



# Volunteer Handbook



*This handbook is intended for use by all those who volunteer with YVEDDI Head Start. It is important that you review this handbook to help ensure that your experience with YVEDDI Head Start is positive and productive.*



***YVEDDI Head Start***

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**Performance Standard Ref. 1304.41.a.3**

Grantee and delegate agencies must perform outreach to encourage volunteers from the community to participate in Early Head Start and Head Start Programs

## **INTRODUCTION**

Head Start enthusiastically promotes using volunteers and community resources to expand and enhance the program operations for the benefit of Head Start children and families. This handbook was developed by YVEDDI Head Start as a training aid to both the teaching staff and volunteers. Teachers will ask each volunteer to review the handbook as part of the volunteer's orientation, answer volunteer questions, and/or refer to the Family Service Staff.

Volunteers make a commitment to YVEDDI Head Start when they offer their service, and we want to make them to feel a vital part of the program with accountability to it. Training must be provided for Volunteers, and they should be included in the regular in-service trainings of the paid staff whenever possible.

Teaching staff should use this booklet and the accompanying forms to orient the volunteers for their classroom. Communication between the teachers and the parents is the key to a successful year.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

YVEDDI Head Start believes that all children deserve the opportunity to learn through play by way of facilitated, competent early childhood practices without regard to race, culture, income, or disability. We also believe by linking services and building partnerships within the community that our families will achieve more success.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The YVEDDI Head Start program will continuously establish and evaluate program practices that will bring about the greatest success for children and families.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

YVEDDI Head Start's goal is to provide comprehensive services to children and families at the rate of 100% in all content areas by building relations, bridges with local resources and empowering families toward self-sufficiency with an intense focus on School Readiness.

## **HANDBOOKS DISTRIBUTION**

A copy of the Volunteer Handbook in English and Spanish will be distributed to each classroom during pre-service training each year. Teachers will ask each volunteer to review the handbook as part of the volunteer's orientation, answer volunteer questions, and/or refer to the Family Services Staff if needed. The Volunteer Handbook will be kept on the Parent Board of each classroom. Volunteers may request a copy of the handbook if needed.

## **TRACKING VOLUNTEER HOURS**

The classroom Teacher will provide you with all appropriate forms and will show you how to complete them. **A Volunteer Information Form or Application (if not a parent) must be completed by each volunteer every year before being allowed to volunteer in the classroom. If parent checked yes to being convicted of crime, form should be faxed to the HSAO.**

All Volunteers are **required to sign in on the Volunteer Sign in sheet** (located in a binder in the classroom) every time volunteer services are provided. All Sign in logs will be kept in a binder in the classroom until the end of the school year and then sent to HSAO for filing.

**All community representatives such as fire department, police department should sign the Volunteer Sign-In Sheet.**

**Anyone other than a parent, guardian or community representative interested in volunteering for the program must complete a Community Volunteer Application. Application should be faxed to HSAO for approval before volunteering in classroom.**

## **DAYS AND HOURS OF CENTER OPERATION**

The Head Start centers operate from 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM Monday through Friday. A Head Start a yearly calendar will be given along with monthly calendars throughout the year.

## **A TOUR OF THE HEAD START CLASSROOM**

All Head Start classrooms meet state licensing and local safety requirements, and are ADA accessible if applicable. Room arrangement is designed with safety and behavior in mind. Low shelves are used to promote self-help skills, divide areas, and ensure that play is uninterrupted. Loud areas (ex. blocks, housekeeping) and quiet areas (ex. books, manipulatives) are well separated. Pathways for children to walk are clear; however, the pathways are short. Furniture is

placed to discourage running in the classroom. As you move around the classroom, you should be able to monitor the children's play in every area while standing.

Each area contains different types of materials and equipment, and each area is set-up to provide different learning opportunities. All the materials used in the Head Start classroom have been tested for developmentally age-appropriate use and safety; and the teaching staff has been trained to create a learning environment using the classroom materials.

Although children are often given freedom of choice, a daily schedule has been developed by the teaching staff that is based on best practices, and focuses on child outcomes in the eight domains of learning (language development, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social/emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical health/development). The children are usually busy playing and interacting with each other. Multiple activities are taking place in different learning areas at the same time.

**As a classroom volunteer, it is important that you know what materials are available. You may also want to ask the teacher about specific items, because they usually rotate items to keep the areas fresh. Write down any questions that you may have for the teacher, so you can remember to ask them during a time that will not interrupt play; a good time might be naptime or at the end of the day.**

### *The Art & Creative Play Area*



The art & creative play area may contain: a child-size table & chairs, a dryer rack or clothesline for drying children's paintings, paint containers, small muffin tins to hold paint, paint rollers, tape, blunt-end scissors, chalkboards, chalk, stencils, an art easel, old magazines, glue, construction paper, crayons, cups, paper plates, yarn, newsprint, craft sticks, fabric scraps, old greeting cards, colored tissue, pipe cleaners, wallpaper books, straws, watercolor markers, and other objects.

The art & creative play area provides opportunities for social/emotional development; emotional and artistic self-expression; exploring with a variety of materials, textures, and colors; developing skills with small tools; encouraging originality; learning to appreciate different ideas

and ways of working; developing a sense of personal accomplishment; developing fine motor skills; planning and organizing projects; self-discovery of color, design, and form relationships; and sharing of time, space, and materials.

### *The Block Activity Area*



The block activity area focuses on construction and may contain blocks of different shapes and materials: foam, wood, and plastic. There should be enough blocks in order for at least three children's construction activities or between 80 and 120 unit blocks. To aid in construction projects the area may also contain: large trucks, multi-ethnic family figures, multi-ethnic occupational worker figures, smaller transportation toys (wrecker, dump trucks, fire trucks), traffic signs, interlocking train with track, farm animals, a barn, fencing sections, zoo animals, mini-village pieces, a doll house with furniture, pictures of structures and modes of transport, a low-pile rug, construction hats, etc. The shelves are labeled to aid the children in organizing their materials during clean-up.

The block activity area provides opportunities for: intellectual, physical, and social/emotional development; shape identifications; spatial relations; scientific concepts (balance, space, and gravity); numerical concepts (whole, half, quarter, third, etc.); new vocabulary words; matching skills; physical release and development of muscular coordination through lifting, carrying, and stacking; emotional release through dramatic play; creative expression and development of sense of design and form; cooperation development in social relationships; and individual and small group activity.

### *The Books & Language Development Area*



The books & language development area, in addition to books, may contain: book display shelves, comfortable chairs, pillows, rugs, pictures, charts, cassette player with headphones, story cassettes, books made by children, play telephones, puppets, puppet stage, flannel board with story materials, magnetic board with letter magnets. Books contained within

this area will be age-appropriate and multi-cultural. Books will be varied (board books, hardbacks, paperbacks, vinyl, and cloth). Some will only contain pictures and the children can make up their own story to match the picture sequence.

The books & language development area provides opportunities for: intellectual, and social/emotional development; developing an appreciation of books as a source of pleasure and information; developing visual and listening skills related to reading; developing their imagination, a restful activity, and vocabulary building.

### *The Music & Rhythm Activity Area*



The music & rhythm activity area contains materials for listening, singing, and movement; making music, and experimenting with sound; and for dancing. This area may contain: a record player, cassette player, CD player, and an assortment of musical and activity records, tapes, and CDs; Rhythm and musical instruments, scarves, streamers, and old dance costumes.

The music & rhythm activity area provides opportunities for: physical, intellectual, and emotional development; developing appreciation for all types of music; self-expression; developing listening skills; positive expression of feelings; improving coordination and rhythm; increasing language skills; developing an awareness of and responding to rhythm; developing space awareness through movement; and becoming more sensitive to sounds.

### *The Sand & Water Activity Area*



The sand & water activity area can sometimes be separate areas. Both need to be positioned for easy clean-up, and the water table needs to be close to a water source. Popular items for sand play are: course or fine sand, plastic containers; sieves of all shapes and sizes; measuring cups; funnels; sifters; pails; shovels; rakes; ladles; spoons; scoops; small cars; people figures; animal figures; trucks; and airplanes. Anything that can be washed off, has no sharp

points, and is rustproof can be used for sand play. Water can be added also to use with items such as Jell-O molds, pails, cupcake pans, and plastic ice trays.

The water activity area may include: dishpans, dolls, doll bathtub, plastic bottles, sponges, plastic eye droppers, boats, buckets, funnels, strainers, plumbing pipes, basting syringe, clear plastic glasses rotary beaters, small house painting brushes, and of course plastic smocks and drop cloth. Science experiments can be performed by adding things that will and will not float (corks, wood, soap, rock, ball, feather, paper, etc.), or will and will not dissolve (ice shapes in different sizes, red clay, salt, baking soda, etc).

The sand & water activity area provides opportunities for: emotional, intellectual, and social development; developing manipulative and sensory skills; discovery; counting, matching, and sorting; other mathematical concepts (size, shape, full, empty, etc); language development; dramatic play; social interaction; and promoting feelings of well-being, enjoyment, and relaxation.

#### *Dramatic Play Area*



The family living & dramatic play area reminds children of their home. When adjusting to being away from home, a child will often feel comfortable playing in the housekeeping area when they do not feel comfortable playing in other areas of the classroom. The area may include: wooden appliances, wooden cabinet with play sink, table with chairs, child-size rocking chair, alarm clock, dramatic play clothing, clothes rack or chest, an unbreakable full-length mirror, multi-ethnic dolls of both genders with clothing, doll bed with linens, doll high chair, doll strollers, cookware, plates, cups, flatware, other kitchen utensils, play telephones, child-sized cleaning tools, shopping cart, kitchen timer, measuring cups/spoons, dish towels, place mats, oven mitts, plastic food, and items that contain environmental print (food boxes, etc.).

The dramatic play area offers opportunities for: social/emotional, and intellectual development; experimenting with familiar adult roles; developing understanding of roles of family members



and a variety of community helpers; learning to cope with stress by giving children an opportunity to recreate actual life events; experimenting with human relationships; communication of ideas in words; using their imagination in fantasy play; interacting with other children in social situations; and developing mathematical concepts (setting the table, folding napkins or towels in half, etc).

### *The Science & Nature Activity Area*



The science & nature activity area is designed to include tools for discovery, exploring nature, sensory awareness, and performing simple experiments. Items for this area may include: magnifying glasses, magnets, a telescope, balance scales, spring scales, rulers, thermometers, a barometer, liquid and dry measuring cups, compass, pulleys, flashlight, stethoscope, microscope, tape measures, and yard stick. You may also find non-living nature items in the area such as: nuts, weeds, shells, seed pods, grains, pebbles, rocks, leaves, feathers, wood, bark, moss, pine cones, and nests. Or you may find: a terrarium with plants, a houseplant, a weather chart, a watering can, and an aquarium with fish. As mentioned earlier, the science area may include objects used in sensory awareness observations in the areas of sound, touch, smell, and sight.

The science & nature activity area provides opportunities for: intellectual and emotional development; using the senses, questioning, problem-solving, sorting, ordering, and discovering relationships; developing concepts and vocabulary related to size, weight, measurement, and classification; firsthand experience with nature materials, small living creatures, and inanimate objects; manipulation of *adult* instruments of investigation; and developing scientific procedures of observing, inferring, classifying, and communicating.

### *The Manipulative Activity Area*



The manipulative activity area includes math activities and may contain items such as: bristle blocks, wooden puzzles, dressing (tying, lacing, buttoning, zipping, and snapping) frames, large plastic nuts and bolts, pipe fittings, Tinker Toys, Lego blocks, sewing cards, Turn-a-gears, Peg boards with pegs, stacking discs, shape sorters, counting/sorting toys, and nesting toys.

In the manipulative activity area, learning occurs in: physical and intellectual development, choices that assist in learning concepts (size, number, shape, and colors); identifying various shapes and forms, and their relationship to the whole; use of visual memory; developing small muscle control; practicing problem skills; practice in eye-hand coordination; individual and partner play in a social situation, developing observation skills; and developing a sense of accomplishment.

### *The Outdoor Classroom*



The outdoor classroom or playground is a learning environment that refines gross motor skills and meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Although it is expensive, Head Start playgrounds are updated frequently to ensure the safety of the children enrolled. The amount of equipment on the playground is determined by the space available and state licensing square footage requirement for fall zones.

The outdoor classroom may include: water play; vegetation, including trees, shrubs, flowers, and grass; sand play; diversity in features, including a lawn, shelter, places to sit on/in/under; and different levels with nooks and crannies, places that offer privacy and views; climbing structures; swinging structures; bikes with a bike path; and a basketball goal with balls. Outdoor play requires quite a collection of gear. Loose parts, sand, water, manipulative items, props, and things found in nature on the playground are essential learning tools. Loose parts provide infinite play possibilities due to their total lack of structure and script, and children are only limited by their imaginations.

The sensory experiences of the outdoor classroom are different from those experienced indoors. Activities frowned upon indoors are tolerated outdoors; they can run, shout, and participate in messy activities. Quality play involves the whole child: gross motor, fine motor, senses, emotion, intellect, individual growth, and social interaction. The outdoor classroom provides positive physiological and psychological responses, including stress reduction and a feeling of well-being. It also improves information recall, problem solving, and creativity. Studies have shown

that children with behavioral or learning difficulties often perform better in an outdoor natural setting. Early experiences with the natural world have been positively linked with the development of imagination and the sense of wonder, and are essential to children's emotional health. The outdoor classroom is also important to the development of independence and autonomy as the large space allows children the opportunity to gradually experiment with increasing distance from the teaching staff.

### *The Parent Area*



The Parent Board contains the following information: *The YVEDDI Head Start Parent Handbook*, *The YVEDDI Head Start Volunteer Handbook*, , *Head Start Policy Council By-laws*, , *Welcome to Kindergarten/Bienvenido al Kinder*, Parent Committee Meeting schedules, current Parent Committee Meeting Minutes, an attendance chart showing parent participation at Parent Committee Meetings, letters from the director, a calendar with classroom or fieldtrip activities, a current copy of *Parenting: A Step Ahead* newsletter, a current menu, Parent Complaint Forms. Changes in policies and invitations to special events for parents will be posted on the Parent Board.

## **HANDWASHING**

Staff, volunteers, and children must wash their hands with soap and running water at least at the following times: upon arrival at the center and after diapering or toilet use, before food preparation, handling consumption, or any other food-related activity, whenever hands are contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids; and after handling pets or other animals, before and after giving medications, before and after treating or bandaging a wound (nonporous gloves should be worn if there is contact with blood-containing body fluids); and After assisting a child with toilet use.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**Parents and family members are highly encouraged to volunteer anytime the center is open some ways you can choose to participate and volunteer are:**

- Serving as elected members of the Policy Council.
- Serving on the Education Committee and/or Health Advisory Committee.
- Assist with field trips
- Assist office staff with clerical tasks
- Help teacher in classroom
- Read stories to children
- Do a craft in the classroom
- Assist in organizing or material preparation
- Participate in Self-Assessment
- Assist in cleaning/sanitizing classroom

Parents come from diverse backgrounds and have a variety of educational training levels and skills.

**The educational training and skill level of a parent does not make a difference in whether a parent can volunteer at Head Start!**

Head Start staff support and supervise all parent volunteers, working closely with parents to make sure that standards are followed and parents succeed with volunteer experience. A TB test may be required for volunteers depending on hours and responsibilities; which will be determined on a case by case basis. You will be notified if additional items are needed.

## **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

### *Parent of the Year*

The Parent of the Year Contest runs from August thru December of the school year. Classroom teachers will nominate a parent by January of the school year to represent their classroom by completing the nomination form along with the parent. Selection of Parent of the Year will be

based on the number of volunteer hours, teacher recommendation, involvement in Head Start activities, and community involvement.

The Parent of the Year may be asked to represent YVEDDI Head Start in competition at the North Carolina Head Start Conference in the spring. If funding is available the Parent of the Year and sponsoring teacher may receive free registration to the North Carolina Head Start Conference including hotel expenses, meals, and mileage reimbursement (if carpool is not available). In addition to the award received at the NCHSA conference, the parent of the year will also be honored at the End of the Year Celebration.

Criteria for Nomination by Teachers (all must be met):

- Be a parent or legal guardian of an enrolled Head Start student.
- Be a member of the North Carolina Head Start Association.
- Demonstrate a sincere interest in the activities of the Head Start program.
- Attend three of the four Parent Committee Meetings from September thru December.
- Volunteer in the classroom 40 hours (Classroom related activities)
- Do at least one special project with the children.
- Write a short report about volunteer activities.

All parents nominated will compete an application answering questions about how their active participation has made a difference in the Head Start program.

## **DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

While volunteers are not expected to handle any behavior issues with children, they should be aware of the program's *Harmful/Disruptive Behavior Policy*. If you, as a volunteer, do find yourself in a situation where a child's behavior is of concern to you, always inform Head Start Staff.

It is Head Start's policy to use appropriate discipline techniques as an overall approach to helping children recognize clear consistent limits and develop self-control.

- Appropriate discipline techniques are redirection, positive reinforcement, prevention, and time-out when it will prevent a child from being consistently out of control.

- Time-out is not to be used in a punitive manner but should provide direction and support so that the child can reenter and successfully become a member of the classroom community.
- In the event that harmful or disruptive behaviors occur that prevent the learning environment from being normal and safe, the teachers may seek approval from any management staff to send the child home. This will be done as a last resort.
- No child should be allowed to disrupt the learning environment in the Head Start classroom.
- No child shall ever be excluded from free-play and outdoor play due to misbehavior.

### **SEX OFFENDER POLICY**

Registered offenders are not allowed on any Head Start property including school buildings, playgrounds, parking lots, buses, activity buses or other property of any kind for any reason, including attendance at all Head Start events whether before, during, or after school hours. In addition, sex offenders subject to the NC General Statutes 14-208.18 may not attend or be present at any student function or field trip on or off Head Start property that is (1) Head Start sponsored or (2) otherwise under the official supervision or control of Head Start personnel”.

### **CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

It is the legal obligation of YVEDDI Head Start to report any suspected incidences of child abuse and/or neglect. If at any time you suspect, that a child in the program has been abused and/or neglected you are also obligated to report it to Division of Child Protection and notify the Family Community Partnership Coordinator.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is of the utmost importance that all nonpublic information remains confidential. Information acquired while volunteering for YVEDDI Head Start is not to be disclosed to other staff members or outside of the agency. Nonpublic information is: personal information about families and children and includes but is not limited to:

- Names of families/children enrolled in the program

- Addresses or telephone numbers of families/children enrolled in the program
- Developmental information of individual children
- Behavior information of individual children
- Financial information of families enrolled in the program
- Goals/strengths/needs of individual families/children enrolled in the program

It is also important to keep all adult conversations appropriate and professional when volunteering with the organization.

## **CONCERNS**

Any problems or concerns about Volunteering in the classroom should be discussed with the Classroom Teacher. If additional information or resolution is necessary please contact the Family Community Partnership Staff.

YVEDDI Head Start would like to thank you for volunteering with our program. We hope that you have a great volunteer experience!!!