

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Early Childhood Education

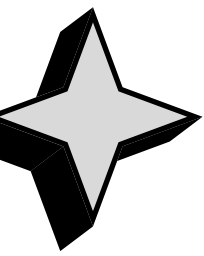


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Career start here"*



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INTRODUCTION

Volunteers play a valuable role in the Palmdale School District Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program. They bring a different set of abilities, a unique perspective, and diverse experiences to the classroom. Volunteering can help parents gain involvement in their child's education. ECE staff truly appreciates all the time and unique skills volunteers provide that help enrich the quality of the program. Your volunteer time also plays an important role in helping us reach our Non-federal share recruitment for Head Start. Each year, we are required to collect \$3.4 million in volunteer time and donations. We can only reach that goal with your help!

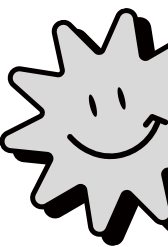
This handbook is to serve as a guide for parents, but if parents have any other questions, please reach out to teachers or office staff.

Guidelines for Conduct

ECE Volunteers are expected to

- Support in providing a healthy and happy environment for the children.
- Treat all staff and fellow volunteers with respect
- Remain professional in the classroom
- Follow Policies and Procedures in the Volunteer Handbook
- Maintain confidentiality about the children and families of the program

Confidentiality: In order to ensure quality care and safety for children under care, it is important to emphasize that confidentiality is mandatory. Volunteers will not be asked to engage in any activity that will violate protective policies and quality services provided to our classroom children and families. In accordance, volunteers are expected to uphold our confidentiality expectations. Please do not discuss children's behavior with other parents.



WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

We understand that parents are excited to volunteer but may have other commitments such as work, caring for a loved one, or school. There are many other opportunities to volunteer and support the program! Several of these do not require parents to complete the standard volunteer requirements (fingerprinting or immunization clearances). Ask your teacher or Family Service Advocate for ways to help!

We have listed a few here:

- Bring the meal carts to the class
- Prepare classroom materials at home
- Decorate outside the classroom for the seasons
- Be a guest speaker about your job
- Decorate flyers for parent meetings or parent workshops
- Hand out reminders for parent meetings
- Participate in parent meetings or workshops
- Take out the classroom trash
- Be a guest reader over Zoom

THE VOLUNTEER IN THE CLASSROOM

Even though you may have experience taking care of children, it is natural to feel some uneasiness about how you will get along with a group of children when you begin your work in the program. You may feel unsure of yourself and wonder how the children will react to you as one of their teachers. Or you may wonder how much the teachers will expect you to know, or whether you will have more responsibility than you feel ready to take.

You will learn more from your Head Start/State Preschool classroom experience if you make an effort to do these two things:

1. Watch and listen as the teachers work with the children. Notice how they talk and interact with the children and the special ways they have learned to guide them.
2. Ask Questions about the things that you want to know more about or do not understand. If there is not time for an answer at the moment, the teacher will make time later.

The following information will explain some of the things volunteers can expect in the classrooms and should be helpful as you begin your work.

1. The Head Start/State Preschool ECE teachers will welcome you. They will help you get off to a good start with the children.
2. Getting to know the classroom children is a fun process.
3. You will be assigned to your child's classroom consisting of either 16-22 children (depending on the program option).
4. The teacher of this class will provide you guidance. During your time in the classroom, you will learn that teaching is a collaborative effort. Your ideas will be welcomed to develop, plan, and implement developmentally appropriate activities for the children.

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH THE CHILDREN

Working with children requires building trust. Adults build trusting relationships with children when they show interest in what children are doing, demonstrate a positive affect and respect the children as individuals. The classroom experience is a reciprocal learning process; adults learn from children just as much as children learn from adults.

Volunteers can make an impactful transition into the classroom by understanding the following:

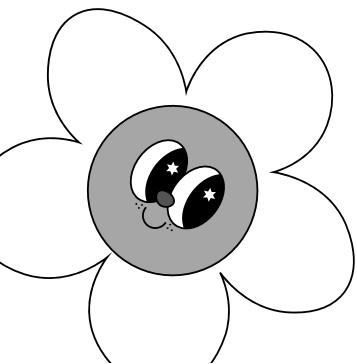
1. Working well with children requires establishing trust.
2. Adults can build trust in children by showing interest in what they are doing.
3. Having a positive “affect” and demonstrating respect for children goes a long way.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SUPPORT LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM. THE FOLLOWING ARE GOOD EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTING PLAY BY MODELING BEHAVIOR, LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SKILLS:

1. Tie a loose shoestring
2. Interact in the dramatic play area
3. Read a story and have them read it back to you
4. Ask the child to find something they are interested in

YOUR ROLE WITH THE CHILDREN

The children will consider you a teacher. Some children may even call you “teacher.” This places an important responsibility on volunteers working in the program.



It puts you in the role of a leader and guide, which means that certain things are expected of you. Some of these things are:


1. Model positive behavior for children at all times.
2. Be patient.
3. Participate in play and remain engaged with children throughout this process.
4. Pay attention to children's interest.
5. Practice active listening.

While you are working with the children in the classroom, you will be learning many things. Not only about these children, but about children in general; how they are alike, how they are different, what interests them, what they can do, how they express their feelings, and what helps them most, among other things.

The following comments may be helpful in your work as a volunteer in Head Start/State Preschool:

1. Keep a firm commitment—a child's relationship with an adult is built on trust, so be DEPENDABLE.
2. Come prepared for creative play and to play on the floor. Wear comfortable, flat shoes and clothing that you don't mind getting dirty.
3. Plan for a time to talk to the teacher outside of class time. The idea is to arrive early so you will know the plan for the day and to stay awhile after the children leave to share your impressions of the day, express any concerns you may have and assist in arranging the classroom.
4. Contribute ideas, projects, etc., to the teacher first, so that she/he may plan for their use. She/He will welcome your suggestions, but will want to fit them into the program. If you have special skills, the teacher will be glad to know about it.





5. All adults must provide supervision and guidance during all activities for safe and active learning. KNOW WHERE THE FIRST AID KIT IS! Child Care Center regulations require that liensees shall provide care and supervision as necessary to meet the children's needs and that supervision shall be visual. Title 22, Division 12, Section 102417(a) and 101229(a)(1)

6. Refer questions from visitors or parents to the teacher.

7. Please follow through with any assignment and/or task you take on in a timely manner.

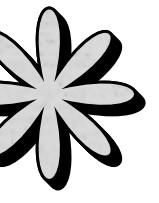
8. Do not discuss a child's behavior or dress in his/her presence or to anyone but the teacher.

9. Any disagreement with procedures, techniques, etc., should also be discussed with the teacher, and not in front of the children. You are encouraged to express your concerns to the teacher, if your concerns were not resolved at the classroom level you are encouraged to meet with the assistant administrator to discuss the concern. (refer to Parent/Community Complaint Procedures).

10. Speak in positive terms to the children. Conversation that starts with "Johnny, don't do" has negative implication and often negative results.

11. Avoid comparison with other children.

12. Use voice as a learning tool. Keep it calm and pleasant and make conversation on a face-to-face level—kneel or sit.

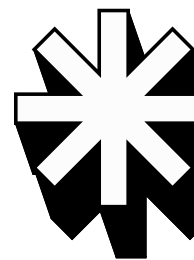


13. Offer a choice only when you can really give one. "Do you want to use red or green paint" is a true choice. "Do you want to have lunch now?" is not.

14. Focus on strengths when addressing and redirecting children. Work to build a positive self-image for each child. Avoid showing preferences.

15. Redirect children by reinforcing and reminding them of classroom expectations. Remember, children are learning new ideas every day and will make mistakes. It is important for adults to remain calm when providing guidance and redirecting them.

16. Learn what the classroom expectations are and positives strategies used to remind children to maintain them.

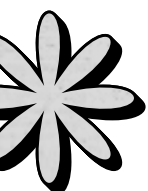


CURRICULUM

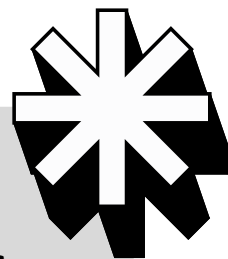
The PSD Early Childhood Education Program uses *The Creative Curriculum*, a research-based curriculum that honors creativity and makes learning exciting and relevant for every child. Its focus is children learning through play while interacting with their environment and others. *The Creative Curriculum* balances both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. Child development theory and scientific research are the foundation for *The Creative Curriculum*.

Theories that support the creative Curriculum:

- Abraham Maslow—Basic needs and learning
- Erik Erikson—The emotions and learning
- Jean Piaget—Logical thinking and reasoning
- Lev Vygotsky—Social interaction and learning
- Howard Gardner—Multiple intelligences
- Sara Smilansky—Play and learning



Children are learning throughout their daily routine. Volunteers should support the classroom learning experience by participating (following the lead of the teacher) in the following activities:



**CIRCLE TIME:
CHILDREN DEVELOP
THE FOLLOWING
SKILLS IN THIS AREA:**

- Prediction
- Self-regulation
- Large motor skills
- Listening skills
- Emergent reading skills
- Language and literacy development skills
- Turn-taking
- Social-emotional skills
- Recall/ Memory development
- Comprehension skills

**CHOICE
TIME/CENTER
TIME ACTIVITIES
SUPPORT...**

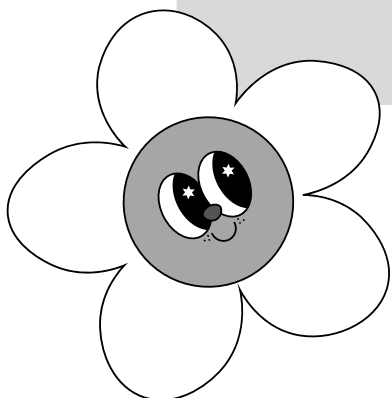
- Language and literacy development
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Classification/Sorting
- Hand and eye coordination
- Problem-solving
- Social –emotional skills
- Memory development

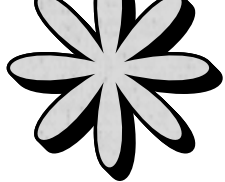
**MEAL TIME
ACTIVITIES
SUPPORT...**

- Self-regulation
- Fine motor skills
- Language and literacy development
- Independence
- Social-emotional skills

**OUTSIDE TIME
ACTIVITIES
SUPPORT...**

- Fine and Gross motor skills
- Language and literacy development skills
- Turn-taking
- Social-emotional development skills
- Math skills
- Problem-solving skills





Commonly used terms in child development

The domains of child development are categorized in different ways in order to highlight the key concepts that are attributed to each domain. However, it is important to note that they do not develop or operate in isolation, they can develop across domains.

Cognitive Development Skills

Cognitive Skill Development in children involves the progressive building of learning skills, such as attention, memory, self-regulation, reasoning and problem-solving. These skills support children while they process sensory information and eventually learn to evaluate, analyze, make comparisons and understand cause and effect.

Social-Emotional Skills

Social-emotional skills include the child's experience, expression and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others both intra-and inter-personally. Play is an important factor in social-emotional development, as play allows children to release emotions, work through feelings, and understand their world better.

Physical Development Skills

Fine motor Skills: The coordination of small muscles in movements, usually involving hands and fingers.

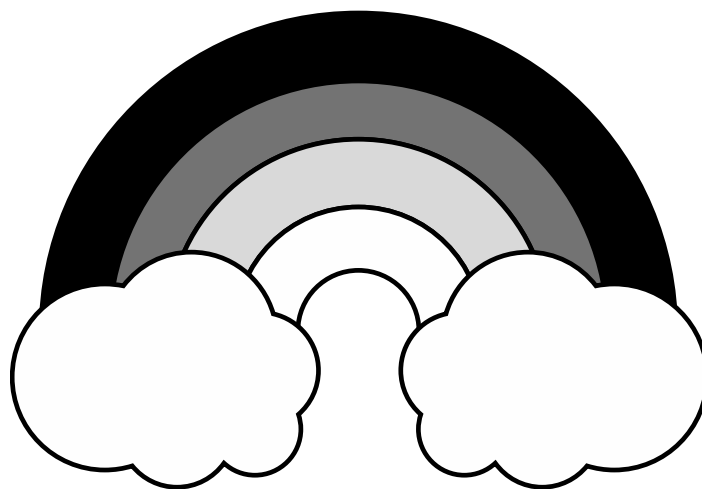
Gross Motor Skills: The coordination of the large body parts and movements (arms, legs, etc.)

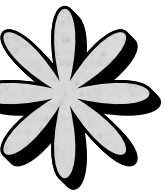
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT THROUGH ENCOURAGING AND EMPOWERING LANGUAGE:

How adults respond and talk to children is critical for classroom management. Language is proactive prevention as well as positive reinforcement. By using encouraging and empowering language, adults can help children thrive in their environment and demonstrate that they believe in their ability to make constructive choices.

Some examples of encouraging language are...

- Speaking to the child(ren) directly and not “at” them or about them- “Todd, I noticed that you held your scissors safely, thank you for remembering that”.
- Describe actions rather than making judgments, “I noticed toys on the floor in the puzzle area. We will get ready for our next activity after we clean this area.”
- Use concrete examples of specific behaviors instead of saying “good job”.
- Speak in a tone that is warm and encouraging.
- Ask- open-ended questions (questions that require more than a one-word answer).





SENSORIMOTOR ACTIVITIES- ACTIVITIES THAT STIMULATE THE BRAIN AND BUILD MOTOR SKILLS

- Play dough
- Bubbles
- Finger-painting
- Wet newspaper
- Water and sand play
- Clay
- Slime

ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Singing the alphabet
- Practicing counting
- Practicing shapes and color
- Offering children choices
- Pretend play in the Dramatic Play area
- Story-time
- Easel painting



ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- Clap a name
- Do You Hear What I hear
- If You're Happy and You Know It
- Role-Playing in the Dramatic Play Area
- Emotion chart
- Books discussing feelings

RECIPES FOR PLAY DOUGH AND SLIME:

How to make Play Dough:

Mix together 4 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 4 tbsp oil, 1 package Kool-Aid or a few drops food coloring (for color) and 1 ½ cups hot water. Stir until combined, then knead with your hands until the flour is completely absorbed.

How to make Slime:

Pour 1 cup of Elmer's glue into a plastic bowl. Add a few drops of food coloring & stir until the color is mixed throughout. Add 1 cup of liquid laundry starch to the glue, a little bit at a time & stir until the mixture thickens.

Immunization:

Prior to volunteering in the classroom, volunteers are required to show proof of the following immunizations in order to volunteer at a child care facility per **Safety Code 1596.7995**.

Volunteers must sign the PSD ECE Volunteer Health Clearance and show proof of the following immunizations*:

- Measles (MMR)
- Pertussis (TDaP)
- Influenza (Flu Shot)
- Tuberculosis (TB Skin Test)



Once a volunteer has receives their health clearance from ECE staff, they can begin to volunteer in the classroom.

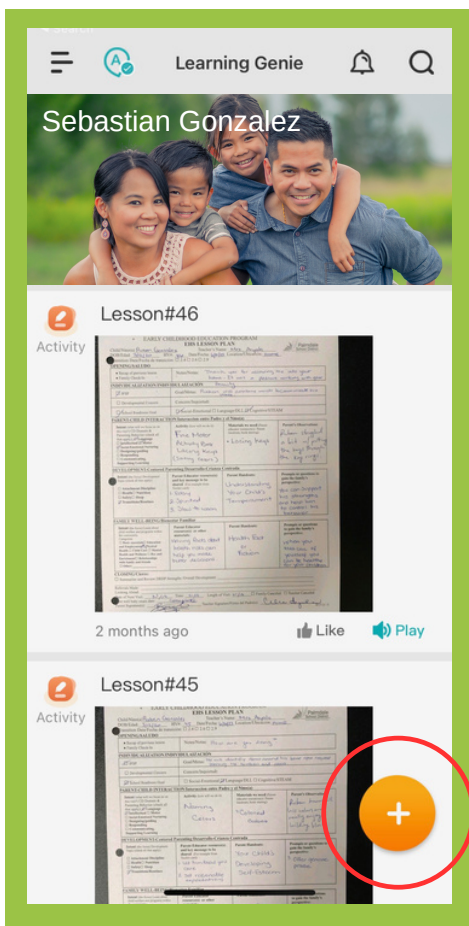
*Unless volunteer has the following medical exemptions:

- Declination Statement (for influenza only)
- Proof of immunity

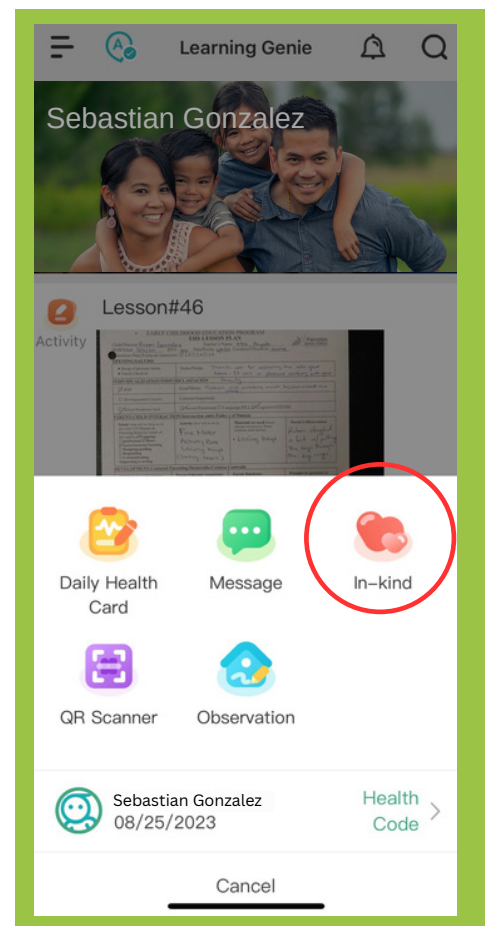
Learning Genie

(Head Start Families only)

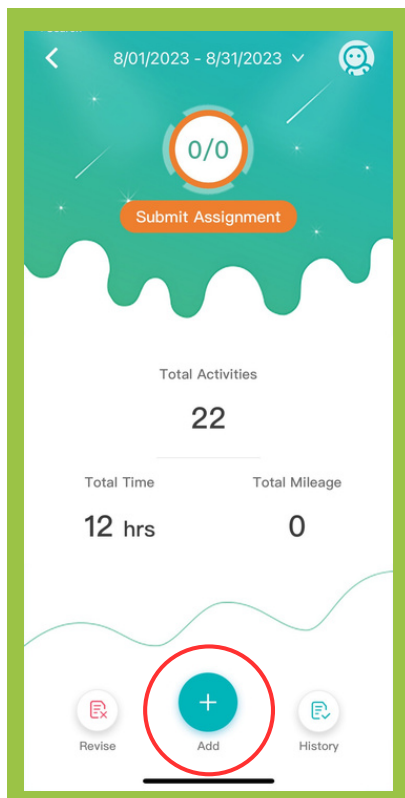
After volunteering in the classroom, you can enter your volunteer time in the Learning Genie Parent Application as an In-Kind time. It is especially important for the program that all volunteer time is counted. Here is a guide for submitting the In-Kind Volunteer time in the Learning Genie App. You can call the office if you have other questions.



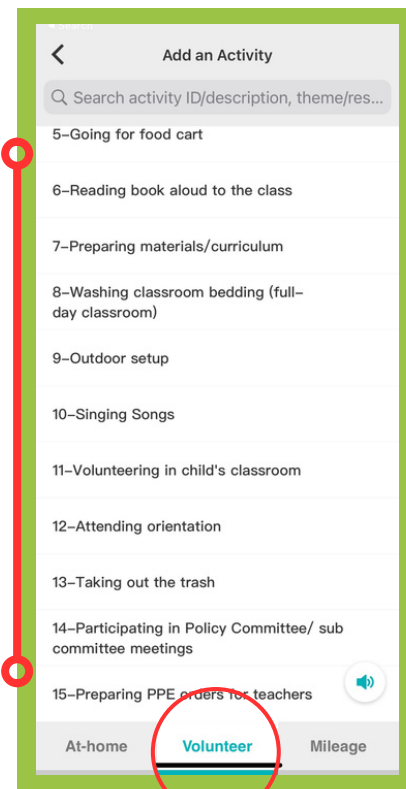
1. Open the Learning Genie app and select the orange plus sign



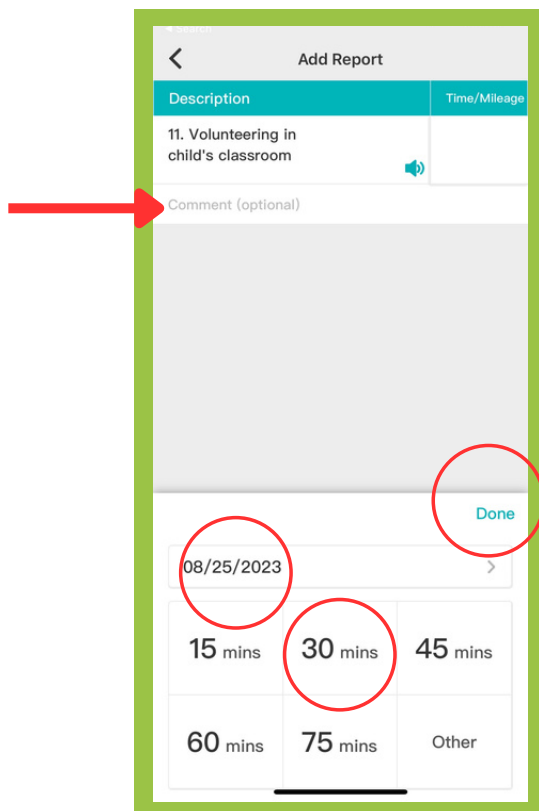
2. Select the Heart labeled "In-Kind"



3. Select the "add" button to add an activity



4. Select the "Volunteer" and whichever volunteer activity you participated in



5. Select the date, length of time, and add an optional description of the activity ex. "helped in Seb's class during snack time". You will be asked for a signature and then you are done!