



# Volunteer Procedures & Guidelines



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Southern Oregon Head Start prepares children and their families for success in school and throughout life.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Children will enter school healthy, ready to learn, and with age-appropriate skills by participating in Southern Oregon Head Start and Early Head Start (SOHS). SOHS will support family well-being and nurturing relationships between children and parents, and will encourage lifelong learning for both children and parents. SOHS will be recognized as the leader in our community in providing high-quality services for children age birth to five years. Our employees will be highly competent, well-qualified, competitively compensated, and dedicated to the work they do.

### **Head Start Teaches PBIS - Positive Behavior Intervention & Support**

**We take care of ourselves**

**We take care of others**

**We take care of our things**

# VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

## Things You Can Do To Help

- \*Have fun!
- \*Help on the play ground
- \*Sit by a child at circle time
- \*Help with small groups
- \*Help children set the table
- \*Play in dramatic play with children
- \*Help set up activities &/or clean up
- \*Repair broken toys and books
- \*Take out the garbage
- \*Help in the kitchen
- \*Clean and organize the bike shed
- \*Help on field trips
- \*Come to Family Days & Family Workdays
- \*Participate in parenting classes
- \*Read to a child/children
- \*Be a friend with children
- \*Sing with the children
- \*Help children wash their hands
- \*Clean off the table after meals
- \*Handyman projects
- \*Cutting projects
- \*Play in block area with children
- \*Sweep floor after meals & projects
- \*Fix broken toys inside and outdoors
- \*Create posters and flyers
- \*Attend parent committee meetings
- \*Organize the clothing exchange
- \*Cleaning and sanitizing

## Tips

- To protect you and the children, you may not be alone with a child. Please talk with your teacher about this policy.
- Check in each day with your teacher.
- Sign in, store your personal belongings in designated areas, and wash your hands.
- Follow the same rules as the children; gentle touching, walk inside, use talking voices; take care of ourselves, others, and our things.
- Sit on the floor or small chairs, but not on tables.
- Protect your back! Do not pick children up (except infants). Squat, sit or kneel down to talk to or comfort a child.
- Schedule a time to meet with the teacher to share observations and or concerns.
- Review the Family Style Meal Guidelines.



## YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A VOLUNTEER

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining an attitude of mutual respect and confidence. Your cooperative attitude, expressed in your willingness to provide needed services, is deeply valued. Please respect confidentiality at all times.

### You should:

- Sign in and out and record volunteer hours on the time sheet provided.
- Be willing to follow and ask questions regarding our policies and practices.
- Dress casually, but appropriately for what you are doing. Wear sturdy shoes.
- Observe each teacher's individual style and follow his/her directions.
- Have short conferences with the teacher to allow for a more rewarding volunteer experience.
- Contact the Head Teacher if you have questions or concerns regarding your volunteer placement.
- Watch and listen to how our Teachers and Teacher Assistants handle activities and try to follow their example. When you have questions, feel free to ask.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Children grow and learn best when their environment is healthy and safe. Head Start counts on all staff and volunteers to promote and insure health and safety. If you have any questions or concerns regarding health or safety, please inform staff as soon as possible.

### Some safety items that a staff would need to be alerted to include:

- **Electrical outlets** need to be covered at all times. If they are not self-closing have plug covers, including power strips.
- **Sharp objects** are stored out of children's reach: adult scissors, paper cutters, push pins, thumb tacks, needles, etc.
- **Toys are in good repair.** If broken, cracked or have sharp edges give to staff.
- All areas are free of **slip/trip hazards.**
- **Potentially hazardous items** (such as medications, lotions, or pins are kept out of children's reach).
- Plants have a label identifying them as a non-toxic plant.
- **No child is ever left alone** without a staff member present.



### Policy and Procedures:

- No personal food or beverages in the classroom.
- No smoking is allowed on Head Start grounds, buildings, parking lots or within site of the children.
- No gum and candy in the classroom.
- Head Start staff are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect. If you see something or have any concerns please tell the teacher or the supervisor at the center.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CHILDREN PLAY

Children are testing the world. Small parts of it are theirs to try to understand, to learn more about.

Children are beginning to understand people and the importance of people's feelings. They are trying to deal with the real life they see.

Children are learning about their own feelings, how to express them, how to handle them.

When children can choose, test, make decisions and relate to others in play, they are learning self-discipline.

As children play in a friendly and accepting atmosphere, they are becoming more aware of themselves, making their own plans and learning to judge what is best.

In purposeful play, children are learning to think because they are:

- **organizing ideas**
- **setting tasks for themselves**
- **talking**
- **repeating what works**
- **solving problems**
- **challenging themselves**
- **trying new ways**



Children are making friends by doing things together. Sometimes young children approach others in ways difficult to understand—like hitting, or pushing or sitting silently near each other. Often an adult can suggest a more successful approach: "Matthew, Randy doesn't like you to knock his garage down. You can tell Randy you want to build with him. What are you both going to build this time?"

Children at play are not waiting to be entertained. They are finding the joy of achievement—the source within themselves for happiness all their lives.

Children need to have fun and know how to create fun. Unless nurtured in childhood, our capacity for joy is diminished and as adults we are cheated.

Adults must plan for the needs of play as carefully as for any other part of the program.

(From Program Guides, Maryland Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene)

## INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN

### Talking with children:

Somehow it seems much easier to ask a child a closed question like "What color is this?" "Do you want the red paint or the blue?" or "Which is the biggest?" than to think of an open-ended question that will stimulate thinking. Some open-ended questions that ask children to think for themselves might begin with:

- What do you think of . . . ?
- Can you tell me more about . . . ?
- Why do you think that . . . ?
- How could that happen . . . ?
- What else could you do . . . ?

Talk with children in their home language (*you might need to learn some key phrases like, "let's play," "I am glad you are here," "time for circle," and "how can I help you?"*) and encourage them to speak in their home language.

It is helpful to tie the questions to children's actions and experiences. Asking "What did you see?" "How did it change?" "How did you do it?" may help focus children's attention and expand their understanding of some phenomenon.

**A basic rule of thumb is to allow up to ten seconds of silence between questions.** This gives the child time to process the questions and formulate an answer. While using this silence, it is also important to keep physical closeness to show you are interested in the child's reply.



## WORDS THAT CAN HELP CHILDREN GROW

Young children need verbal direction and will often seek help from adults. It is important to give them help in ways that will lead to new behavior and new learning. Adults tend to use restrictive language and must learn a different pattern of reacting to children's needs. You may have to practice for a while, but it soon becomes very easy. Your improved relationship with the children will be a most worthwhile reward. Here are a few examples of "growing words" rather than "restricting words."

### SAY THIS

"Use two hands when you climb."

"You'll need an apron."

"Scissors stay on the table or here in the holder. We can find them when we need them."

Can you push your own sleeves up?"

"Oops, juice spills sometimes. Here's a sponge to wipe it up."

"Turn the pages by the corners carefully. That's right."

"Carrots stay here on the table."

"Everybody please move back a little. I'll hold the book so you can see."

### INSTEAD OF SAYING

"Hold on or you'll fall."

"Don't get paint on your clothes."

"Don't run with the scissors."

"Don't get your clothes wet"

"Be careful pouring-here. I'll do it."

"Watch out! You'll tear the book!"

"Stop dropping carrot pieces on the floor."

"Don't crowd so much. You can all see."

### **Remember:**

- To react positively
- To give the child an acceptable solution so that he or she can carry it out
- To be patient and try again
- To trust the child's judgment
- To reinforce learning with praise



## SOME THINGS WE SHOULD NEVER DO WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

- Never tease a child.
- Never discuss a child's behavior or appearance in his/her presence or within the child's hearing.
- Never ridicule or in any way humiliate a child. Laugh with a child, but never at the child.
- Never handle a child roughly or frighten a child.
- Never deceive a child. Never promise a child something which you cannot deliver.
- Never exploit a child by having the child "show off."
- Never show a preference for one child over another. Try to find the likeable things in a child who may seem less attractive than others.
- Do not offer a child a choice that you cannot grant. Do not say "Would you like to give me that sharp stick?" Suppose he/she says "No." Then you will have to insist he/she do it anyway. You can say, "You may put the stick in the basket or on the table."
- Never compare children. Do not say, "See how nicely Johnny builds with the blocks." This will not teach a child to build, but it may make the child dislike Johnny.
- Never threaten or bribe a child.
- Do not deny a child something and then give in because he/she creates a scene. Be sure your denial is necessary before you make it, and then stick to it.
- Keep personal feelings out of the situation. Do not say, "Miss Jones doesn't like you when you do that," or "If you liked your friend, you wouldn't hit her." To deny a child your affection is cruel and shatters his/her security.



## WHEN GUIDING YOUNG CHILDREN, TRY TO REMEMBER THESE THINGS:

- Be alert to dangerous situations. Broken equipment should be repaired, toys should be put away when not being used, and open doors should be watched.
- Tell children what to do instead of what not to do. "Put the bead on the string," instead of, "Don't put the bead in your mouth."
- Know what children are capable of at each age level. We expect three-year olds to play alone. The four-and five-year olds often play in small groups.
- Avoid situations which encourage competition. To suggest being the "first one through" or painting the "best picture" does not support individual self-confidence.
- Let the children play in their own way. Instead of making pictures for them, or showing them what to draw, paint, or build, we encourage them to do these things for themselves. We want them to develop initiative, imagination, and self-reliance.
- We may show disapproval of a child's actions, but never of the child himself/herself. You may say, "Biting is unacceptable." But never, "You are a bad child because you bite."
- A child needs your reassurance. If they are in disgrace for hurting another child or destroying something, let the child know you still love and trust him/her.
- Be alert to individual differences. No two children are the same. There are no standard methods that apply to all children in all situations. We cannot say that when a child does certain things, we must respond the same way every time.
- Be consistent.
- Do not fault a child by telling him he is a "big boy," nor blame a child by saying he is "too big" for such behavior. Do not put a premium on being "big." There should be just as much satisfaction in being three as being six.
- When a child shows you his/her artwork, say "tell me about it" instead of "what is it?" This gives the child the opportunity to express himself/herself by telling a story about the picture.
- Try to see the situation through the child's eyes. When talking to a child, it is good practice to sit beside the child or stoop to his/her eye level.
- When children play together, be slow to solve their problems. Let them try to come up with a solution themselves. Learning how to play is a step in social adjustment.

## FAMILY STYLE MEAL GUIDLINES

Adults play a major role by modeling at mealtime. Food related activities and leisurely mealtimes provide opportunities for:

- The development of positive attitudes toward healthy food.
- Decision making, sharing and communication with others.
- Development of muscle control and eye-hand coordination.



### Preparing For the Meal

- Children and adults come to the table with hands washed at the start of the agreed upon meal time.
- The first meal eaten at the center (breakfast or lunch) is served within the first 1/2 hour of arrival.

### During The Meal

- Children and adults eat together family style and share the same menu.
- Adults model appropriate meal time behavior and set good examples by demonstrating a positive attitude toward all food served.
- An adult must be seated at the table during meal times so no child will be left alone at a table.
- If a child asks for water during the meal they may get a drink of water, although no water is allowed at the table.
- Children serve themselves food and pour their own milk.
- Children are allowed sufficient time to eat. Those who become restless before the meal is over may be allowed to leave the table, taking plates to the cleaning area and then participating in a quiet activity.
- Food from family style serving bowls/platters and all food brought to the table is discarded after meal service.

## Meal Time Conversation

- Conversation at the table between children and adults helps set an appropriate pace to the meal while at the same time establishing a pleasant environment. Some methods for facilitating meal time discussions include:
- Asking open-ended questions, modeling good listening skills, and encouraging turn-taking in conversation.
- Encouraging children to compare contrast and classify food attributes, such as taste, texture, shape, size and color.

## Children's Acceptance of Food

- Head Start serves a variety of foods which consider cultural and ethnic preferences and which broaden the child's food experience.
- Children are encouraged to take a full portion the first time food is offered, but be allowed to make their own food choices based on individual appetites and preferences.
- A child may have seconds of any food regardless of what else they have eaten.
- Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat or taste their food. Most children require a number of exposures (14-17) to a new food before they will accept it.
- Food must be passed around the table at least 2 times during the meal. This ensures the child that initially refused the dish has an opportunity to change their mind and take some.

