

Head Start and Early Head Start staff are very appreciative of all volunteers. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, friend, student teacher, or community member, we know you care about children enough to give your time and talents.

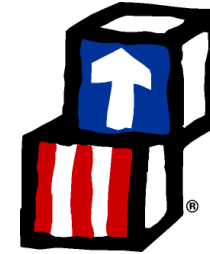
We hope you enjoy your time with us. Growing and learning is a life long process. We hope you learn a lot about yourself and the children.

Have fun!

Produced by BI-CAP Head Start: Prenatal to Five
Information was taken from
Creative Curriculum Preschool and
Creative Curriculum Infant and Toddler

Onboarding & Annual Training/Lab Student Student Teacher/5.2025

BI-CAP Head Start: Prenatal to Five



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



BI-CAP Head Start gives children and families a head start for kindergarten and for life.

Volunteer Guidelines

As a condition of providing services on behalf of BI-CAP, volunteers are required to give permission for the completion of, and pass, an Applicant Background Check and Background Study.

Regulations require that personal items are kept in a locked space. Ask classroom staff where you can keep your purse, valuables or medications.

Attire is casual but professional.

Cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom when children are present.

Hot drinks and soda cans are not permitted in the classroom. Staff and volunteers may use a water bottle in the classroom.

All Head Start sites and activities are smoke free and drug-free.

Please leave parking spaces nearest to the building for families bringing children to the center.

Remember to sign in when you arrive to the classroom. Our program receives matching Federal “in-kind funds” for time you spend volunteering.

Children are never left alone with volunteers.

Family Privacy

- Volunteers are required to respect privacy by not discussing Head Start children and families with anyone.
- Staff and volunteers will not give out names, phone numbers, or addresses of anyone.
- Volunteers are required to follow BI-CAP’s data privacy policies and sign a confidentiality agreement.



Emergent Writing

Children are learning:

- To use small motor skills.
- How letters are formed.
- The meaningful purpose of print.
- To increase their vocabulary and verbal skills.
- The sound structure of words (phonological awareness).
- To develop print knowledge.
- About letters and words.
- An understanding of books.



Volunteers can:

- Offer to show children how to hold a writing tool correctly (three point pincer grasp).
- Join in and model writing.
- Use verbal skills to explain what you are writing.
- Ask children what they are writing.
- Describe what you see.

Music and Movement

Children are learning:

- Listening and speaking skills, motor skills, creativity, and artistic appreciation.
- Increased fine and gross motor skills.
- Ways to grow in their imagination in different kinds of movement.



Volunteers can:

- Encourage children’s enjoyment of songs.
- Help children discriminate among different sounds.
- Encourage children to sing familiar songs.
- Focus attention on how their bodies move: fast, slow, high, low.
- Encourage children to pretend to the music.

Creative Arts (Continued)

Volunteers can:

- Describe what you see the child doing (Example: “I see you have two small circles inside a big circle”).
- Describe what is happening as the child is manipulating the materials.
- Join in with the materials provided.
- Offer to write the children’s stories as they tell them.
- Encourage children to write their name on their work and offer help if needed.



Outdoor Play

Children are learning:

- To use large muscles (climbing, jumping, hopping, skipping, etc.).
- To observe the natural world around them (insects, animals, plants, weather, seasons changing, etc.)
- To use all their senses to learn about the outdoors.
- To use social skills to play with other children (Example: “Pushing someone on the swing, taking turns, playing games, and cooperating”).

Volunteers can:

- Assist children in dressing appropriately for the weather before going outside, but encourage independence.
- Encourage children’s growing vocabularies.
- Encourage movement and exploration.
- Help growing imaginations by asking ‘Why’, ‘How’ and ‘What’ questions.
- Assist in keeping children safe on the playground (Example: standing near areas where children might fall, staying inside the fence, etc.).
- Join in outdoor play.
- Encourage children to take turns, help each other, use words to work out problems.
- Encourage children to notice plants, animals, and changes in the environment.

Relating Positively with Children

Children experience healthy development through relationships with important people in their life. Children look to adults to model how to get along.

Your interactions with children provide consistency to help regulate emotions, develop connections to others, explore materials, and learn.

Each child has their own temperament and will need support in different ways to promote mental health and positive behavior. The classroom staff can help you identify what will work best with each child.



- Respect each child’s style of interacting. Are they slow to adjust and take time to do an activity, or are they right there and ready to go?
- Acknowledge children’s positive interactions.
- Help preschool children’s social emotional growth in order to form relationships, regulate emotions, explore and learn.
- Mirror the behavior of toddlers. Copy a toddler’s funny face with your own funny face.
- Give children chances to help you and each other.
- Give children a chance to work out differences, but be ready to step in if you are needed.
- Help children express feelings in acceptable ways.
- Give every child a chance to develop a sense of responsibility.
- Model positive nurturing.
- Have realistic expectations for children’s behavior and set limits based on their age and stage of development.
- Teach children about feelings and empathy.
- Speak to children on their level with a calm voice.
- Use a problem solving approach to reduce conflict.
- Use routines and schedules.

Challenging Behavior

1302.90c HSPPS and Objective: The program ensures all staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers abide by the programs standard of conduct.

1.0 Standards of Conduct

1.1 Staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers implement positive strategies to support children's well-being and prevent and address challenging behavior.

1.2 Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers do not engage in behaviors that maltreat or endanger the health or safety of children, including, at a minimum,

(A) Corporal punishment; or physically abusive behavior, defined as intentional use of physical force that results in, or has the potential to result in, physical injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pushing, restraining, force feeding, or dragging

(B) Sexually abusive behavior, defined as any completed or attempted sexual act, sexual contact, or exploitation. Examples include, but are not limited to, behaviors such as inappropriate touching, inappropriate filming, or exposing a child to other sexual activities;

(C) Emotionally harmful or abusive behavior, defined as behaviors that harm a child's self worth or emotional well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to, using seclusion, using or exposing a child to public or private humiliation, or name calling, shaming, intimidating, or threatening a child; and

(D) Neglectful behavior, defined as the failure to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs including access to food, education, medical care, appropriate supervision by an adequate caregiver, and safe physical and emotional environments. Examples include, but are not limited to, leaving a child unattended on a bus, withholding food as punishment or refusing to change soiled diapers as punishment;

(i.) Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers report reasonably suspected or known incidents of child abuse and neglect, as defined by the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C. 5101 note) and noncompliance with Federal, State, local, and Tribal laws;.

(ii) Ensure staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers respect and promote the unique identity of each individual and do not stereotype on any basis, including gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or family composition;

(iii) Require staff, consultants, contractors, and volunteers to comply with program confidentiality policies concerning personally identifiable information about children, families, and other staff members in accordance with subpart C of part 1303 of this chapter and applicable Federal, State, local, and Tribal laws; and,

(vi) Ensure no child is left alone or unsupervised.

Volunteers are not responsible for responding to, correcting or documenting challenging behaviors in the classroom.

Sensory (Sand, Water, oatmeal, flour, corn, etc.)

Children are learning:

- To use creativity in a natural way.
- To develop fine motor skills, hand eye coordination and balance.
- To see how materials compare and change (Example: Adding water to dry sand).
- To understand cause and effect.
- To explore volume and measurements (pouring sand, water, etc., into different containers).
- To problem solve (Example: Dig a tunnel in wet sand for water to run down).
- To play cooperatively with others.

Volunteers can:

- Help children wash hands before using sensory materials.
- Help children put on aprons as needed.
- Point out what is happening to the media they are exploring.
- Encourage children to talk about what they are doing (Example: How many cups will it take to fill the pitcher?).
- Ask open ended questions.
- Encourage children to keep sensory materials in agreed upon spaces (Example: water table, plastic mat, table top, etc.).
- Join playing with materials provided.
- Encourage and assist children during clean-up time.
- Encourage children to help each other.



Creative Arts

Children are learning:

- To develop small muscle skills through cutting, painting, drawing, and by pushing, pulling, pinching, and rolling play dough.
- To express feelings through colors.
- To express individual creativity.
- To observe cause and effect when mixing colors.
- To name what they have created.
- To solve problems.
- To make use of space.

Block Building

Children are learning:

- To classify and sort sizes, shapes, numbers, lengths, weight, and colors.
- To be creative.
- To use small muscle coordination in hands.
- To share and play together.
- To solve problems.
- To cooperate.
- To respect different building ideas.

Volunteers can:

- Talk to children about their building, but do not take over their play. Use open-ended questions (Example: Tell me about your building.)
- Encourage children to use blocks safely.
- Encourage children to add cars, people, animals, etc., with their blocks.
- Offer help with problem solving.
- Encourage children to put blocks away where they belong.



Handwashing

Adults and Children should wash hands:

- Upon arrival.
- After using the bathroom or helping someone else use the bathroom.
- After handling items soiled with bodily fluids or wastes such as blood, saliva, urine, stool, vomit or discharge from nose or eyes. Wash hands even if gloves were worn.
- After handling pets or other animals.
- Before preparing or serving food.
- Before eating or drinking.
- Before tooth brushing.
- Before and after bandaging a wound.
- Before and after participating in sensory activities, such as water, sand, sensory table materials, play dough, clay and silly putty.



Handwashing should be completed as follows:

- Have supplies ready and within reach including soap and paper towels.
- Turn faucets on using warm water.
- Lather the fronts and backs of hands, under fingernails and between the fingers for at least 20 seconds.
- Rinse off all the soap under running water. Run water from wrists to finger tips.
- Dry hands with a paper towel.
- Turn off faucet with the paper towel to avoid picking up germs from the faucet.
- Drop paper towel in trash can. Avoid touching can with clean hands.

Diapering and Toileting

This will only be done by staff familiar to the child and trained in the diapering and toileting process. Caregivers who are with their child during Head Start activities will be requested to diaper or help their child for any toileting needs.

Classroom Interactions

Infants: 6 weeks to 16 months
Toddlers: 16 to 36 months
Preschoolers: 3 years to 5 years

Routines

Every routine offers opportunities to build relationships with children and support their growth and learning.

During Routines:

- Ask yourself: what is the child experiencing, feeling, or thinking? To respond appropriately, you must try to determine what is behind a child's behavior.
- There are many ways to respond to children's actions: Do you step back and observe, ask a question, mirror what the child is doing, or intervene for safety?

Hellos and Good-byes:

- Children need time to get to know you and feel comfortable with a stranger in their environment.
- When families bring children to the center, refer them to staff in the room.
- Pay attention to, and participate in, rituals children and their families develop.
- Parents and caregivers should always say good-bye.



Manipulative Area (Continued)

Volunteers can:

- Join the children on the floor or at the table.
- Help children work with table toys such as puzzles.
- Help children do activities step by step.
- Ask children to describe what they are thinking and doing using open-ended questions.
- Encourage children to put table toys back in containers when they are finished.

Dramatic Play

Children are learning:

- How to pretend.
- To express individuality and creativity.
- To act out and negotiate roles.
- To play cooperatively.
- To play out real-life experiences.
- To enhance communication, emotional, cognitive and social skills
- To use language and vocabulary.



Volunteers can:

- Provide verbal descriptions of what a child is doing and how you think they may be feeling.
- Model using props for other than what they are intended for.
- Model using imaginary objects.
- Encourage children to talk about what they are doing. (Example: "What do mothers/fathers do when children are sick?" or "What can we do for this sick baby?")
- Ask questions that help children think about what they are doing.
- Play along with the children and have fun (If it is a restaurant, order food, pay for your order, say please and thank you).
- Encourage children to put dishes, clothes, dolls, and other toys where they belong.

Small and Large Group Times

Children are learning:

- To be a part of a group.
- To share ideas and listen to others' ideas.
- To participate and follow directions.
- To stay in their space and respect others' personal space.
- To sing songs, say rhymes, hear and tell stories, play games, and practice creative movement.

Volunteers can:

- Participate in activities and encourage children to do the same.
- Encourage children to share their ideas.
- Encourage children to remain in the group.
- Help children learn to wait their turn and listen to others.



Manipulative Area (Table Toys & Games)

Children are learning:

- Physical skills
- To develop small muscles by stringing beads, doing puzzles, and using other small materials.
- To build competence.
- Thinking and social skills.
- To work cooperatively in small groups playing games.
- To sort, match, classify and sequence objects.

Meal Time (Family Style)

Children are learning:

- To wash hands before eating.
- To help set the table.
- To pass and serve food, pour drinks, and use utensils.
- To stay at the table during the meal.
- To try a variety of foods; this encourages good nutrition.
- To say please and thank you when passing food.
- To have pleasant conversation with adults and children while eating.
- To put dishes away and clean the table after eating.
- To brush or swish teeth after meals.



Volunteers can:

- Create a calm and pleasant atmosphere.
- Keep waiting time as brief as possible.
- Encourage children to participate in whatever ways are appropriate for their level of development.
- Encourage children to wait until everyone is served.
- Encourage children to taste a variety of foods.
- Avoid struggling over food.
- Model and encourage manners.
- Encourage relaxed, friendly conversation.
- Recognize children's skills and new accomplishments.
- Encourage children to stay at the table until most of the children are finished.
- Encourage children to clean up their own space (including chair and floor if needed).



Transitions

Children are learning:

- To move from one activity to the next.
- To finish a task in a given amount of time.
- To be more flexible.

Volunteers can:

- Play with children following classroom rules.
- Remind and encourage individual children to finish their activity. (Example: “You have time for one more puzzle.”)
- Give specific directions. (Example: “Put the animals in the blue containers.” When you are finished cleaning your space, find a book to read.”)

Sleeping and Naptime

Adequate sleep is essential for proper child development. From birth, children differ in how much sleep they need, how soundly they sleep, and the regularity of their sleep patterns.



Volunteers can:

- Watch for cues that tell you a child is tired such as eye rubbing, crabby behavior, or yawns.
- Acknowledge and describe what you think the child is feeling: “You look sleepy.”
- Rub backs to help children calm down.

Getting Dressed

Children are learning fine motor skills, self help, patience, routines, sequencing and independence.

Volunteers can:

- Talk with children about what you are doing and have children participate in whatever way they can.
- Step in to prevent frustration when children attempt a task that may be too difficult.
- Be aware that children’s temperaments may shape the way they experience dressing. Children may be sensitive to touch and find certain textures uncomfortable.
- Avoid turning protests about dressing into a power struggle.

Reading to Children



Children are learning:

- About the sounds of word and the importance of reading.
- To use their imagination.
- New words, their meanings and ideas about the world around them.
- To understand more about feelings and emotions.
- To predict what will happen next.
- How to use books. (turning pages, front to back, etc.)
- How books are written. (authors, illustrators, etc.)

Volunteers can:

- Encourage children to follow the illustrations as you read the text: “Can you find Spot in the picture? Point to the puppy.”
- Take communication cues from the children’s gestures, sounds or words: “Yes, that is a little girl – just like you.”
- Add a few words to the child’s response.
- Ask the child to complete a word or a phrase.
- Ask the child to supply a repeated refrain, such as, “Not by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin.”
- Ask the child details about what happens in the story.
- Ask the child what the characters do.
- Ask the child to tell what is happening in the picture.
- Ask questions that relate something in the story to the child’s life.