

Early Head Start/Head Start  
2024-2025 School Year

# Volunteer Orientation Packet

## Head Start Program Philosophy

The philosophy of our Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children from low-income families while providing them with high quality, nurturing and responsive learning environments. Social competence means the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both the present environment and later responsibilities in school and life.

## Early Head Start Program Philosophy

The philosophy of our Early Head Start program is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhance the development of very young children, and promote healthy family development.

## Early Head Start/Head Start Program Goals

1. TGC EHS/HS will provide parents the opportunity to increase their knowledge of early childhood education and build staff capacity.
2. TGC EHS/HS will implement a comprehensive professional development program that increase staff abilities to better meet the needs of children and families and to advance their career within the program.
3. TGC EHS/HS will put supports in place to support the mental health and wellness of staff and families.

## The Guidance Center's Mission & Vision

Mission: Nurture development. Foster resilience. Cultivate well-being.

Vision: The Guidance Center will be an innovative leader in programs, community engagement, and collaboration to create a vibrant future for those we serve.



## WHAT EVERY VOLUNTEER SHOULD KNOW

1. When volunteering in the site/classroom you are required to document your volunteer time on the appropriate form. Please check with a staff member if you are not sure what form to use.
2. Volunteers who will be in the site beyond 15 minutes during drop-off and pick-up are required to sign-in and out on the sites visitor's log and check in with the office staff upon arrival and departure at any TGC Early Head Start/Head Start site. Volunteers are required to wear a "Head Start Volunteer" name tag all times while they are in the site.

3. For the safety of all the children, you will be required to find alternate care or leave siblings at home when volunteering in the classroom or during site events/activities.
4. Personal items such as purses or bags must be locked up in the classroom/office/site or left outside of the building in a personal vehicle.
5. No outside food and drinks are permitted in any of the TGC Early Head Start/Head Start Sites. All outside food and beverages must be consumed before entering the buildings.
6. **Cell phone, tables, smart watches and other electronic device use is prohibited while volunteering.** We ask that you put your cell phone on vibrate and refrain from using it while in the classroom or participating in site events or activities. If you must use your cell phone for any reason while volunteering, please exit the classroom or area where they children are present before using your cell phone for safety purposes.
7. Personal cell phones or any other mobile devices cannot be used to take pictures or record any child, parent, volunteer or TGC staff member.
8. A paid staff person must be present in the classroom, during outside playtime, in the gym, etc. with the children at all times. Volunteers should never be left alone with any child.
9. ONLY paid staff can:
  - a. Discuss children with parents/guardians.
  - b. Release children to parents/guardians at pick-up time.
  - c. Practice "Universal Precautions". This includes a child having a bathroom accident, vomiting, needing help blowing nose or cleaning up a cut.
10. Volunteers should always present a clean, professional appearance and dress in clothes that can get messy when participating in activities with the children. Everyone is expected to be well-groomed and wear clean clothing, free of holes, tears, or other signs of wear. Clothing with offensive or inappropriate designs or stamps are not allowed. Clothing should not be too revealing.
11. Please help us set a good example for the children in our program by modeling appropriate behavior and language and refrain from using profanity at the site at any time. For many children, the most important role models are their parents and caregivers. Children look up to their role models to help shape how they behave in school, form relationships, or when making difficult decisions.
12. Smoking is prohibited in the building or on school grounds.
13. The State of Michigan Legislation MCL 750.237 has designated all school buildings a WEAPON FREE ZONE. **No person may possess any firearms including a permit to own and/or carry firearms, knives, tasers or other lethal weapons on the premises of any TGC Head Start/Early Head Start Facility. This includes parking lots, articles of clothing, purses, backpacks or vehicles.** All violations will be reported to the proper authorities.
14. Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any physical, verbal, email, social media or any other type of written correspondence used to threaten, intimidate or inflict bodily harm towards any employee, child, parent or community volunteer.
15. Any individual judged to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave by the site leader or site staff in charge. Police will be called if a person asked to leave does not. Police will also be called for any of the following infractions:

-Verbal or physical abuse	-Damaging or stealing property
-Any act of violence, or threatening behavior	-Possession of a weapon
16. PLEASE feel free to ask questions or share comments and/or concerns with a staff member at your site.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

1. As required by The State of Michigan, Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs (LARA) – Child Care Licensing, **all volunteers who participate in classroom activities interacting with children other than their own, MUST complete a Public Sex Offenders Registry clearance BEFORE volunteering in the classroom.** To complete this, the Public Sex Offenders Registry Clearance Authorization Form must be filled out and submitted with a current copy of a valid driver’s license or state issued identification card. A staff member at the site can assist you with this process.
2. About **Discipline**: When it comes to discipline in our centers, we implement positive techniques that include verbal redirection, offering the children choices and explaining the consequences of their actions. The Teachers and Assistant Teachers are responsible for all discipline in the classroom and on the playground. **Only paid staff may implement positive discipline techniques with the children.**
3. About **Confidentiality**: Children may say or do all kinds of things in the classroom. Anything said by a child about their life or personal experience stays in the classroom. When choosing to volunteer in our Early Head Start or Head Start classrooms, you are agreeing to abide by the applicable principles of confidentiality. **Do not repeat a child’s conversations to anyone, especially other parents/guardians. If this occurs it could result in the termination of your volunteer opportunity.** However, any information raising suspicion about child abuse or neglect must immediately be reported to the Teacher or Site Leader.
17. About **Safety**: Tell the Teacher or Assistant Teacher about any potential safety issues (i.e., uncovered electrical sockets, spilled water, etc.). Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom, please be familiar with them. You can assist the Teachers and children in the event of a fire, tornado or evacuation drill.
4. About **Assignments**: Ask the Teacher or Assistant Teacher where they need help in the classroom. Let them know what special skills and interests you have, especially in working with children.
5. About **Self-esteem**: Try to learn the names of the children. If you forget, ask them to help you remember. They will smile and be happy that you did! Stoop or sit down to talk and listen to them on their level, eye-to-eye.
6. About **Work time**: Ask what they are doing. Ask questions that need more than a “yes” or “no” answer. Have real conversations with the children and listen to their answers to keep them talking, and practicing their language skills.
7. About **Direction**: Follow the child’s lead. Facilitate children’s play, do not lead it or take control of it. Be a partner in the learning process.
8. About **Focus**: Talk with the children, not the other adults in the room. Children’s language is built by adding new words to their vocabulary every day. Promote their literacy skills in every way possible with reading, writing and conversation.
9. About **Illness**: One of the biggest problems we have to work together to avoid is widespread absenteeism due to sick children. If you are not feeling well, please stay home. Germs spread easily in groups of children. The staff and other parents will appreciate you being considerate of them and their health.

## WHAT TO DO?

1. **A Child is Injured:** If you witness a child injury, do not attempt to administer any type of aid. No matter how minor the injury is, you should immediately notify the teacher or a staff member.
2. **A Child Becomes Ill:** Children frequently become ill while at school. If a child complains of not feeling well, you should notify the teacher immediately. Volunteers are prohibited from administering any form of medicine to the child.
3. **You Are Injured:** Should you become injured while performing the duties of your job, notify a site staff member immediately. The office staff will assist you and ask you to fill out the proper occurrence report form.
4. **You Are Asked to Take the Class Alone:** Because you are not a paid employee, you are not legally permitted to supervise a class alone. Consequently, if the teacher must leave the room, arrangements should be made to have a paid staff member present.
5. **Someone Asks to See a Child:** If a person who is not a member of the school staff should ask to speak to you or asks to take a child, you must direct that individual to the teacher. Under no circumstances should you grant such a request.
6. **Someone Asks You How a Child is Doing:** As it becomes known that you are working in the classroom, you will likely be asked questions concerning specific children. If a parent/guardian asks about a child's progress, you should say, "I enjoy working with your child and I'm sure if you schedule an appointment, the teacher would be happy to talk with you."

### VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

- ☆ To be treated with respect and dignity
- ☆ To be supported by program staff
- ☆ To be informed of individual duties and responsibilities before beginning the job
  - ☆ To have the same working conditions as staff doing similar tasks
- ☆ To receive feedback on the quality of work, including areas needing improvement
- ☆ To participate in training that will enhance job performance and personal development
  - ☆ To be kept informed about the program activities and calendar changes
  - ☆ To receive recognition for contributions to the program on an ongoing basis
    - ☆ To state grievances in an appropriate forum
- ☆ To be given meaningful work that promotes learning and growth



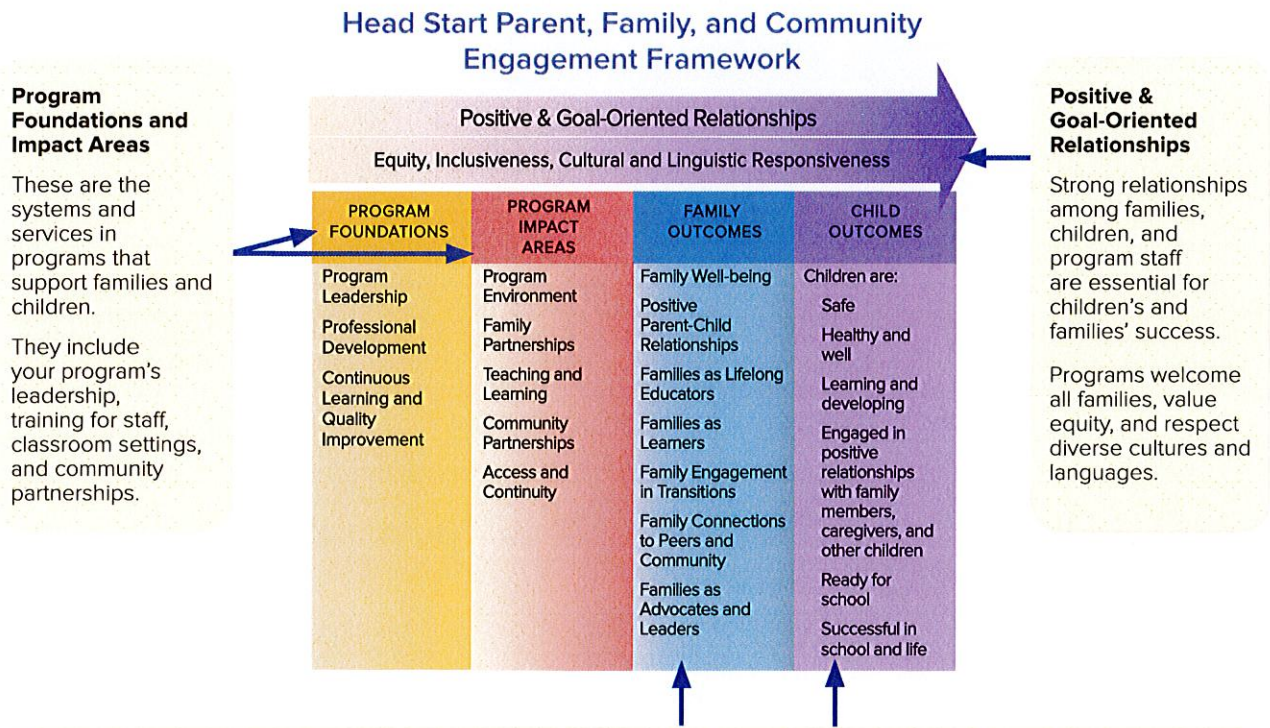


## Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework: An Overview for Parents

As parents and family members, you know your children better than anyone else does. You know their personalities, strengths, and challenges. You also know the goals you have for your children and for yourself.

Head Start and Early Head Start programs partner with parents, families, and communities to help you achieve those goals. When you share what you know about your child with us, we can help make your children’s everyday experiences better. Together, we can lay the foundation for their future success.

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework is a visual tool that program staff, parents, and families can use to build effective partnerships. It describes how programs, parents, families, and communities work together to promote children’s healthy development and learning, and well-being for families.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY CHECKLIST

Below is a list of the ways that parents can volunteer at The Guidance Center Head Start/Early Head Start sites. If you would like to provide more information on ways you are interested in volunteering in our program, please fill out the form and return it to your child's teachers, family service worker or site leader.

Volunteer's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Site \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Opportunity	
<b>In the Classroom</b>	
Assist with toothbrushing or handwashing	
Assist the Teacher/Assistant Teacher during rest time	
Assist during meal and/or snack time(s)	
Assist with classroom clean-up	
Share a talent, family story or tradition	
Prepare items for classroom activities	
Help set up before and/or clean-up after activities	
Sing songs or read to children	
Help clean and sanitize the materials/ furniture in the classroom	
Work with small groups of children (play board game, matching game, etc.)	
Help plan classroom activities with the Teacher/Assistant Teacher	
Other:	
Other:	
<b>At the Center</b>	
Attend the monthly site parent meeting, workshops, family activities or events	
Help with site events such as Buddy Day and Culture Night (set-up/clean-up etc.)	
Complete general office work (phones, buzzers, copies,)	
Assist with the newsletter, calendars, flyers, posters, parent bulletin board, etc.	
Assist with site menu planning	
Greet other arriving parents to remind them about an upcoming parent committee meeting, other program events, or deadlines (screening, enrollment, etc.)	
Donate professional skills (e.g. medical professional performing health related screening or painter assisting with facility painting)	
Assist with building and playground safety	
Assist with special site events (ex. Music Lady, Culture Day, etc.)	
Other:	
Other:	
<b>At Home</b>	
Assist with recruitment by distributing flyers for our Program	
Complete the physical fitness or literacy activity sheets with your child	
Complete Family Connection In-Home Activity Sheets	
Watch ReadyRosie Videos and complete activities with your child	
Repair classroom equipment	
Create materials for the classroom that teachers have requested	
Other:	
Other:	