

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

The Center

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VISITORS WELCOME

You are entering the world of the child...

IF the furniture is uncomfortable and too small for you,
remember that it fits us just fine.

IF you must walk around our games, toys and block structures,
remember that it is through this kind of manipulation and experimentation
that we learn.

IF we are noisy as we play,
it is because we are learning to live with each other.

IF we come up to talk to you, do not be surprised.
We are open, friendly and curious. We want to know you as our friend.

ENJOY our world! When you leave we hope you carry with you some of
our enthusiasm for living and learning.

The Center Phone Directory

Child Care Director	486-6929
Head Start Director	486-6928
Education Manager	486-6925
Health Manager	486-6923
Family and Community Partnerships	486-6928 – English
	486-6925 - Spanish



The Center

Early Childhood Programs
Lake County School District R-1

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to serve and respect children and families by providing research-based early childhood services that promote the development of knowledge, life skills, and self-esteem.

Vision Statement:

The Center positively impacts the lives of children and families in Lake County by:

- Providing a developmentally appropriate, family-focused Early Childhood Care, Education and School Readiness program that meets the needs of a diverse population
- Promoting professional growth for Early Childhood providers in the community
- Serving as a community catalyst in creating a seamless, comprehensive Early Childhood Care, Education and School Readiness program where the family and community are a priority

Governing Values:

- ❖ We believe all children, families and staff must be respected for their unique strengths and abilities.
- ❖ We believe involvement of the family, regardless of its composition, is an important part of enriching each child's success.
- ❖ We believe children have the right to be in a physically, emotionally and mentally safe environment.
- ❖ We believe children learn best in an accepting, loving, and fun environment.
- ❖ We believe families are a child's first and most influential teachers.
- ❖ We believe we can support families in advocating for their child's best interest.
- ❖ We believe it is the responsibility of all staff to nurture, strengthen, inspire, and expand each child's abilities, interests and independence.
- ❖ We believe all families must have access to affordable child care.
- ❖ We believe all children must be given equal opportunities to enter formal education ready to learn.

Parent Involvement Mission: Our purpose is our work with families to involve parents in the program in ways that enhance their abilities to support their children's growth and development and to assure that the Head Start program effectively addresses the parent's own goals for their children.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

Who benefits from your presence in the school?

- 1) **Your child.** By being in the classroom, you are showing your child in the clearest way possible that his or her education is important to you. In a child's way of thinking, you do the things you think are important, and you are here, so this must be important. This can go a long way in making your child more successful in school. Learning becomes something valued in the family, which will serve as a motivator all your child's school years. In fact, studies have shown that the more involved the parents are in a child's education, the more successful he or she will be in school
- 2) **The teachers.** Contact with parents has many benefits for our teaching staff. Clearly, an extra pair of hands is always welcome. But more importantly, the better the teacher understands your relationship with your child, the more he or she will learn about how best to encourage and assist your child.
- 3) **The other children in the classroom.** The more positive role models the children have, the more they learn to trust and respect others. A mix of cultures, languages and backgrounds is very enriching for children.
- 4) **You.** It may take a little time to feel comfortable in the classroom; so please take advantage of the volunteer training we have available. The teachers will provide guidance for you in the areas that need assistance. You will meet new people, get to know your child's friends and learn more about your own child by observing him or her at play with other children. You may see new ways of helping your child learn or new methods of modifying negative behaviors by watching how the teachers deal with the children.

Please remember to honor your volunteer commitment in the classroom. If there is no way you can arrange your schedule for time in the classroom, we can always find other ways for you to help, so please ask!

TIPS FOR CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

Here are some tips to help make your volunteer experience a positive one for both you and your children.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

- ✓ Always sign in at the front office and wear a visitor pass.
- ✓ Record your hours on the classroom In-Kind sheet.
- ✓ Remember, anything seen or heard in the classroom is CONFIDENTIAL. It is important that volunteers do not discuss matters concerning the children or families outside of the school.
- ✓ **Children should not be left alone at any time.**

TALK TO THE TEACHER

Ask the teacher what specific task he or she wants you to do that day. You can also check the daily schedule, lesson plans, and ask about any special activities and classroom rules.

Tell the teacher what you feel comfortable doing at first. Let the teacher know what you especially like to do and what special talents you have.

MEET THE CHILDREN

It takes time for young children to get to know new people. Some react by being shy, others can be silly. Please understand, they have no personal feelings against you, but they need time to get to know you.

- Show that you are interested in what they are doing by interacting with them in a friendly way, with a smile and a hello in a pleasant tone of voice.
- Use their names as soon as you can.
- Talk with the child at their level, face to face. This may mean kneeling down or sitting in a small chair.
- Go to the child you wish to speak with instead of yelling across the room. Really listen to the child talk, if you want to have the child talk to you.

INTERACT WITH THE CHILDREN

Small children actively participate in their own learning. The preschool classroom looks and operates differently than an elementary classroom. Routines are structured, but what happens during the day varies. Young children learn as they play with materials and share experiences with other children and adults. The following are some guidelines to help you be responsive to the total classroom situation.

1. STATE SUGGESTIONS OR GIVE DIRECTIONS IN A POSITIVE MANNER

A positive suggestion is one which tells a child ***what to do*** instead of pointing out ***what not to do***. It makes help seem constructive rather than limiting and interfering.

Examples : "Blocks are to build with – let's make a road" *instead of* "Do not throw the blocks."

"Sand stays in the sand pile" *instead of* "Don't take sand over to the grass."

"Walk while you carry scissors" *instead of* "Stop running with scissors in your hand."

"Rocks will hurt someone if they are hit – Let's get a rubber ball and throw that" *instead of* "Don't throw rocks."

Long explanations are often lost on young children. A short, positive statement is more meaningful and effective.

2. USE YOUR VOICE AS A TEACHING TOOL

Use gentle words and tone of voice to help the child feel confident and reassured. The most effective speech is soft, simple, direct, and slow.

3. NEVER ATTEMPT TO CHANGE BEHAVIOR BY USING WORDS WHICH MAY MAKE A CHILD FEEL LESS RESPECT FOR HIMSELF

Do not blame or shame a child by making them feel guilty. It is important to use constructive ways of influencing behavior to promote good self-esteem.

4. AVOID MAKING COMPARISONS BETWEEN CHILDREN

Do not encourage unnecessary competition by comparing one child to another.

5. AVOID SHOWING CHILDREN HOW TO MAKE AN ART PROJECT

If you create a model at the art table, a child will be more likely to try and copy your creation. Instead allow the child to use art as a means to creatively express themselves while they develop fine motor skills. You may ask the child, "Tell me about your picture" or "I see you used red in your painting". Write the child's name and the date on the picture. Parents will cherish it in future years!

6. OFFER SUGGESTIONS AND ASSISTANCE

You may have some ideas for building with blocks. Say, "Try the long blocks here" or "Maybe two of these are the same as one of these". Assist children in returning blocks to the shelf in the correct cubbies. "All the little blocks go here, all the big blocks go here."

7. GIVE CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME INDEPENDENT

This does not mean to deny a request for help – only to leave the child on their own long enough to try the task independently. Encourage them and provide support. Often you need only to reassure a child of their own abilities. "You can do it" or "I will help if you need it". Recognize and encourage independence in a child. Praise the child for accomplishing the task and for their effort in trying.

ATTEND TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer training is available upon request. You will go through an orientation process similar to new staff. You may also check out a DVD on how to be a volunteer. Please see the Family and Community Partnerships Manager for more information. We also have many other videos and books in our resource library on topics of interest to our families and caregivers. Many of these resources were purchased by our Policy Council.

CPR and First Aid are offered each year to parents, staff, and private childcare providers. Parenting classes are held in the building twice a year. This class is also offered in Spanish.

Parents and volunteers are invited to most trainings that are offered to staff. Our trainings address topics such as conflict resolution, nutrition, and stress management. Parent meetings or "Family Fun Nights" are also held several

times a year. Topics covered at these meetings vary yearly from literacy and child development to parenting and nutrition. Please check your Parent Handbook Calendar, the newsletter, and your child's cubby for information on these training opportunities.

RECORD YOUR HOURS

Each classroom has a form for volunteers to sign in and out on. It is very important to record your volunteer hours as in-kind, whether, at home or in the classroom. In-kind hours provide a match for federal grants, which help support our program.

Hours are calculated and entered into the computer. These figures are included in annual federal reports.



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

What can I do if I cannot visit the classroom during the day?

PARENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS aka "FAMILY FUN NIGHTS"

As the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in preschool, ***you*** are an important member of a group called the Parent Committee. Meetings are held a minimum of 4 times each year at Family Fun Nights.

If you are a Head Start parent your roles and responsibilities on the Parent Committee are:

- Electing Policy Council representatives
- Providing input into program curriculum
- Participating in activities
- Bringing parents together to share common interests
- Participating in the interview and staff recruitment process

OTHER COMMITTEES

At The Center we have several committees that meet throughout the year.

- Education Committee – discussions about curriculum and goals
- Nutrition Committee - discussions about menu choices and Food Friends
- Family Partnerships – discussions about communication between school, family, and community
- Health Advisory Committee – discussions on community health issues and resources

We welcome your participation and value your input. We often make changes to the program based on suggestions and feedback from the families we serve.

POLICY COUNCIL

The Policy Council is made up of parents of Head Start children, who are elected by the Parent Committee, and members from the community, who are appointed by the elected members. The roles and responsibilities of the Policy Council include input and approval on grant applications, staff policies, policy decisions, and program assessment. Head Start could not operate effectively without this important board. Members may serve up to three years and must be elected annually. If you are interested in serving on this board, please contact any Head Start staff member.

CURRICULUM PLANNING

Most Fridays, our teachers plan classroom activities for the upcoming week. The teachers welcome your ideas and suggestions. We value parents and families as their child's first teachers. You know better than anyone what your child's interests are. Planning days and times are listed in your parent handbook and your classroom calendars. Please come with your ideas, call and leave a voice mail message, or send a note or email to your child's teacher with your suggestions.

AT HOME

You can volunteer at home by asking the teachers if there is any cutting or organizing that you can take home, complete, and return. Preparing weekly projects can take a great deal of time and your help is always appreciated. Your child will also receive monthly "Practice Packs" which include activities you can do at home with your child. These activities have been chosen to help your child develop certain school readiness skills.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Your involvement in the community, with friends, in church, in schools, on boards, or in local government is essential to their effectiveness. This kind of advocacy also gives you the opportunity to speak out about the needs of your family and your school. Please check your child's cubby for flyers about upcoming community events.



INFORMATION

How do I know what is happening in the building?

We share information with families in many ways. Your child's teacher or the preschool offices are always available to answer your questions.

Information is also shared through:

- Notices in your child's cubby
- Monthly newsletter
- Signs
- Bulletin Boards
- Parent Teacher Conference
- Home visits
- Parent Orientation
- Family Fun Night
- Staff voice mail

Please check your child's backpack daily for notices!

BULLETIN BOARDS

A parent board is in the front lobby and in the Preschool hallway. The following information is posted: Policy Council minutes, Lake County Early Childhood Council minutes, School Board minutes, Community Complaint process, Childcare license information and training opportunities.

Bulletin Boards are located outside each classroom in preschool. Weekly activities and notices are posted and updated regularly. Please take a moment to read them.

THE CENTER POLICIES

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER

Any adult whose child does not attend The Center and wishes to volunteer on a regular basis must follow the following procedures:

- 1) Obtain a background check (fingerprint check) through the Lake County Sheriff's office.
- 2) Complete an application with three local references
- 3) Read the volunteer handbook, attend orientation, and watch the volunteer training video
- 4) Schedule volunteer time with the Director for approval
- 5) First Aid/CPR recommended but not required

REGULAR VOLUNTEERS

A "regular volunteer" at The Center is any adult who volunteers more than 2 days per week for at least one hour. A regular volunteer must follow the same health guidelines and background checks as an employee. The volunteer will receive a packet of forms to complete. A TB screen and physical is required. The Head Start program will cover the cost for a Head Start parent volunteer at the Lake County Public Health office.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Volunteers, staff members and parents working in any programs at The Center will maintain confidentiality and will respect each family's rights to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life.

Except in cases of abuse or neglect, no information will be disclosed on any Center child or family member. Staff members who suspect abuse of any kind MUST report that information to the Administrator. Any volunteer or parent, while in the building, who witnesses any kind of suspected behavior, must report that information to the classroom teacher. The teacher will then document that information and report to the Administrator.

DISCIPLINE

The staff is responsible for classroom discipline. They set the limits for children to follow and the consequences for not following them. As a volunteer, you will be supporting their procedures. It is important to discuss these procedures ahead of time so you can provide consistent guidance.

Remember to model good behavior yourself and to recognize others who are doing the right thing. Ignore poor behavior which is attention getting, provided it is not hurting anyone else or disrupting learning. Keep your voice low. Children's voices will get louder as your voice does. Be understanding of the attention span of small children. This is not usually any longer than 10 or 15 minutes.

If you know you will be volunteering beforehand, discuss it with your child so he/she will know what to expect. If possible, notify the teacher so she can set up a plan for you. If you plan to stay for lunch, let the teacher know so she can add you to the lunch list.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate dress is required at The Center. Clothing should be neat, comfortable and clean. Clothing should allow staff or volunteers to participate in all activities.

Please do not wear low-cut or revealing clothing, bare midriff or short tops. Skirts should be of a length sufficient to allow bending, reaching, participating on the playground, and sitting on the floor playing with the children. Appropriate shorts may be worn during summer months.

Keep in mind that you will be doing a lot of walking, standing, sitting on the floor, and playing on the playground, so shoes and clothing should be appropriate and comfortable for these purposes.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

The Lake County School District R-1 prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or a controlled substance on district property.

Any employee or volunteer knowingly in the possession of or under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substances shall be suspended or removed from the building.

Smoking is not permitted on school property.

HEAD START POLICY ON FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES FOR PARENTS

Head Start parents who volunteer in the classroom for a minimum of 1 ½ hours (or arrive by 10:30 AM) may receive a free lunch in the room with their child. Please notify the teacher that you plan to eat with your child as early as possible.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

HANDWASHING

All staff and all other adults working in the class rooms will teach and model appropriate hand washing practices in order to lower the risk of spreading communicable diseases.

Procedure

Staff shall supervise children's hand washing to assure adequacy of the procedures. Staff is responsible for ensuring children dry their hands completely.

Staff, children and volunteers shall wash their hands whenever hands come into contact with body fluids and at the following times:

- Before food preparation, handling, or serving. (including setting the table)
- After toileting or changing diapers.
- After assisting a child with toilet use.
- Before and after eating meals or snacks.
- After handling pets or other animals.
- Before and after using disposable gloves.
- After coughing or sneezing.
- After inspecting for lice.
- After using the water or bean table.
- After playing in the gym.
- Coming in from outside.
- Before and after giving medication.
- Before and after applying sunscreen.

Clear, simple hand washing procedures will be posted in all the classrooms. Use the following procedure:

- Wet hands with water and then add soap.
- Use friction to work up lather and wash hands for at least ~~10-20~~ 20 seconds out of the stream of water.
- Rinse well under a stream of water.
- Dry hands thoroughly, with a single paper towel.
- Turn off faucet with a paper towel, if possible.

ACCIDENTS, ILLNESS, INJURIES, MEDICATION

****As a volunteer to our program, you will never be left in a position where you are the main decision maker for children, or be put in a position of authority where you would be held solely responsible for children's safety in an emergency. The following information is provided to you from our regular employee handbook, so that you will have some general knowledge about these procedures and will feel confident should a situation of child illness or injury arise. This information may also be helpful to you in identifying a situation in which you notice something that should be brought to a staff member's attention.****

In case of an accident, injury or illness at The Center, the adult in charge is responsible for taking immediate action. Exclusion will be based on whether there are adequate facilities and staff available to meet the needs of both the ill child and other children in the group. If a child appears ill, the teacher will take the child to the office for evaluation. If based on the following criteria the child should be sent home, the office staff will call a parent or guardian to come and pick the child up. Some communicable diseases must be reported to the public health authorities so that control measures can be used. A list of these diseases will be kept in the front office. Parents are to notify the office within 24 hours after a child has developed a communicable disease. The telephone number of the local health department is listed in the office. Parents of children who may have been exposed to a child with a communicable disease or reported condition will be informed about the exposure according to the recommendations of the local health department.

All caregivers will obtain immediate medical help for the following conditions :

Get Medical Help Immediately

For some conditions, caregivers need to get medical help immediately. When this is necessary and a teacher must contact the parent without delay, tell the parent to come right away. The teacher may also have the parent tell the doctor that you will be calling because you are with the child. If the parent or the child's doctor is not immediately available, contact the program's health consultant or EMS for immediate medical help.

The teacher will tell the parent to come right away and get medical help immediately when any of the following things happen:

- Any child looks or acts very ill or seems to be getting worse quickly.
- Any child has neck pain when the head is move or touched.

- Any child has a stiff neck or severe headache.
- Any child has a seizure for the first time.
- Any child acts unusually confused.
- Any child has uneven pupils (black centers of the eyes).
- Any child has a blood-red or purple rash made up of pinhead-sized spots or bruises that are not associated with injury.
- Any child has a rash of hives or welts that appear quickly.
- Any child breathes so fast or hard that he or she cannot play, talk, cry, or drink.
- Any child has a severe stomach ache that causes the child to double up and scream.
- Any child has stools that are black or have blood mixed through them.
- Any child has not urinated in more than 8 hours and the mouth and tongue look dry.
- Any child has continuous clear drainage from the nose after a hard blow to the head.
- Any child that has an allergic reaction to food or medicine.

Exclusion Policy

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Children will be EXCLUDED if:

- The child's illness prevents the child from participating in routine activities.
- The illness requires more care than childcare staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of other children in the group.
- Keeping the child in childcare poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults whom the child will come in contact.
- The following symptoms require immediate consideration: Fever, Rash, Abdominal Pain, Unusual Irritability Behavior, Sore or Red Throat, Upper Respiratory Infection, Diarrhea (repetitive), Vomiting (from infection), Impetigo, Lice, Ring Worm, Pink Eye with accompanying pus coming from the eye, Temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, and Severe Coughing.

Specific Condition that DO NOT require Exclusions are:

- Children who have a type of germ in their bowel movements or urine that can cause disease, but that is not giving any symptoms to the child whose stool or urine contain the germ.
- Children with conjunctivitis (pinkeye), eyes that have a clear watery eye discharge and do not have any fever, eye pain, or eye or eyelid redness.
- Children with a rash, but no fever or change in behavior.
- Children need not to be excluded from any child care program if they have only mild respiratory illness that poses no risk to others.

- Children with Cytomegalovirus infection, carriers of Hepatitis B, and HIV infection.

Accident reports must be filled out when a child has an accident or when the child arrives at school with visible marks. Staff members who witness the accident will fill out the report. The accident reports will be reviewed and initialed by a director or manager before the parent/guardian signs the accident report the day of the accident. Parents will receive the yellow copy of the accident report. All accident reports will go to the front office to be signed by the principal. A copy of a completed incident report form will be filed in the child's file. The Administrator will place an order for correction on any hazards that have been identified.

Only staff trained in medication administration is allowed to administer medicine to children, with parent and physician written consent.

As a volunteer to our program, you will never be left in a position where you are the main decision maker for children, or be put in a position of authority where you would be held solely responsible for children's safety in an emergency. The following information is provided to you from our regular employee handbook, so that you will have some general knowledge about these procedures and will feel confident should a situation of child illness or injury arise. This information may also be helpful to you in identifying a situation in which you notice something that should be brought to a staff member's attention.

EVACUATION PLAN AND FIRE DRILLS

DRILLS

- Fire or lock down drills will be conducted once a month. Evacuation routes will be posted by the door of each classroom. Teachers will take their First Aid fanny pack and red emergency bag with them. Management staff will check bathrooms and classrooms to ensure no children are left behind.
- Fire drills will be held monthly. The timing of the fire drills will vary to include early morning, mealtimes, and afternoons.
- A director will give the all clear sign when children and staff can return to the building.

- A representative of the fire department will observe at least one drill per year.

EVACUATION PLAN

- Staff/child ratios will be maintained and the children will be evacuated to the Senior Center building behind The Center on West 6th Street or any other School District building. The secretary will notify the appropriate agencies.
- The secretary will carry emergency contact information from the facility to the new site. Teachers will be responsible to carry attendance records to the new site and compare attendance at the new site to make sure no children or staff have been left behind.
- Parents will be notified by telephone where to pick up their child.
- All new staff will receive in-service training on the evacuation plan.

FIRE

- Anyone who discovers smoke or fire will pull the fire alarms located in the hallways.
- Staff will exit with their children following the posted evacuation procedures.
- When exiting room, close window and close doors as they leave.
- The director will check that all areas of the building have been evacuated, and will close doors and windows in those rooms that have not been closed by the teachers.
- Any staff not with children will use the fire extinguisher where necessary and safe.
- The Administrator will report the fire to the childcare licensing agency within 24 hours.



THE PARENT'S PLEDGE

- ❖ I will show my children I love them every day through words and physical affection.
- ❖ I will listen to my children and let them know I value what they say.
- ❖ I will praise my child's accomplishments and efforts towards accomplishment.
- ❖ I will have realistic expectations for my children. I will allow them to make their own mistakes and learn from those experiences.
- ❖ I will encourage my child to meet new challenges and have new experiences.
- ❖ I will respect my children as individuals even if I don't always agree with them.
- ❖ I will enjoy my children and make time to share interests and appreciate one another.
- ❖ I will love my children unconditionally. I will let them know they are lovable, worthwhile and valuable human beings.