



Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, Inc. Volunteer Handbook

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Welcome

We are so excited that you are considering volunteering in our program! It is our pleasure to welcome you to Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, Inc. (Plaza) and to inform you that volunteers are an integral part of the services to the children and families in the Early Head Start and Head Start program.

An excellent program calls for many people to work together, sharing their talents, knowledge and energy, so that children can receive the greatest benefit. With this in mind, Plaza staff are delighted you are interested in offering your time, talents and energy for the benefit of all children and families enrolled in our program.

Plaza has an excellent achievement record, partly due to the dedication and enthusiastic spirit of employees, parents, volunteers and community partners. These individuals have contributed to Plaza's success and have helped the program develop a reputation of high-quality community services.

Plaza offers a variety of opportunities for parents, extended family, community members and college students to participate as volunteers in the program. When vacancies occur, volunteers often apply for regular positions and may become employed in Plaza programs. In addition, as a volunteer in one of the Head Start/Early Head Start programs, you are helping us to meet our required non-federal share each year. In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, non-profit programs such as Plaza, are required to obtain at least a 20% community match (i.e. in-kind or non-federal share) primarily raised through volunteer time, donation of equipment and supplies, and donated space.

Once again, thank you for volunteering your services to the program.

Sincerely,



Norayma Cabot
Executive Director

Purpose

This Volunteer Handbook is designed to acquaint volunteers with Plaza and to provide information to frequently asked questions regarding volunteering in the program. We intend for this Volunteer Handbook to offer two-way communication: what volunteers can expect from Plaza and what we expect from volunteers. As mentioned earlier, volunteers are important to Plaza services and community relations.

The policies and procedures set forth in this handbook are intended to help foster a well-organized and productive volunteer program which supports Plaza's mission, vision and philosophy.

While this handbook gives basic information to parents and other volunteers, they are always welcome to ask specific questions at any time. Volunteers may contact any Plaza employee, including the Site Supervisor, Education Coordinator, Assistant Director of Program Services and Human Resources representative at 526.776.1301.

Prior to volunteering in the program, individuals must read the Volunteer Handbook, become familiar with the program and complete the required volunteer forms.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services is to empower families to become self-sufficient by providing educational opportunities, support services, and community resources.

Program Philosophy

Our philosophy is best expressed through the organization's set of core beliefs which are:

- ✓ All cultures and beliefs should be respected and acknowledged.
- ✓ Every child deserves a safe and secure learning environment.
- ✓ Families are essential partners in their children's education.
- ✓ Early intervention is the key to educational success.
- ✓ Embracing diversity enriches children's learning.
- ✓ Parents should be empowered as advocates for their children.
- ✓ All children deserve an early childhood education that inspires them to reach their full potential.

Program Vision

We believe that children learn best when they are actively involved through first hand learning experiences. Our program is designed to provide each child with maximum opportunities for development in cognitive, social, physical and emotional areas. The classroom sets the stage for learning by providing a safe attractive environment with appropriate developmental materials and opportunities for children to make effective choices and decisions. The team approach to teaching can best provide the flexibility for individual teaching styles that allow a balance of child initiated and adult initiated activities. This approach includes on-going observations and a curriculum that meets the needs of all children including those with special needs.

We believe in the importance of parent and teacher collaboration that is necessary for a positive family-school relationship. Children will develop to their utmost potential in an atmosphere of respect and trust whereby parents, as the primary educators of their children, are active participants in the education process both at home and school.

Program Goals

1. To utilize the child's individual needs and interests in planning activities for further growth and development.
2. To encourage his or her participation in learning through a wide variety of materials, activities and learning styles.
3. To help prepare the child with necessary school readiness skills.
4. To assist the child in practicing good personal health, safety and nutrition habits.

5. To give the child opportunities to develop responsibility and independence.
6. To provide a safe, healthy and fun environment for the growth and development of children.
7. To enhance the child's primary language and communication skills.
8. To maintain the child's culture.
9. To encourage and develop the child's self-help skills.
10. To utilize a bilingual/multicultural approach to cognitive and language development.
11. To encourage the development of self-esteem and respect for all people.
12. To ensure active participation in a full range of learning experiences.

Types of Volunteers

According to the Head Start Performance Standard (1304.3(20), "volunteer" is defined 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, transportation, nutrition, and management. All volunteers are expected to complete a volunteer orientation and required volunteer forms.

Occasional Volunteer: Volunteers occasionally drop in for only a few hours every once in a while and spend time in classrooms helping out or doing other activities for the program (e.g., yard work, kitchen duties, office duties).

Regular Volunteer: Volunteers work in the program at least sixteen (16) hours or more a week on a regular basis.

Parents as Volunteers: Parents are always welcome in the classroom. In some instances, a child may be best served if his or her parent volunteers in a different classroom than that to which the child is assigned. Or, the parent may be asked to volunteer in another part of the program.

The benefits to parents of volunteering or working in a program are many. For example, a parent can gain experience that may be useful in a future or current job. The parent or family member who volunteers can also more effectively reinforce the child's learning at home.

Volunteer Requirements

In accordance with state licensing regulations, all volunteers must be at least 18 years old and be in good health to prevent exposure of health risks to children in the program.

All volunteers, including parents, are required to submit a **Tuberculosis (TB) Risk Assessment Questionnaire** prior to volunteer assignment. The TB risk assessment

must be administered by a licensed health care provider (i.e. physician, physician assistant, or registered nurse). If TB risk factors are identified, the health care provider will conduct a TB examination, including a TB test. The results of the test must be submitted to the agency prior to volunteer assignment.

Please note: The agency will reimburse the volunteer for costs of the TB test and/or chest x-ray, if required.

Plaza is committed to providing a safe environment for children, families and employees in the program. In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards and Los Angeles County of Education procedures, regular volunteers that work at least sixteen (16) hours or more a week must complete and successfully clear a Criminal Records Check (CRC). Volunteers convicted of certain crimes not cleared by California Community Care Licensing Division will not be eligible to participate in the volunteer program.

Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Volunteers have rights too and we want to ensure that volunteers know how we expect them to be treated. If at any time volunteers have concerns, please contact any Plaza employee, including Teachers, Education Coordinators and Assistant Director of Program Services at 562.776.1301.

As a Plaza volunteer, you have the **right to:**

- Be treated with respect
- Have the same working conditions as employees doing similar tasks
- Receive feedback on the quality of work, including areas needing improvement
- Participate in training that will enhance volunteer performance and personal development
- Be kept informed about program activities and calendar changes
- Receive recognition for contributions to the program on an ongoing basis
- State complaints or grievances in accordance with agency procedures
- Be given meaningful work
- Be open to suggestions and directions and ask for specific expectations
- Ask questions when teachers are not working with children
- Be aware of Head Start Performance Standards
- Feel appreciated for your contribution

As a Plaza volunteer, you have the **responsibility to:**

- Arrive on time, report absences and perform assigned tasks
- Accept and advocate for program goals and aims, particularly for children.
- Be enthusiastic, patient and have a positive attitude
- Attend on scheduled day(s) and time

- Respect children, employees, family members, business partners, community agencies and other individuals providing services to the program
- Adhere to program policies and regulation, including Head Start Performance Standards or other federal and state regulations
- Be professional and maintain confidentiality
- Respect children, staff and family member confidentiality
- Make constructive suggestions for improvement
- Accept feedback and redirection as necessary

Confidentiality & Standards of Conduct

Plaza has contracts with various federal and other funders to provide a variety of services in the program. In order to remain in compliance with the contracts, the agency is required to meet confidentiality requirements. For instance, Head Start Performance Standards 1304.22(b)(3), 1304.22(a)(5) and 1304.51(g) establish confidentiality requirements for information relating to children, families and staff. These requirements apply to staff and volunteers working in the program.

Volunteers are not permitted to access client records. All information concerning participating children and information shared by families is confidential. Confidential records are maintained in a secure location. Only authorized employees may view these records. Confidential information will not be given to others without written consent from the parent or legal guardian.

It is the policy of this program not to disclose the names of children who may have caused injuries to other children while at the program. This is a safeguard for each family's privacy.

Plaza has long recognized the value in maintaining certain behavioral standards that contribute to the atmosphere at the workplace. The Standards of Conduct is a statement of the ethical principles, values and behaviors expected of employees, volunteers and consultants.

All Plaza employees, Family Child Care Providers, consultants and volunteers are required to adhere to the following codes of conduct:

- Respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability;
- Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and employees;
- Maintain visual observation of children at all times and not leave any child alone or unsupervised while under their care;

- Use positive methods of child guidance and will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation;
- Not employ methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs;
- Not solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors, or anything of significant monetary value from contractors or potential contractors;
- Maintain respect and promote professional relationships with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), their own DA-CCP, and other DA-CCP's, families, employees and children;
- Refrain from the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcoholic beverage, controlled substance, and tobacco in the workplace or at any activity funded by federal or state funds.

Any breach of the above codes of conduct (depending on the nature of the breach) may result in removal from the volunteer program.

Volunteer Guidelines & Activities

General Guidelines:

- Always remember that keeping children safe is the number one priority.
- Interact with the children. All adults must focus on the children, so try to wait until after class for discussions with the teachers.
- Become familiar with the classroom. Look at the room, and read the signs for adults that are posted in the areas around the classroom. Some of the signs you will see are: exits, no smoking, evacuation plans etc.
- Assist children in the different interest areas indoors and outdoors.
- Observe how the teaching staff handles activities, and follow the teacher's example.
- If you are a parent volunteer, expect that your child may act differently, and perhaps inappropriately. Do not feel bad, this is a normal part of development.

Volunteers are expected to model appropriate behavior at all times.

All adults must remember to:

- Wash your hands after toileting, before meals and before handling food and dishes, after outdoor time, and sand/water play.
- Be a positive language and behavioral role model.
- Model good eating habits by suggesting but not forcing children to try all of the foods.
- Model appropriate table manners as well.

Activities

Under the supervision of the teaching staff, volunteers may engage in many activities to support the program. Volunteers may:

- Greet each child as they arrive into the classroom in the designated greeting area
- Encourage children to try new foods, to take an “adventure bite”
- Monitor each area of the classroom with a staff person
- Assist with groups of children as needed (sing songs, read a short story, sit with children)
- Prepare materials and resources for various activities in the classroom, on field trips, walks or outside activities
- Help the teaching staff prepare displays of children's work
- Work with other volunteers and parents in familiarizing them with the classroom procedures and activities

Praising children's efforts and accomplishments

- Sit at the table or on the floor with the children
- Encourage children to choose toys from the shelves
- If children spill food or liquids, avoid making a big deal of it. Spills are part of the learning process
- Show children where they can get clean up supplies and help them
- If children are having trouble, encourage them to try doing something themselves before doing it for them
- Remind child to wash hands after using the bathroom
- Encourage a sense of pride in the appearance of the classroom
- Encourage children to talk about the day's activities
- Encourage and support children in their imaginative play by letting children take the lead
- Talk with children about the story and the pictures

Guidance and Discipline Procedures

The goal for children in our program is to provide a setting where children can develop a sense of inner self-control, that they can begin to understand the reasons for limits that are set and develop a sense of being respected and respecting others' rights and feelings.

When behavior issues arise, we will look at our classroom routines and environment, as well as individual needs of the child, to help the child learn the appropriate behavior. It is important for all adults to be aware of the language, the tone of voice and the manner of speech they use when working with young children. Providing each child with choices, foreseeing problems and responding to their needs immediately enables us to help the child positively without having to use punitive methods.

The techniques described below must be used at all times by employees and volunteers:

- Model appropriate behavior and communication;

- Use voice levels that are soft and calm;
- Tell children what they are to do (rather than what not to do) in a positive tone.

The following are prohibited actions and should never be used by employees and volunteers

- Any form of corporal punishment, including rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, spanking, or arm pulling;
- Any form of emotional abuse, including name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family, or using language that threatens, humiliates or frightens the child;
- Withdrawal of food, rest or bathroom opportunities;
- Unsupervised isolation;
- Traditional "time out" procedures;
- Any type of punishment hazardous to the physical, emotional or mental health of the child;
- Any type of punishment or negative attention related to the child's toilet skills;
- Yelling or raising voice (unless the child is engaged in conduct that threatens their safety such as running into the street and traffic is approaching).

If you have any concerns regarding children's behavior, please notify any employee at the site.

Volunteer Orientation

Plaza is committed to providing volunteers training so that they are acquainted with the agency's policies and procedures in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards. Parents and other volunteers will be required to complete orientation after submitting the required forms to the Human Resources Department. The orientation generally consists of the following topics:

- The mission, vision and philosophy statements of Plaza and Head Start
- An introduction to the Head Start Performance Standards and how they apply to the specific program options, settings, and services
- A review of the Standards of Conduct

Personal Appearance

Recent studies indicate that personal appearances play an important role in the well-being of young impressionable children. To ensure that volunteers portray a positive image, the agency requires all volunteers to use good judgment in their

personal appearance. Furthermore, volunteers are expected to comply with the guidelines indicated below:

- Clothing volunteers should be clean, unwrinkled, in good repair, and suitable to the work being performed
- Low cut and backless dresses; low-neck blouses, cutout clothing and halter-tops are not acceptable
- Short tops must have something underneath so that the waist is covered
- Short shorts and mini-skirts (shorts/skirts shorter than three inches above the knee) are not acceptable
- Spandex and/or lycra biking shorts are not permissible
- Shoes must be worn at all times
- Suitable, safe, low heel, and closed toe shoes are permitted when working in the sites when children are present
- Jewelry should be moderate and not interfere with work. When in contact with children, volunteers may not wear bracelets, dangling or hoop earrings or necklaces
- Body/nose rings that are visible may not be worn by any volunteer. This includes tongues, eyebrows, noses, etc
- Fingernails must be clean and trimmed

Incident Reporting

Parents are notified of any unusual occurrence involving their child while she/he is at the center (such as minor injuries, conflicts with other children, etc.)

Employees must contact parents in a timely manner, so they will be aware of any incidents. Parents or persons authorized to pick up the child will be asked to complete the required forms which confirms that employees reported the incident.

Volunteers can assist the classroom staff at the end of the session by helping children round up jackets and materials to take home, so that the teacher and teacher assistant are free to interact and discuss incident reports or other issues with parents.

Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect

All Plaza programs are required by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the local office responsible for child protective services. The symptoms of child abuse may include bruises, burns, scars, scrapes or cuts that are recurring. Symptoms of neglect may include lack of appropriate clothing, nutrition, medical or other care. If you have any concerns regarding possible signs of suspected child abuse or neglect, please notify the any Plaza employee, including the Site Supervisor IMMEDIATELY.

Volunteer Placement

Once a volunteer submits the required forms and completes orientation, the Human Resources department will notify the volunteer and the Education department of the volunteer's placement date.

The prospective volunteer must follow the placement process outlined below:

1. Obtain a Volunteer Handbook from the school site or the administrative office
2. Complete the required forms and submit a copy of current TB screening results and photo identification (i.e. state driver's license or identification card, college ID card etc.) to the Human Resources department
3. Complete orientation at the school site or at the administrative office
4. Regular volunteers working at least 16 hours or more must complete criminal record check forms and receive clearance from the local Community Care Licensing Division office prior to volunteering in the program
5. Confirm placement date and location with the Human Resources department

Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers that do not comply with the agency's policies and procedures, including the Standards of Conduct, Confidentiality Agreement or display conduct that interferes with program operations will be dismissed from the volunteer program.

Summary

All volunteers will have an assigned supervisor and must be willing to receive feedback and suggestions for improvement. Volunteer assignments can be terminated at any time for any reason. The program follows state and federal regulations in addition to best practice recommendations from the field of early childhood education. Your ideas and suggestions are very important to us. If you have a question regarding anything occurring in the program, do not hesitate to ask any Plaza employee.

Helpful Tips

1. Speak with the supervisor about expectations and responsibilities prior to considering the volunteer program.
2. Plan to observe the physical arrangement of the area in which you will be volunteering.
3. Communicate any problems, questions, concerns or personal observations to the person in charge in the classroom, whether you are observing or interacting with the children.

4. Do not ask about or make statements about children in front of other children or parents. Remember, all information about children and families is confidential.
5. Ask for guidance in handling teaching or office materials or situations with which you are unfamiliar.
6. When you have serious doubts about a procedure say to the child, "Let's ask the teacher."
7. Remember that you are an important role model for the child; be supportive to the learning environment and always demonstrate positive and appropriate behavior.
8. Lastly, this is a learning experience for you as well as the children and staff. Please, ask if you have questions and be sure to share your ideas.



**Plaza de la Raza Child Development Service, Inc.
Volunteer Program Checklist**

Instructions: All volunteer forms should be filed in the Human Resources department with a copy maintained in the volunteer file at the location where the volunteer performs his/her volunteer activities.

Volunteer Name: _____ Date: _____

(For office use only)

Date of Placement: _____ Date of Dismissal: _____

Volunteer Type: Occasional or Regular (volunteers 16 hrs or more per week)

Required for all volunteers:

- Volunteer Application (and resume [optional])
- Volunteer Agreement form
- Tuberculosis (TB) Risk Assessment Questionnaire
- Criminal Arrest/Charge/Conviction Declaration Form
- Confidentiality Agreement
- State driver's license or identification card or college/university ID
- Standards of Conduct
- Volunteer orientation provided by _____ on _____
Plaza Representative Date

Required for all regular volunteers:

- Criminal Record Check

Check all that apply:

- Credentials/License (CDA, CDL, etc.)
- First Aid/ CPR Certification
- Other _____



**Plaza de la Raza Child Development Service, Inc.
Volunteer Agreement**

Volunteer Name: _____

Volunteer's Responsibilities:

1. Arrive on time, report absences and perform assigned tasks
2. Accept and advocate for program goals and aims, particularly for children
3. Be enthusiastic, patient and have a positive attitude
4. Attend on scheduled day(s) and time
5. Respect children, employees, family members, business partners, community agencies and other individuals providing services to the program
6. Adhere to program policies and regulation, including Head Start Performance Standards or other federal and state regulations
7. Be professional and maintain confidentiality
8. Respect children, staff and family member confidentiality
9. Make constructive suggestions for improvement
10. Accept feedback and redirection as necessary

Volunteer at program on _____(days) at _____(times).

Comments (as needed)_____

Supervisor assigned: _____

This is to verify that I have attended a Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services volunteer orientation, received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. I am able to also make a commitment to the agency to adhere to the above mentioned responsibilities and those listed in the Volunteer Handbook. I understand that my volunteer assignment can be terminated at any time as necessary for program operations.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Print Volunteer Name

Plaza de la Raza Representative Signature

Date

Printed Name and Job Title



Plaza de la Raza Child Development Service, Inc.
Criminal Arrest/Charge/Conviction Declaration
(For All Volunteers)

Name of Volunteer: _____ Date: _____

This Declaration is required prior to employment or the provision of volunteer services by Head Start regulations, 45 CFR Part 1301, Head Start Grants Administration, Subpart D- Personnel and General Administration, Section 1301.31 (b) (iii) and (2) and (3).

Volunteers must complete this Declaration Form prior to engaging in volunteer activities.

1. All pending and prior criminal arrests and charges related to child sexual abuse and their disposition;
2. Convictions related to other forms of child abuse and/or neglect; and
3. All convictions of violent felonies.

This declaration may **exclude** the following:

- a. Traffic fines of \$200.00 or less;
- b. Any offense, other than any offense related to child abuse and/or child sexual abuse or violent felonies, committed before the prospective employee's 18th birthday, which was finally adjudicated in a juvenile court or under a youth offender law;
- c. Any conviction the record of which has been expunged under Federal or State law; and
- d. Any conviction set aside under the Federal Youth Corrections Act or similar State authority.

NOTE: State or national criminal record background checks will be conducted on all employees, regular volunteers and prospective employees. Criminal record background checks will be conducted in accordance with applicable federal or state law. If required by state law, background checks may include disclosure of information contained in state child and/or adult abuse reporting registries.

Please provide your signature in all appropriate categories below:

1. I have no pending or prior criminal arrests or charges related to child sexual abuse.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

2. I have no convictions related to any other form of child abuse and/or neglect.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. I have no convictions of violent felonies.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

4. I **HAVE BEEN** arrested, charged and/or convicted of child sexual abuse or convicted of child abuse and/or neglect or a violent felony.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you have been arrested, charged and/or convicted of child sexual abuse or convicted of child abuse and/or neglect or a violent felony, attach information showing the offense(s) for which you were arrested, charged and/or convicted, the date(s) of arrest, charge and/or conviction and the disposition of each offense. Information provided will be assessed to determine its relevancy in connection with your volunteer activities.

