

Volunteer Handbook

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HEAD START

Absaroka, Inc.

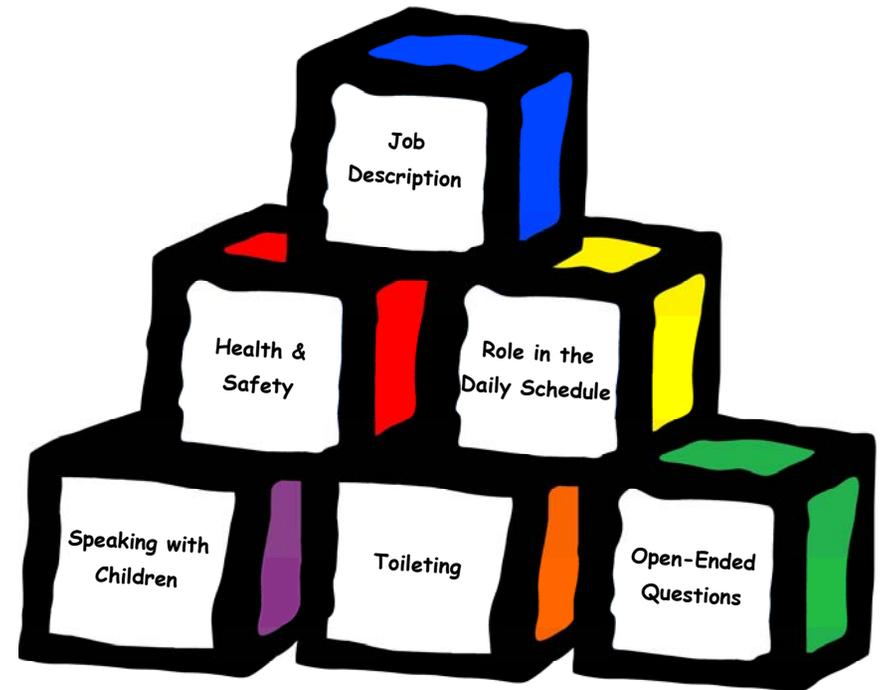
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Essential Volunteer Knowledge

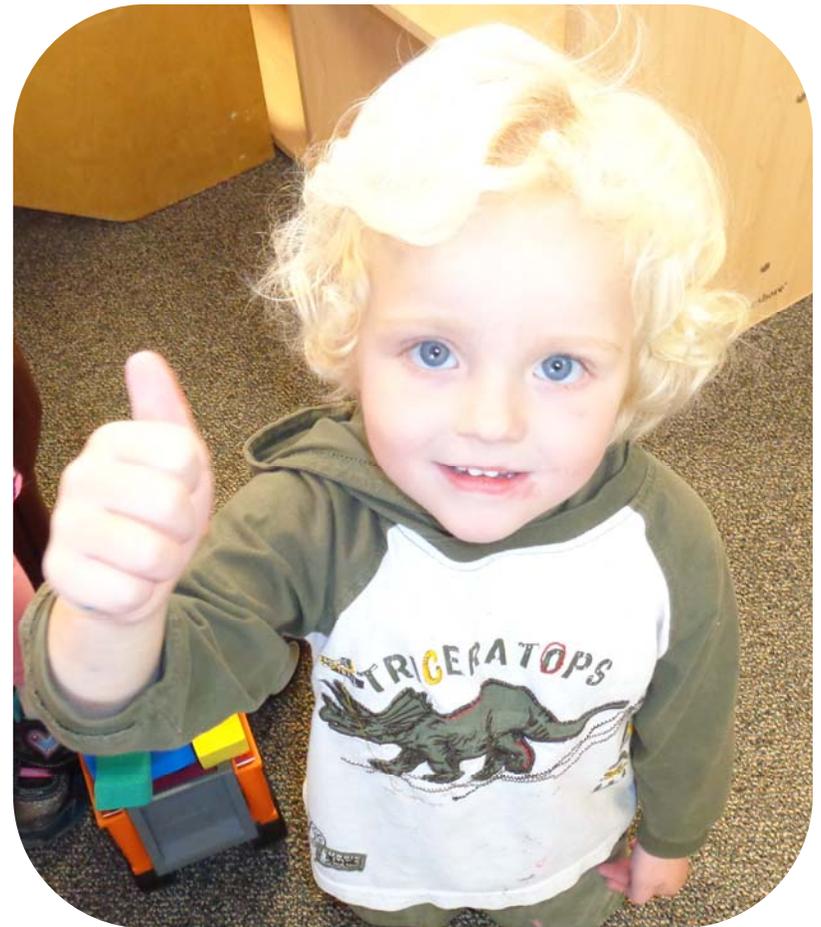
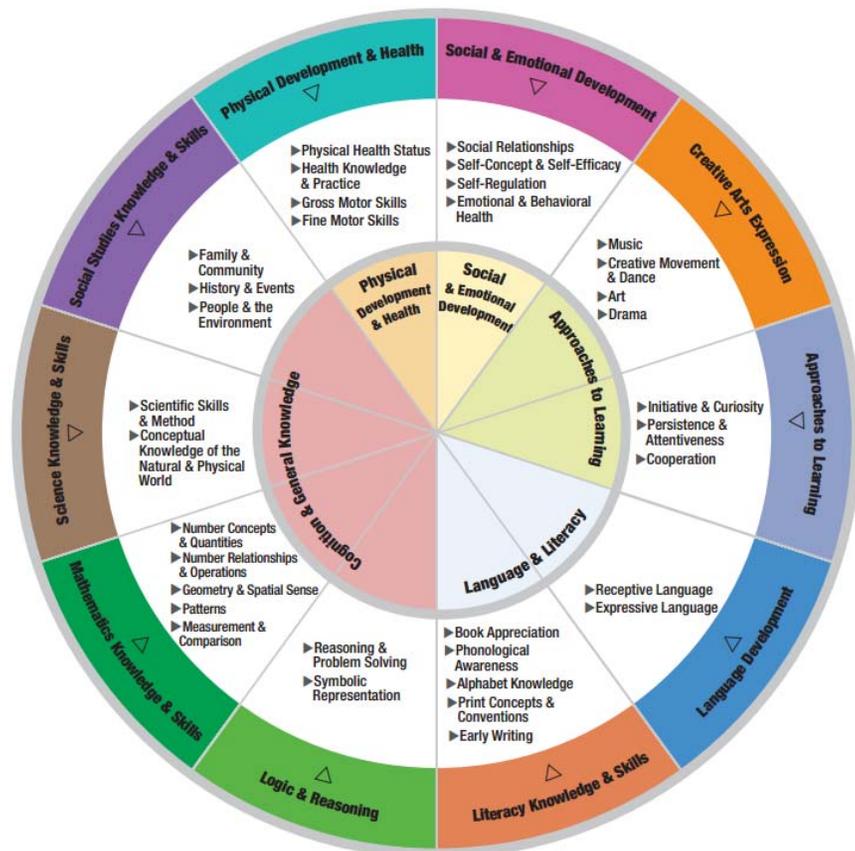


These are the topics that you should be familiar with as a Head Start volunteer. Please review the provided materials and ask your center staff any questions you may have.

Head Start Child Development & Early Learning Framework

The Office of Head Start has included several training videos on their web page. These are helpful for people new to the program and provide more understanding of a Head Start classroom. An overview video can be found at eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/hscdelf-video. There are several shorter videos covering assorted topics at eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/ISS/ISS-library. The following videos are recommended in order of relevance for volunteers:

- Engaging Children in Conversations
- Expansions
- Fostering Children’s Thinking Skills
- Providing Feedback
- Thick and Thin Conversations
- Making Learning Meaningful
- Scaffolding Children’s Learning
- Using the Scientific Method
- Asking Questions
- Novel Words



Thank you for volunteering with Absaroka Head Start,

This handbook has information to prepare you to be helpful and confident in the classroom. As children explore the world and learn to interact with it, they become problem solvers. Most of us naturally lend a hand when someone is struggling so it can be difficult to just watch. Your job will be to assist this process only when needed. Remember, everything is difficult until we learn to do it.

Be kind, be caring, be patient and you’ll do GREAT!



Your Day

Before going into the classroom, put your coat and personal items away. Check with a staff member for a good place to store your items while volunteering. Your personal items must be out of reach of children at all times.

- Sign-In each day
- The schedule is posted on the wall. It is a good idea to look at it so you know what you will be doing.
- Review the lesson plans with the classroom teacher before children arrive. Look for some activities that you might want to

assist with.

- Ask the teacher if there are any special projects or activities that may need your help.
- Wear comfortable clothing and remember that Head Start can be a messy place to visit. Comfortable clothing also enables you to get down on the floor with children and participate in their daily activities.
- Be sure to wash your hands after working with children and before food service. Washing hands is the best way to stop the spread of illness.

Checklist for Creating Open-Ended Questions

A question is open-ended if it meets any one of the following criteria:

- Allow the child a variety of ways to respond.
- Suggest that there are many possible responses.
- Allow the child an opportunity to observe without responding.
- Allow the child to develop a hypothesis (thinking and problem solving) at his/her own level.
- Allow the child an opportunity to make a prediction.
- Allow the child an opportunity to test an idea.
- Allow the child an opportunity to evaluate the hypothesis.

Sample Open-Ended Questions

- Tell me about....
- What can we do with it....
- What does it feel, look, smell or taste like....
- What is happening to....
- What else can you do with this....
- What do you think would happen....
- How are things alike or how are they different....
- What would you use this for....
- Where could these come from....
- If that doesn't work, what else might you try...

- Use of food as reward
 - Abusive or profane language
 - Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment or emotional abuse, including shaming, humiliating, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child
 - Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet
 - Bribes, false threats or false choices
 - Retaliating or doing to the child what s/he did to someone else
 - Labeling a child as "bad" or otherwise implying that s/he is a problem, rather than the behavior
- Staff members will also refrain from discussing a child's challenging behavior in front of the child whenever possible, and will never do so in front of other children or families. Use of any inappropriate child discipline methods by faculty or volunteers will be grounds for immediate disciplinary action.

stop kicking. We'll find something else for you to do."

- Share our own feelings (happy, sad, mad or afraid) about certain behaviors: "I get scared when you climb on the bookshelf."
- Help children deal with frustration and anger through words or pretend play.
- Focus on the child's behavior, not on the child's value as a person.
- Help children understand the consequences of their actions, and use problem-solving skills to develop solutions.
- Encourage children's growing sense of independence.
- Acknowledge when children show self-control.
- Help children refrain from dwelling on mistakes, so they can learn to move on.

Time away from an activity can allow a child the chance to cool off and regain control; however, this strategy is used only rarely, for very objectionable, out-of-control or repeated antisocial behavior.

Unacceptable Discipline Methods

The following are prohibited for staff members at all times, under any circumstances:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, squeezing and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom

Volunteer's Role in the Daily Schedule

These are the activities you will find in the schedule. Teachers are able to gauge the energy level and focus of the class and have the flexibility to rearrange the activities depending on the needs of the children so the order may vary.

Arrival & Departure

- Greet them individually, by name if possible.
- Help the children with their outerwear if necessary. Remember children take longer to zip, button and tie, but many of them can do it by themselves. Help and encourage them if needed.
- Help distribute artwork and notes home, as directed by the teacher.

Bathroom

Only regular, approved volunteers may assist children with toileting.

- Children (and adults) need to wash their hands before eating and after going to the bathroom. They may also need to clean up after a "messy" art project. Model good hygiene by washing your hands too.
- Avoid wasting supplies. Encourage 1 or 2 squirts of soap and 1 or 2 towels.
- Encourage children to be independent when zipping, snapping, etc.

Meals

Recite the poem "Let's try to be polite in everything we do. Remember to say please pass and not forget thank you."

- All adults are required to sit with children during meals.
- This is a good time to visit with children. Talk with the children about the different kinds of foods, their family, activities that they did at school, etc.
- Reinforce table manners.
- Children serve themselves family style. It helps them develop self-help skills and self-esteem.
- Encourage children to try foods however the decision of what and how much to take is theirs. It is Head Start policy that we never require children to eat everything on their plate or finish one kind of food before they have seconds on a different type. All of the food that is served is nutritious and meets USDA guidelines.
- Children are responsible for cleaning up their own place at the table. When buckets are brought out, children will scrape their



plates and separate dishes in tubs.

- Spills will occur. Remember, it is a natural process to be unsuccessful at something new they are learning. Be positive and let the child have the opportunity to clean up the spill.
- If children are being too active, remind them quietly that it's time to eat.
- Meals are an important time to spend talking and interacting with the children. Do not visit with other adults and exclude the children at your table.
- You may be asked to help by wiping off tables or with brushing teeth after meals.

Circle Time

Reading, Telling Stories, Singing, Finger Plays...

- The children will move to the circle area. You can help the teacher clean up and then join the children.
- Sit with the children. You may need to sit near a child who is restless. Sometimes a child will not want to participate in circle time. Allow the teacher and the aides to discuss the classroom rules and routines with the child. They will handle all disruptions while you are volunteering at the center.
- Participate along with the children— join in with singing, finger plays, etc.

