we know that there will be times when parents need to prioritize work and homelife in order to support their students. We ask that families fit OPEPO activities in where it makes sense and allows a healthy balance.

Student Responsibilities

Each OPEPO student becomes responsible for setting appropriate goals, self-evaluating to track progress, sharing knowledge with other students, and taking responsibility for their own learning.

Teacher/Facilitator Responsibilities

In addition to the district-wide curriculum goals, OPEPO teachers aim to provide students with a wide variety of resources and opportunities, facilitating the students in constructing their own knowledge. They work with students individually and collectively to create and work toward academic and social/emotional goals. They help children develop the social skills needed to express their feelings in appropriate ways, to be sensitive towards others' feelings, and to negotiate and reach consensus. Our OPEPO teachers are also kind, friendly, and fun!





OPEPO Application for Enrollment Academic Year 2024 - 2025

Application Due By Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Student Name _____

Nickname _____ Gender _____ Birthdate _____

Parent/Guardian 1 _____

Relationship _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ (home/work/cell)

OK to text YES _____ NO _____ (please check one)

Email _____

Parent/Guardian 2 _____

Relationship _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ (home/work/cell)

OK to text YES _____ NO _____ (please check one)

Email _____

Current School _____

Teacher _____ Current Grade _____

A note from the OPEPO Enrollment Committee:

Thank you for your interest in OPEPO! The information on this application is used to help get to know your family and student. The application is viewable only by the Enrollment Chair, Enrollment Records Admin, the OPEPO teachers, and Salish Coast Administration. The information on this application has no influence on your child's entering the lottery for enrollment in the OPEPO program.

1. Are other siblings applying or currently enrolled in OPEPO? Please list:

Name _____

Current Grade _____

Name _____

Current Grade _____

2. What would you like us to know about your child (strengths, needs, challenges, etc.)?

3. Why are you choosing OPEPO for your child?

4. How would you like to meet the parental participation component of OPEPO?

Parents are requested to devote 6 hours per month (3 hours per month for single-parent households) to the program. Examples of parent participation are flexible and varied, and include parent meeting attendance, committee participation, working on projects from home, in-class volunteering, field trip chaperoning, etc.

Date Received: _____

5. The OPEPO Program would like to know how to best serve the needs of your student. Has your child participated in any special needs programming in the district? Please indicate below all that apply.

Special Education _____

Title I/Chapter _____

TAG/REACH/HiCap _____

Elementary Alternative Program _____

Other _____

6. Is there anything else you would like the teachers to know about your student?

I understand that to participate in OPEPO my family is required to commit both fees and time during the school year. Fees for the 2024-2025 school year are approximately \$125 per student and are applied toward the purchase of supplies and program enrichment. *Full/partial scholarships and payment plans are available as needed.*

Parent/Guardian signature _____ Date _____

Further Information:

For your child to be eligible for enrollment in OPEPO, the following steps must be completed by the dates below.

- **Return this application to Salish Coast office by the end of the school day, [Wednesday, April 10th](#)**
- **Attend one of our scheduled orientations/observations. There will be one daytime orientation and one evening orientation:**
 - o **Tuesday, March 26th from 10:30 - 11:30am** — This orientation is in-person during school hours and includes an overview of the program, opportunities to ask questions, and a short classroom observation.
Children are not permitted at the in-person orientation/observations.
 - o **Thursday, March 28th from 6:00 - 7:00pm** — This evening orientation takes place in the OPEPO classroom and includes an overview of the program, opportunities to ask questions, and a visit with one of the OPEPO teachers.
Children are permitted to attend (please note, there are no student-focused activities at this meeting).

Date Received: _____

Student Enrollment

The applications will be reviewed in late April. Applicants will be notified by email and/or called if they are being offered a spot in the class.

Please note: In some years, more students have applied for OPEPO than there are spaces available. Because OPEPO is a family program, siblings of continuing OPEPO students have first priority when filling vacancies. Once siblings have been accommodated, other applicant names are drawn to fill the remaining spaces.