

# **VOLUNTEERS IN THE CLASSROOM**

**A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES & VOLUNTEERS  
SUPPORTING LEARNING AT LINCOLN OPTIONS**

*“Lincoln is a community committed to  
Learning, Kindness and Celebration”*

# Safety First

Please review these safety guidelines. The safety of our children is paramount! These guidelines also protect you!

- Sign in and wear your name tag
- Use adult bathrooms only. (There is one on each floor)
- Work with groups of 2-3 children. When you leave the building to take children to the garden, etc. take three or more! OR.....
- Work with children in open areas near other adults and children. (Read page 2 for more detail) OR.....
- Leave doors open when working with children away from the classroom
- If children are unkind, uncooperative or unsafe, return them to the classroom teacher. Do not delay!
- Do not touch children in anger. Do not chase or grab children. Return to the classroom teacher for support or to report.
- In the event of a fire or earthquake drill, participate! Listen to the teacher and model calm, responsible behavior.
- Sign out so we know you are not in the building. (In case of emergency)
- Always sign your child out during the school day. We must know where the children are!
- Read page 2 for details on safe interactions, safe communication and safe touch.
  
- Forms that must be completed:
  - Volunteer Confidentiality Statement
  - Volunteer Driver(Both forms are available in the office)

# **GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION**

In the Olympia School District, our students' safety and your protection are paramount. We strive to provide a safe, healthy, supportive work environment for students, staff and volunteers. To help ensure this, we ask that you follow these guidelines.

## **Safe Interaction with Kids**

In compliance with state guidelines, volunteers in the Olympia School District work under supervised conditions. This means:

- There should be another volunteer, district employee, or parent in the area where you are working with the student(s).
- When you are asked by the teacher to take a group of kids out of the classroom where there is no other adult, work in an open area where you and the children are visible. For example, the hallway, the cafeteria, etc.
- To protect your privacy and that of the students, do not ask for a student's address or phone number, or share yours with the student, without discussing it with the principal first.

## **Safe Verbal Communication**

- Let your conversations demonstrate respect for others, and avoid language that may be perceived as discriminatory, sexist or offensive.
- Remember that you are a role model for the students.
- Treat all students in the same kind and fair manner.
- If a student shares with you anything that causes you concern for their safety or health, TELL THE TEACHER OR PRINCIPAL. Be assured that they will follow up on the information.

## **Safe Touch Areas**

- Shoulders
- Upper Back
- Arms and hands
- If you hug a student, hug from the side, or bend down so that your shoulders are level with the child's.
- Handshakes, "high fives", and arm around the shoulder are safe, warm and friendly touches.
- NEVER touch a child in anger.
- Do not chase or grab children. Report!

In short, use your best judgment at all times. Treat the students as you would wish to be treated.....with dignity, care and respect.

# The Developmental Point of View

The Developmental Point of View means **understanding** that growth is orderly, structured, predictable. In this way he/she is like every other child.

The Developmental Point of View means **respecting** the fact that every child has his/her own rate and pattern of growth peculiar to him/her. In this way he/she is different from every other child.

The Developmental Point of View means **accepting** the child with his/her physical, social, emotional, and intellectual components. These components are not separate, and one cannot be stretched ahead of the others without upsetting an intricate balance. A child tends to seek balance necessary for his/her time and space at any given moment.

The Developmental Point of View means **appreciating** that readiness for any given task has its roots in the biological-maturational make-up of the child. We can neither PRODUCE IT, HURRY IT, nor IGNORE IT. When a child is ready he/she will be born,

walk,

talk,

read.

The Developmental Point of View means **promoting** educational programs for children in terms of development as it IS NOW, not in terms of what one thinks it ought to be.

The Developmental Point of View means walking hand in hand with nature. It is a respect for the total humanness of children.

# PARENT INVOLVEMENT

**Parent Involvement may be fulfilled in many different ways that meet both the needs of the program and the interests of the parents.**

**Parents may work regularly as floaters to assist in the class where needed:** such as listening to children read; tutoring; helping with class projects in writing, art, cooking, and science; and driving for field trips.

**Working parents may help during lunch hours** supervising students while they eat or work in the classroom, also by providing additional adult supervision on the playground: initiating a game, turning a jump rope or planning the game with children!

**Parents who want to help only occasionally in the classroom** help with special project, be a guest speaker, teach a mini-course, or substitute for regularly scheduled parents.

**Parents may assist out of class** by coordinating field trips, finding guest speakers, shopping for class needs, making learning materials and games, constructing classroom furnishings, setting up construction projects for children and tending the garden weekends, evenings and in the summer.

**Parents can participate in classroom committees.** These vary from class to class, but include art, science, basic skills, gardening, cooking and computers. Each committee is responsible for implementing the teacher's ideas for their area, brainstorming and exchanging ideas for their area, coordinating activities between classes that relate to their area, and selecting a chair to represent the committee at monthly curriculum meetings with the teacher and classroom coordinator.

**Training for some jobs will be offered.** The success of the parent participation aspect of the program depends on each parent carefully considering how she/he can make a meaningful and quality contribution of time. Each classroom teacher and classroom coordinator will consider how parents gifts and talents can be integrated into the classroom.

## WAYS FAMILIES CAN VOLUNTEER AT LINCOLN

- Assist with curriculum in the classroom especially for center times, recess and field trips.
- Curriculum focus - offer your expertise in an area being presented in the classroom
- Cooking
- Music
- Art
- Technology
- Story Telling
- Field Trips
- Typing Class Books
- Geology
- Master Gardener Helpers
- Sharing Family Culture/Traditions
- Cooperative Recess Games - come spend a lunch hour or 20 minutes
- Book Orders
- Animal Supporter
- Class Shopper
- Wood Working
- Hobbies
- 1 on 1 with Child
- Assist Teacher with Tasks
- Class Charts - Handwritten or Calligraphers or Sketchers
- Clean & Organize Class Space and Materials with Teacher's Directions
- Library Book Collector
- Research for Classroom Study or Special Interests
- Resource Collector
- Help Teach Kids Jobs so They can Contribute
- Small Group Instruction
- Independent Work Support
- Sit Beside or Hold a Child on Your Lap
- Read to Children
- Assist in Individual Interests and Projects

\*Family adults in the classroom reduce class size!

## **Other Ideas:**

- Green House/Garden
- Common Spaces Organizer/Cleaner, Activities Room, Kids Kitchen
- Community Connection to Invite Local People to be a Part of What's Happening at Lincoln
- Write/Print Newsletters, Flyers, Weekly Class Newsletter, Class Opus Article
- Eat with a Lunch Buddy
- Capital Employees Come for Lunch or Playground Support
- Help with tutoring and/or Lunch Buddy
- Develop Partnerships with High School
- Visit Senior Centers with Children
- Child Care Organizer
- Provide Clerical Office Support
- Provide Library Support
- Technical Trouble Shooters
- Grant Writers
- Elders - Help with Transportation to Get Elders Here
- Come to recess and Play
- Lunch, Come to be with Us on the Playground....
  - be here to push swing
  - turn the jump rope
  - kick the ball
  - hang out
- Support:
  - Special Events....Harvest Festival in September, Camp Thunderbird Campout in June, Weekly Assemblies
  - Fundraising
  - Enrichment
  - Skating/etc.
  - Community Service
  - Fine Arts
  - Greeters/Tour Guides for Visitors in School
  - Painter; Class Projects, Furniture
  - School Photographer - Scrapbook, How Parents Help at Lincoln, Teacher, Child, Parent Partnerships, Slide Show
  - Video Production Coordinator - Classroom Meetings, School Events, Parent Ed., etc.
  - Weeding - Help Keep Grounds Chemical Free and Looking Nice
  - Offer Early Release Activity
  - Classroom Team; Council Rep., Resource Person, Volunteer Coordinator
  - Auction Committee
  - Join the Parent Band

## **PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN THE CLASSROOM REMINDERS AND SUGGESTIONS**

We want parents, families and community volunteers to feel welcome, safe, and comfortable in our school and in the classroom.

Please ask questions and feel free to say what you are comfortable doing and what you are not comfortable doing. Please let the teacher know if you have an area of expertise or a particular interest or talent you would like to bring to the classroom.

PLEASE:

- DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEACHER(S) AND THE CHILDREN YOU WORK WITH.
- OBSERVE AND ASK QUESTIONS.
- RESPECT THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY OF EACH CHILD. PLEASE TALK ONLY TO THE TEACHER ABOUT THE CHILDREN IN THE CLASS.
- GIVE THE TEACHER AN OPPORTUNITY OF ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CLASSROOM OR ANY CHILD'S PROGRAM. SHE/HE HAS THE WHOLE PICTURE.
- PLEASE ASSUME ALL CHILDREN ARE DOING THE BEST THEY CAN. ASSUME INNOCENCE. ASK OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS IN ORDER TO BE HELPFUL.
- RESPECT AND HONOR THE WAYS CHILDREN LEARN. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO BE SMART!
- USE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND COMMON SENSE. IF SOMETHING LOOKS UNSAFE, STOP THE BEHAVIOR AND ASK THE TEACHER FOR HELP.
- NOTICE THE CLASSROOM AGREEMENT. USE THAT LANGUAGE TO REMIND STUDENTS OF EXPECTATIONS.
- USE THE USEFUL INFORMATION NOTE TO LET THE TEACHER KNOW WHAT WORKS FOR YOU AND ANY OBSERVATIONS OR CONCERNS YOU HAVE.
- IF CHILDREN ASSIGNED TO YOU ARE UNKIND OR UNSAFE, RETURN THEM TO THE TEACHER

## **Strategies for Intervention with Children:**

Assume Innocence

Develop a relationship

Model

- .....listen to the teacher
- .....use listening posture
- .....be kind and calm and clear
- .....during fire alarm, be silent

Ask open-ended “wh” questions (that cannot be answered yes or no)

- How can I help you right now?
- What do you need to .....?
- Where could we work together?
- Who knows how to do this well?
- etc.....

The agreement is \_\_\_\_\_. Can you do that? Thanks a lot.

Clear messages/directions, then walk away:

- “The rule is to come in when you see the teacher.
- “I am going in and I will count to 20. I want to see you with your class.”
- (THEN GO IN! If student does not come in, report to the teacher.)

Return/report to the teacher or other staff (para educators, Cheryl, Jenny, teacher, etc.....)

Make a plan for next time, so you are comfortable working in the classroom or with this/these child(ren).

Please..... When there is a problem.....

- DO NOT chase children and DO NOT “grab” children.
- Both behaviors tend to escalate the situation.

**The use of *mediational* language shifts ownership for a child's actions and responsibilities from the parent to the child. It empowers the child,, by providing the child with the opportunity to demonstrate his/her capabilities, knowledge and willingness to be successful.**

- What do you need/want to do next?
- Tell me how you did that.
- What do you think would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?
- When have you done something like this before?
- How would you feel if \_\_\_\_\_?
- Yes, that's right AND how do you know it was right?
- When is another time you might need to \_\_\_\_\_?
- Stop and look carefully at what you're doing.
- What do you think the problem is?
- Let's think of another way we could do this.
- Why is this one better than that one?
- Where have you done that before to help you solve a problem?
- Let's make a plan so we don't miss anything.
- How can you find out?
- How is \_\_\_\_\_ different (or alike) \_\_\_\_\_?

# SOME ROLES OF THE PARENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Your major role in the classroom as parents is to support the teacher in serving the students. Some of the ways you may be asked to do this are:

1. To monitor and assist students during **teacher-directed, whole class instruction.**
2. To monitor and support students during **independent work** or cooperative learning activities.
3. To provide **follow-up instruction** after teacher-directed instruction.
4. To occasionally provide teacher planned **small group instruction** to students (for instance, lead a reading group, practice a play, cook with a small group, etc.)
5. To support students' instructional program through the preparation of materials and the fulfillment of other **clerical tasks.**
6. Occasionally you may be asked to **monitor** a group of students on the **playground** or **teach/play a game** with them **outside or in the gym.**

# HINTS FOR HELPING WHEN.....

## Whole class instruction

- Model focusing on the teacher/speaker
- Model “giving five”

## Interventions

- Sit or stand near the child who is off task. If it is your child, hold them.....or sit with child so they can “lean on you.” Keep your attention on the speaker.
- Touch the child on the back or shoulders.
- A nod, a look, a gesture to remind the child.
- Let the teacher direct, if these have not been successful.

## Support for Independent Work

- Most teachers encourage children to ask a partner or a peer for help before asking an adult..... “Ask three before me”.

## Interventions

- Move around the classroom.
- Notice children’s work..... “Ask questions....what makes this quality work?” “What do you like/love about this work?”
- Ask QUESTIONS!!! (See great questions on the next page.)
- Ask a child to give you directions for the work.

## Follow up instructions / Following directions

- Prompt children, who are not getting started after directions have been given, with questions.
- Remind children of these thinking steps;
  1. Tell me (the adult) what you know. Ask the child, “What do you know?”
  2. “What is your specific question?”  
Child: “My question is\_\_\_\_\_.”

## Small group instruction

- Following are pages with examples on how to do small group instruction smoothly. The page entitled ONE TO ONE WORK SUPPORT “RECIPES” is a great guide for working with one child in any subject area. It is always a good idea to check with the teacher about the finer points on one to one work.

## **One to One Work Support “Recipes”**

This is a very helpful strategy to use any time you work with a child in any subject area:

1. Stop and carefully read the title of the lesson or The directions for the center or station.
2. Study the examples and ask the child questions about what they know about this work. (Remember, they are in the classroom every day and they know how it works!)

Proceed with the following steps:

1. I DO IT ..... MODEL the skill or strategy using one or two items from the lesson.
2. WE DO IT ..... PROMPT and guide the child to do the task or practice it together. Say it together, walk through the steps together, etc.
3. REPEAT STEPS ONE AND TWO UNTIL CHILD CATCHES ON!
4. YOU DO IT ..... When the child shows some confidence, have them practice independently.

This is a very helpful strategy that move children toward independence!

# Parent Training

## Working with a Small Group

Often you will be asked to work with a small group of children in the room or down the hall in a vacant space. Please remember your common sense, the class agreement, and our school agreement. Lincoln is a community committed to learning, kindness, and fun. Any behavior that interrupts learning or is hurtful in any way is unacceptable behavior.

Let's assume you are taking a small group of children to a space outside of the room. Here is one collection of strategies that may be helpful.

### **BEFORE MOVING TO THE SPACE:**

Gather the children around you to quickly give **expectations** of hall behavior and gathering behavior once you get to the space. (The teacher may do this).

"Your teacher has asked me to work with you on your book 'Ira Sleeps Over'. I'm **looking forward** to reading the story with you. It's one of my favorites. We're going to walk together down to the empty room at the end of the hall. We'll **walk in a cluster** grouping. Please **stay beside me or behind me** as we walk. Remember your **quiet voices** so we won't interrupt learning as we pass classrooms or people working in the hall. When we get to our space, please **criss-cross sit** in a circle. (If there are chairs and a table, indicate gathering the chairs around the table.) are there **any questions?**"

*(Eventually, you would only need to greet your group and give quick reminders: walk beside or behind, quiet voices, criss-cross sit in our circle...)*

Acknowledge the group for moving to the learning space and keeping our agreements.

### **MOVING TO THE SPACE - TROUBLESHOOTING:**

**Children who start to run ahead of the group:**

Give one reminder: "Jason, remember to walk beside me or behind me." or "Jason, the rule is to walk beside me or behind me. You may walk beside me." If reminder is ignored: "Jason, please return to your teacher in the classroom. You can try it again another day."

**Children who do not come to the circle once you are in the room:**

Give one direction to the child: "Lucy, quickly join us in our circle with a criss-cross sit." or "Lucy, our rule is to join the circle and sit criss-cross. You may join us quickly."

### **DURING THE GROUP LESSON:**

Do not begin the activity until you have your learning circle where everyone is sitting and ready to start. Then quickly review the work or our job:

“**Our job** for the next 20 minutes is to read ‘Ira Sleeps Over’. When we share ideas, remember to **raise hands** to talk. (*We want to hear everyone’s ideas and we can only listen to one person at a time.*)

### **DURING THE GROUP LESSON - TROUBLESHOOTING:**

#### **Child starts talking without raising a hand.**

Give one reminder: “Susan, remember to raise your hand.” or “Susan, our rule is to raise your hand. Please do that.”

#### **Child start to lie down in a prone position during the group lesson.**

“Lying down gives your brain the signal to rest or sleep. Since this is a learning group, your brain needs to be awake, please continue to criss cross sit.”

#### **Child becomes disruptive to the learning of the group.**

Return the child to the teacher

### HELPFUL TIPS:

Guidance phrases and directions should be delivered in a quick manner and then attention should be redirected right back to the task. The less attention paid to inappropriate behavior, the better. Also the less verbage, the better.

## Rapid Reading Steps

- Child Selects Book
- Read Title to child
  - Chat about what book might be about....
- Read Book First Time
  - Instruction time...use picture cues, initial sounds, ending sounds, does it look right, sound right, make sense.
- Read Book Second Time
  - Read book to me so it sounds like talking
- Select Favorite Page

Other possible activities.....

- Write Favorite Page
  - Give a few writing strategies, similar to reading strategies....initial/ending sounds, two finger spaces
- Write Sentence Strip
- Cut up sentence strip/mix up words/put back together
  - Glue in writing book if they want too