



**action pact**  
**Head Start**

# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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### COVID-19 Guidelines

**action pact Head Start will be following state licensing policies and the Office of Head Start's guidance regarding COVID-19 precautions and guidelines. Parents will be required to adhere to these policies for all children's wellbeing as well as for themselves. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.**

Volunteering is essential to all Head Start programs throughout the United States. Eighty percent (80%) of the program cost is federally funded. Twenty percent (20%) of program cost is required by the federal government to be locally funded through in-kind donations of goods/services and volunteer services donated to the program. The success of the program depends upon active participation of parents and others in the community. Your knowledge, time and talent can all contribute to this effort.

By volunteering, you will become acquainted with our local Head Start program, see its strengths and goals, and help staff make it a fun learning experience for all.

There are many ways that volunteers can contribute to the program. Each volunteer comes to the program with different experiences, skills, and talents. Each has a unique contribution to make.

#### **Definition of a Volunteer:**

The Head Start defines a Volunteer as "an unpaid person who is trained to assist in implementing ongoing program activities on a regular basis under the supervision of a staff person in areas such as health, education, nutrition, and management.

#### **Volunteer Requirements:**

A person must be 16 years of age to volunteer for our program. **Before entering a classroom**, it is our policy that ALL volunteers go through the application process. **Parent volunteers** must complete a volunteer application, Volunteer Job Description form, the "Head Start Volunteer Form" (FCP 503), which states the rules and regulations that is required of ALL volunteers, the Volunteer Acknowledgement Form, a "No Child Left Unsupervised" form and complete a Tuberculosis Screening Form. **Non-parent volunteers** must complete a volunteer application, Volunteer Job Description Form, Volunteer Acknowledgement Form, records check release form, Tuberculosis Screening Form, if applicable, a fingerprinting process, a "No Child Left Unsupervised" form and sign the "Head Start Volunteer Form". The Volunteer Form contains a "Confidentiality Agreement" section. By signing the form, all volunteers are agreeing to keep information concerning our enrollees and employees that you may be exposed to confidential. By signing the Volunteer Form, you are also agreeing that you understand that under no circumstance is corporal punishment or inappropriate isolation acceptable.

Non-parent volunteers are required to have a cleared background check, drug screen, and a fingerprinting process in addition to completing the required forms listed above. A copy of the volunteer's **DRIVER'S LICENSE** is also required.

Agency staff and volunteers are **mandated reporters**. Any suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported immediately. All volunteers will receive training on suspected child abuse and neglect, corporal punishment and reporting procedures. All volunteers are required to follow the agency's **reporting procedures and procedures for child supervision**. Each volunteer will sign a "Volunteer Acknowledgement" of training.

Only when all requirements have been met and results are in and acceptable and the volunteer receives a written notification of approval may the volunteer begin volunteering.

Also, if a volunteer plans to be present on a daily or regular basis, an interview session may be required with the Education Specialist or designee. If a volunteer is completing an internship or student teaching requirements for a college or technical school, they must **in addition** to all the above requirements provide proof that they have general liability and worker's comp insurance coverage from the institution that they are interning or student teaching for. The individual may not begin their internship/student teaching until all requirements have been met.

Special groups from the community may also volunteer for the program. However, there must be an agreement that exists between these groups and Head Start Volunteer Program identifying the role and responsibility of management of these volunteers. Each member of the group is to sign-in on the appropriate Volunteer Sign-In sheet when they visit the centers.

### **Volunteer's Role:**

- Be a positive language and behavioral role model
- Interact with children at child's level
- Respect the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Provide positive guidance techniques
- Expand on children's learning experience
- Dress appropriately for working with small children – no revealing garments
- Sign Volunteer Sign-In sheets and/or In-kind forms

### **Head Start Performance Standards:**

Head Start programs must follow the rules defined in the Performance Standards to keep in compliance with Head Start laws. A copy of the Performance Standards may be found online on the ECLKC website. Volunteers are encouraged to review them. Center supervisors can assist volunteers in finding these online and where other important issues are located.

### **Termination:**

Volunteers can be discharged immediately if a violation of Head Start policies and procedures occurs, for failing to meet standards of conduct and confidentiality, or for unsatisfactory performance of assigned duties.

This handbook was designed to help you become the best volunteer you can be. The following pages will give you examples of ways you can volunteer. We want to make your time spent with us as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.

## **CENTER VOLUNTEER**

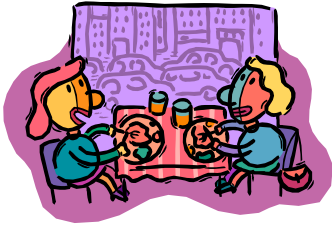
Here's how you can help the children learn from their play activities. BE PREPARED – look through the center lesson plans and ask the teacher questions. Here are some of the typical activities found at all centers:

## Arrival at School

- Let children remove their own outside clothes and find their place to put them.
- Give children assistance when they need it – encourage the children to help themselves.

## Meal Time

- This is a time for children to talk to others around the table, try new foods, learn facts about food, and practice mealtime manners;
- Let children serve themselves, pour juice, and clean up spills;
- Help them when they need it;
- Use disposable gloves when handling food;
- Sit and eat with children;
- Remind children of positive mealtime manners, i.e. use “please” and “thank you,” use napkins, sit on chair, feet on floor; and
- Talk to children about the food, their friends, and their favorite games.



## Bathroom/Hand Washing/Tooth Brushing

- Volunteers will **NOT** be asked to take children to the bathroom.
- Wash hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom and before each mealtime.
- Each child has their own toothbrush and will be provided with toothpaste. Let the children help themselves, i.e., rinse own brush.
- Children brush together in groups of two or three.
- Wipe up spills and toothpaste.



## Group Time

- This is a time for the children, teacher, and you to come together for name recognition, story time, songs, music, and games.
- Help children participate by listening, singing, answering questions, and following directions.
- Sit with the children, sing songs, and have fun!



## Free Play

- Is an opportunity for children to play and be with other children. They may choose from many toys, games, art projects, and special activities.
- Join in their games and activities. Pretend with them. Talk to them, i.e. housekeeping - “I love spaghetti. Are you making spaghetti? What’s your favorite lunch? How do you make that?”
- Encourage sharing;
- When helping with artwork, let children create their own “Masterpieces”;
- Try to spend a few minutes with each child.
- They like to feel that you are interested in what they are doing – it makes them feel good; and
- Be positive, smile, laugh, and have a good time.



## Art Helper



- Make games, posters, or signs. The teacher will supply you with all the materials you need.

## Carpentry

- Repair damaged toys, assemble new toys, or build shelves.



## VOLUNTEERING AT HOME

### Laundry

- Wash a load of doll clothes or dress-up clothes. Mend or sew items for center.



### Phone Tree



- Call the other parents to remind them of meetings or special events.

### Child Care Provider

- Provide baby-sitting for another parent who is volunteering at the center or attending a Head Start meeting.



### Home Visits



- Be at home and ready for the visit. Practice activities with your child during the week, i.e. sort laundry by colors or count socks for practice.
- Share the activities with other members of your family – let everyone be involved.

## Preparing Materials/Activities

- Check with teachers to see if you can help by preparing materials or activities for use in the classroom

## POLICY COUNCIL

- Represent your center at bi-monthly Policy Council meetings. Parent representatives attend meetings to share ideas, plan Head Start activities, and are a part of program decisions. Policy Council provides excellent leadership experience and members connect with other parents and community members.



## PARENT CENTER COMMITTEE

All Head Start parents are encouraged and responsible for being a member of this committee.

- Attend all meetings;
- Call other parents to offer a ride or get one;
- Be a meeting aide. Come early to help set up chairs, etc.



And many more special jobs...your ideas are welcome! Let your child's teacher know you are ready and willing to help. Your teacher will find things for you to help with.

Volunteers are truly appreciated. **action pact** Head Start has a volunteer appreciation program that includes:

- Volunteer incentives
- Recognitions at parent meetings, Policy Council meetings, and an annual appreciation luncheon; and
- "Parent of the Year" awards.



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**Please see your local center's site supervisor to obtain a volunteer packet and any necessary instructions.**