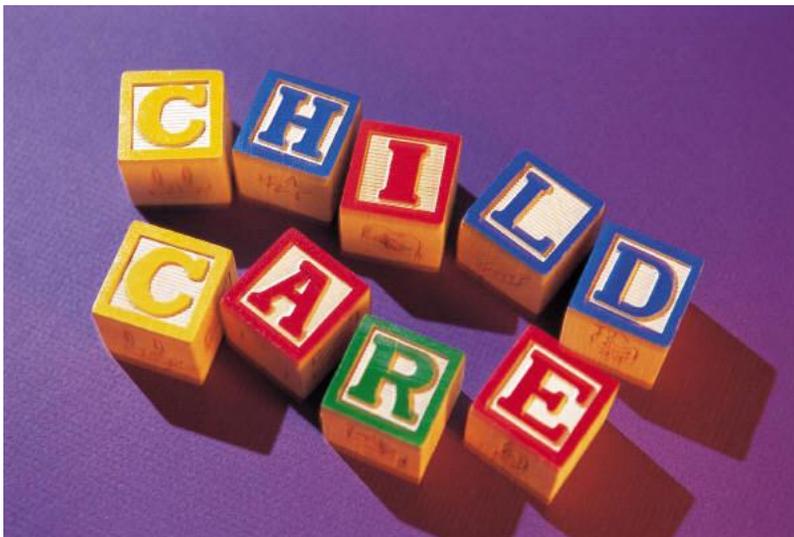


# Volunteers and Practicum Students in Child Care Facilities

Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Early Childhood Development  
Office of Child Care

## Resource Guide



**2016**

Replaces Circular Letters #96-08 Volunteers in Child Care Facilities (September 12, 1996) and 03-01 Child Care Practicum Students in Regulated Child Care ( May 1, 2003

# Guidance

## Introduction

**This document provides guidance for the use of Volunteers and Practicum Students in Child Care Facilities. Child Care Facilities include Child Care Centers, Family Child Care Homes, Large Family Child Care Homes, and Letters of Compliance Facilities.**

## Definitions

“Volunteer” is an individual who is 13 years old or older, works in or for a child care facility but is not a compensated employee of the facility, and is not enrolled as a child in care at the facility.

“Child Care Practicum Student” is a high school or college student whose course of study requires that the student receive some direct experience working with children in child care facilities.

### **I. ORIENTATION FOR VOLUNTEERS AND PRACTICUM STUDENTS**

A. Each volunteer or practicum student must participate in an orientation given by the provider, the center director, or the director’s designee.

B. Orientations must include information about:

- (1) Handwashing procedures;
- (2) Diapering procedures;
- (3) Discipline procedures;
- (4) Procedures for reporting child abuse and neglect;
- (5) Emergency information and procedures; and
- (6) Guidelines for interacting with children, parents, and staff.

## **II. RECORD KEEPING**

- A. A listing of volunteers who are on the premises once a week or less must be maintained. Listings must include the date that each volunteer received an orientation.
- B. Child care facilities must maintain personnel records for each practicum student or volunteer who is on the premises more than once a week and has direct contact with children. Personnel records will contain (1) a brief statement of duties, (2) a medical report, and (3) the date of orientation.
- C. Practicum Students
  - (1) The child care program will maintain a listing of all practicum students observing or working directly with the children.
  - (2) Programs are strongly encouraged to notify parents that practicum students will be working with their children.

## **III. SUPERVISION**

- A. Volunteers
  - (1) Shall not be used to meet staff/child ratios in Child Care facilities.
  - (2) Shall always be directly and closely supervised by qualified child care staff.
- B. Practicum Students:
  - (1) Shall always be directly and closely supervised by qualified child care staff;
  - (2) May not be utilized to fulfill the child/staff ratio unless the program is operating according to an approved plan that demonstrates consistency of caregivers;

- (3) May not be left alone with, or in charge of children; and
- (4) Shall be assigned tasks appropriate to their developmental, training, and/or experience levels.

C. An operator may not use as a volunteer an individual who has been prohibited, or automatically would be prohibited, from employment at a child care center.

#### **IV. CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS**

Criminal record checks are not required for volunteers or practicum students.

#### **V. Training**

Practicum students must have completed a minimum of:

- (1) One semester of child care coursework prior to working directly with preschool children in the child care program; and
- (2) Two semesters of child care coursework prior to working directly with infants or toddlers in the child care program.

#### **VI. RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

Child abuse and neglect clearances are not required for volunteers or practicum students.

#### **VII. TEEN VOLUNTEERS**

Students may elect to fulfill their community service requirement by volunteering in child care facilities. To assure a beneficial experience for teen volunteers and to provide safeguards for enrolled children, facilities must adhere to the following requirements:

- A. Teens may not volunteer in facilities in which they are enrolled or that receive payment for their care. They must be counted as children in care.

- B. Assigned tasks should be appropriate to the developmental level of teens. Memorandums of agreement outlining schedules, duties, responsibilities, and restrictions, if applicable, must be kept on file in child care facilities.
- C. Teen volunteers may not be left alone with children; and they may not be utilized to satisfy staff/child ratios in Child Care Centers, LOCs or Large Family Child Care Homes.
- D. Teen volunteers under the age of 18 may not work with children under two years of age in family child care homes.
- E. Providers must inform parents that teens may be volunteering and working with their children (two years of age and older) by including this information in parent agreements.
- F. Teen volunteers should participate in the same orientation as staff and adult volunteers.
- G. Teen volunteers receiving stipends are not considered salaried.

## **VIII. VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE**

Licensing staff will verify compliance with this policy through observation of volunteers and practicum students in their interaction with children and adults, and through examination of volunteer and practicum student records, parent agreements, and parent handbooks, if used.

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