

Volunteering in the classroom

A handout for additional family volunteers



Welcome to JKCP, we are happy to have you participate in our program, and so are the children! In this handout, you will find much of the information you need to volunteer in the classroom. But please feel free at any time to ask a teacher if you have any questions.

Each year our co-op families bring new talents and ideas to our school which really enrich our program. This has helped the co-op become a wonderful learning environment and a caring community. We know you will have fun learning and playing with us this year.

When you come only to drop off or pick up:

Please supervise your child while in the schoolyard. We will open the classroom door when school is to begin. Please enter and help your child find their nametag, wash their hands, and sit down for circle time (the 3am class circle time begins later, so you may help engage your child in play to settle in).

Please remember to sign your child in when you arrive, the clipboard is outside next to the door. Sign your full name clearly and a phone number where you can be reached (licensing requires this). Then you are free to go.

At pick-up time, we will keep your child in the classroom until you arrive. Please be sure to collect their belongings and any notices or crafts that need to go home. Please be sure to sign your child out on the clipboard.

When you are volunteering in the classroom:

All volunteers must have a copy of the LIC503 form signed by your doctor prior to working in the classroom. Even if you are staying to volunteer in the classroom, licensing requires that you **sign your child in and out** that day.

When you are working in the classroom, it is not necessary to arrive early. Just enter when the door has been opened for everyone. Help your child get settled, then proceed to the “Apron Cabinet” in the children’s bathroom. There is a list on the door inside the cabinet that will tell you which apron to wear that day (#1, #2 or #3). Inside the apron pocket is a card with directions and a timeline for the day. Reference this during your shift as often as you need, and feel free to ask teachers or other volunteers if you have any questions along the way.

Teachers will help children in the bathroom (you may help your own child if you like). If a child is being disruptive or hitting, please feel free to address it, but discipline is the teacher’s responsibility. Please call us over if we haven’t already noticed an issue.

While you are here, please play and supervise all the children around you, not just your own, and enjoy your time in the classroom!

Schedule of the day:

Our class begins with an opening circle time, where the children sing, report the weather, say the pledge of allegiance, and count. The next 45 minutes is spent playing and learning through activities of the child’s choice. The children will make their own decisions as to what they will do. Choices may include puzzles, games, blocks, play kitchen, dress-up, drawing on the easels, etc. At some point during this time, each child is encouraged to participate in a supervised craft. At the end of this time, weather permitting, we will all go outside to play. When the class comes back inside, they wash hands and sit at tables for snack time. After snack, they are excused for a second circle time, where there may be music and movement, a story, a drama experience, science, or a variety of other planned options.

Our daily schedule is posted in the classroom, indicating what time class transitions are. It is in very large print, viewable from most areas of the classroom. Teachers will initiate the transitions.

Apron duties:

Apron #1: When you are apron #1, you will supervise and play mostly in room #1. Your child will get to say the prayer at snack time. We try to keep items that have been set out in this room from being taken into other rooms. Feel free to bring out new items or ask the teachers for items you would like put out.

Apron #2: When you are #2, you will supervise and play mostly in room #2. Your child will get to pass the wastebasket after snack. The blocks, toys, and the family life areas are located in room #2. Please help the children with dress-up clothing, putting it on and putting it away.

Apron #3: When you are #3, you will assist a teacher in room #3, the craft room. Your child will get to count the children during opening circle time. The teachers will have already planned, prepped, and set out the items to be used at craft time. It is important that children do their own work. Crafts are set up with a learning experience in mind. It may be designed to build small motor skills, self-expression, creativity, following directions, or a combination of ideas.

Playground rules:

- Children ride bikes in one direction, counter-clockwise
- Children swing facing the classroom. Do not stand, twist, or jump from swings
- Children should be encouraged to share if someone is waiting for a swing
- Children using slide should slide down feet first, not on tummy, no walking up slide
- Gravel stays in play structure area, do not take to grass area or sidewalk

Suggestions for volunteers interacting with the children:

1. Use a quiet, confident tone of voice when you speak to a child.
2. Give your directions in as few words as possible, making them specific, not general.
3. Give the child plenty of time to carry out a task.
4. Make your suggestions positive. Tell the child what you want them to do rather than what you don't want them to do.
5. Encourage independence.
6. Help children discover what there is to play with at school. Talk about things with them, show them how things work, then step back and let them explore on their own.
7. The library corner is located in room #1. The children love to be read to! If you're sitting on the couch reading to them, you will also have a good view of the other children in your area who may need assistance.
8. At snack time, sit with the children and talk with them as they eat. This is a good time to ask them questions and prompt a conversation.

9. Encourage the children to put away a toy, puzzle, etc. when they are finished with it, before they move on to something else.
10. It's helpful if you bend low or sit at the child's level.
11. Try to react calmly about accidents; spilling paint, juice, etc.
12. Try to notice, appreciate, and comment about activities children are involved in, and regarding good behavior.
13. Enjoy your time in the classroom with the children!

Preschool is...

- Exposing children to many experiences
- Grasping ideas at their own pace
- Making new friends
- Sharing experiences with peers, learning through play
- Learning new skills through games, music, crafts, stories, puzzles and role-playing
- Learning to follow directions
- Learning to be responsible and independent
- Having fun
- Coming home with a smile on your face

Thank you for being a part of your child's first school experience!

