



# Orientation Packet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Partners in Education Philosophy**

1. Every child is important as an individual.
2. Every child has the right to read.
3. Every child has basic needs.

Some of these needs are:

- To be loved and understood.
- To feel approval from peers and adults.
- Warmth and security.
- Continuous reassurance and the safety of being able to fail without embarrassment.
- To be valued as a person of dignity regardless of success with traditional academic skills.
- To express frustration.
- To be listened to with understanding when expressing themselves verbally and emotionally.
- To accomplish learning tasks successfully.

### **Your Gift**

A gift can be purchased by anyone,

But the gift of yourself in kind  
deeds that you've done --

In some childheart's memory your  
imprint will stay --

... the gift of yourself that you gave away.

Nancy Fowler

## **Why do schools need volunteers and partners?**

To support and enrich the lives of schoolchildren and to make our community a better place in which to live by:

- Building self-esteem and self-confidence
- Giving students extra chances for success
- Bringing enthusiasm and encouragement for academic pursuits
- Giving students instant feedback
- Adding another adult friend to a student's experience
- Serving as role models
- Increasing students' knowledge of the business community
- Becoming an advocate for students and teachers
- Introducing volunteerism to children
- Establishing a school and community partnership for quality education

The partner is not asked to fill all the needs of the school, but commits to fulfilling some of these needs. Partners usually offer to help in ways that match their own capabilities, such as:

- Volunteering
- Funding of supplies, equipment and programs
- Sponsorship of activities
- In-kind services and donations of materials
- Expertise (Career Days, School Centered Council or special presentations)

Research shows that one-on-one programs are highly effective in dealing with youth, whether they are academically able or at-risk. Psychologists and sociologists report that the ideas that people hold about themselves often depend on what they see and hear reflected in others. Students begin to "be" what they believe other people think of them. If students are given negative images of themselves, they begin to think of themselves accordingly and may not learn. The Dallas Independent School District Partners and Volunteer program proposes to place caring individuals with students who need positive support for their educational and personal growth.

## **Who can volunteer?**

Volunteering in a school is a unique and exciting experience and a privilege for the school and volunteer. It is designed to promote and maintain a supportive relationship for students and school staff. Parents, business and professional people, retirees, college students, high school students -- all have talent to share. Your work or hobby can add an exciting learning experience for some student.

If a description of the ideal volunteer were to be drawn, he/she would:  
be friendly, reliable, flexible, young or old

- show concern for students
- have a good professional attitude, interest and enthusiasm for working with young people and work cooperatively with school staff
- have good health
- recognize that well-educated students are our greatest natural resource
- feel a deep obligation to support and help the schools to educate each child to his/her capacity
- be skilled or willing to get the skills that are needed for the job.

# Volunteers' rights

- The right to know as much about the school as possible, its policies, its people, and its programs;
- The right to well-planned and well-presented training for the job, and as follow-up to initial training, information about new developments;
- The right to sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, well-informed, patient and thoughtful, and who has time to invest in giving guidance;
- The right to a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background;
- The right to a variety of experiences -- as interests and needs change, through special project assignments;
- The right to be heard, to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions, to decline assignments that are not a personal "match;" and to have respect shown for an honest opinion;
- The right to recognition through day-by-day signs of appreciation.

## DISD Regulations

The Dallas Independent School District is bound by law and local school board policy to set certain standards for all staff and volunteers to follow, so that schoolchildren (and their families) will be protected while they are attending school. Therefore, everyone is asked to observe these safeguards:

- So that only authorized people shall be allowed on school grounds: **volunteers shall check in at the principal's office or designated place when they arrive at a school.**
- So that the school nurse or other authorized person can follow the required procedures where sickness or medications are concerned: **volunteers must avoid giving medications or medical treatment to a child.**
- So that each family's beliefs and religious habits will be respected: **volunteers must avoid proposing any personal or religious doctrines or beliefs to a student.**
- So that the student may be kept free of unusual pressures and the family's privacy of beliefs may be respected: **volunteers must avoid promoting any political candidates or parties.**
- So that staff persons who are responsible for the overall care of the student can take the necessary actions: **volunteers must seek the aid of school personnel in case of serious discipline problems, or suspected mental health or drug/alcohol problems (and not take matters into their own hands).**
- So that their parents are not expected to return unauthorized expenditures: **volunteers must avoid lending money to students.**
- So that one business does not have an unfair advantage over another: **volunteers must avoid promoting any specific business, commercial products or brand names.**

## Responsibilities of volunteers

All volunteers should:

- Attend an orientation/training session.
- Complete and sign a volunteer application form.
- Meet the school principal and familiarize yourself with the school building.
- Locate and use the volunteer sign-in sheet.
- Call the school if you are unable to attend, so a message can be given to the teacher and students.
- Meet the teacher or other staff person to work out volunteer activities and the number of students with whom you want to work.
- Support teachers: remember that volunteers act only as assistants.
- Keep communication open between you and the teacher, exchanging telephone numbers if you wish.
- Share matters of concern with the contact person of your group, the principal, or the partnership coordinator.
- Work within the rules of the school; observe the no-smoking rules and dress codes.
- Keep confidential any information about students. **(The exception to this is child abuse or extreme family difficulties; then notify staff members only.)**
- Avoid expressing dissatisfaction with school or staff in presence of students.

## Tips for getting ready

As a school partner, you help promote and maintain a supportive relationship between students, faculty and staff.

So, remember to be:

- dependable • dedicated • responsible • supportive • professional
- Check with the school secretary to locate restrooms, parking, storage areas for coats, purses, etc.
- Ask questions! No question is inappropriate if you don't know the answer. You may be nervous -- it's only natural.
- Tell the principal or school partnership coordinator if you are having problems with your volunteer placement.
- Don't be discouraged if you see what appears to be little academic progress.
- If you are given a child with discipline problems, return the student to the teacher.
- If you have constructive criticism, speak up! The district's Office of District Engagement Services welcomes your comments.
- If you are happy about your volunteer experiences with the Partners in Education program, say so, and tell others!
- Reminder:
  - Be Honest* in your approach and attitude. It will aid in developing trust.
  - Be Patient* when working with students.
  - Be Flexible* in responding to the needs of teachers and students.
  - Be Friendly* with a smile and a thank you, you can accomplish miracles.
  - Be Respectful* treat individuals in the same matter you wish to be treated.

# 101 WAYS TO PRAISE A CHILD

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Wow λ Way to Go λ Super λ You're Special λ Outstanding λ Excellent λ Great λ Good λ Neat λ Well Done λ Remarkable λ I Knew You Could Do It λ I'm Proud Of You λ Fantastic λ Superstar λ Nice Work λ Looking Good λ You're On Top Of It λ Beautiful λ Now You're Flying λ You're Catching On λ Now You've Got It λ You're Incredible λ Bravo λ You're Fantastic λ Hurray For You λ You're On Target λ You're On Your Way λ How Nice λ How Smart λ Good Job λ That's Incredible λ Hot Dog λ Dynamite λ You're Beautiful λ You're Unique λ Nothing Can Stop You Now λ Good For You λ I Like You λ You're Darling λ You're A Winner λ Remarkable Job λ Beautiful Work λ Spectacular λ You're Spectacular λ You're Precious λ Great Discovery λ You've Discovered The Secret λ You Figures It Out λ Fantastic Job λ Hip, Hip Hurray λ Bingo λ Magnificent λ Marvelous λ Terrific λ You're Important λ Phenomenal λ You're Sensational λ Super Work λ Creative Job λ Super Job λ Fantastic Job λ Exceptional Performance λ You're A Real Trooper λ You Are Responsible λ You Are Exciting λ You Learned It Right λ What An Imagination λ What A Good Listener λ You Are Fun λ You're Growing Up λ You Tried Hard λ You Care λ Beautiful Sharing λ Outstanding Performance λ You're A Good Friend λ I Trust You λ You're Important λ You Mean A Lot To Me λ You Make Me Happy λ You Belong λ You've Got A Friend λ You Make Me Laugh λ You Brighten My Day λ I Respect You λ You Mean The World To Me λ That's Correct λ You're A Joy λ You're A Treasure λ You're Wonderful λ You're Perfect λ Awesome λ A+ Job λ You're A-OK My Buddy λ You Made My Day λ That's The Best λ A Big Hug λ A Big Kiss λ Say I Love You! λ Remember, A Smile Is Worth 1000 Words !!!!!!!