



ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.

HEAD START

Strong Families, Successful Children

Volunteer Handbook



Welcome To
Rocky
Head Start

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Welcome Message

Welcome and thank you for being a Rocky Head Start Volunteer. Your participation is a valuable asset to the success of our programs' educational experience. As a volunteer you provide additional educational opportunities for children, and support to the classroom teaching team.

The extent of family involvement in a child's education is more important to child's success than family income or education. Teachers recognize the importance of individualized instruction by listening and responding to each child in an attempt to meet their unique and special needs.

The presence of another caring and interested person in the classroom can make a real difference.

You are part of our Education Team. Volunteers who are committed to helping children be successful are important members of our Rocky Head Start team. You are essential to bringing the outside world to the classroom. Children need contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring other perspectives into the classroom. Children need adults who can guide them through the learning process.

As a volunteer working with children, just think how exciting it will be to know that you are making a difference in a child's life by volunteering in a classroom. We know the experience will be an enjoyable one.

Please contact the Rocky Head Start office for further information.





About Head Start

The premise of Head Start is simple: every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to reach their full potential.

When Head Start was first launched in 1965, the idea of providing comprehensive health, nutrition, and education services to children in poverty was revolutionary, if not radical. The Head Start Model, developed over the decades has been built on evidence-based practices and is constantly adapting—using the best available science and teaching techniques to meet the needs of local communities.

Vision & Mission

Vision

To be a leading child and family development center working with Head Start families and community partners in Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, and Jefferson counties, to promote healthy life choices and develop skills necessary for academic and social success.

Mission

To be a supportive and safe learning environment for children and families by enhancing their sense of belonging and self-worth while encouraging them to reach their highest potential.



Volunteers

REQUIREMENTS:

- Fingerprint Criminal Background Checks and immunization records may be needed to participate in certain activities. Rocky Head Start will guide you through this process.

VOLUNTEERS CAN BE:

- Parents/Guardians
- Grandparents
- College Students
- High School Students
- Community Members
- Retirees

AREAS TO VOLUNTEER:

- Classroom
- Field Trip
- Office
- After School Activities/Events
- Policy Council
- Classroom Leaders

VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP

- If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Rocky Head Start office at 406-457-7308 and ask for our Family and Community Engagement Coordinator.
- You will then schedule an appointment with this person to complete the required paperwork with you.

SIGN-IN

- Please be sure to sign in each time you visit the classroom on the In-Kind form
- You will also be given a badge to wear during your volunteer service at the classroom location. For your safety and the safety of our children, it is important that we know who is on site at all times.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEER FIRST-DAY CHECKLIST

- Ask where you should store your personal items.
- Learn how the teacher will communicate with you.
- Ask about classroom expectations and your role in enforcing them. Ask for ways on developing rapport with the children.
- Try to learn names of children.
- Call the office if you are scheduled and need to be absent. Be patient when dealing with children.
- Child efforts should be praised.

Volunteers

ABUSE PREVENTION

- All interaction with Rocky Head Start children, staff and volunteers should be professional and focused on teaching and learning.
- These guidelines are provided for the protection of everyone involved and must be followed by volunteers:
 - Avoid being alone with children. If alone with a child, be visible and in an open location.
 - Treat all children in the same manner.
 - No physical contact with children unless for Health or Safety reasons

FIELD TRIPS AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

- Check in with your Head Start teacher about specifics of the activity
- Make sure you and your child stay with the group
- Maintain confidentiality and take only pictures of your Head Start Child

SUPERVISION

- School volunteers always work under the direct supervision of Head Start staff.
- If any concerns or issues arise in the classroom you may go to the classroom teaching staff or the Family and Community Engagement Coordinator.
- Volunteers are never to be alone with a child.

DISCIPLINE

- It is not a volunteer's job to discipline a student.
- It is acceptable to stop un safe or unkind behavior.
- The classroom staff must be informed immediately if any discipline issues arise.

MANDATORY REPORTING

- If a child confides in you information of a personal nature that may be construed as possible abuse, you are obligated to report this information to the staff member that you are volunteering with. They are prepared to follow up with the appropriate reporting agency

MEAL SERVICE

- Mealtimes should be a fun and enjoyable experience for all.
- We serve meals family style.
- Children decide what foods they would like to eat and how much.
- Children help to pass and dish up their own plates.
- Adults role-model and children practice using good manners.
- Adults engage children in conversation.

Volunteers

DRESS AND BEHAVIOR

- Please dress appropriately for the volunteer assignment you are performing.
- Keep in mind that you are in a position to set an example for children.
- Your speech and behavior should serve as a good role model for children to follow.

RESTROOMS

- Staff restrooms are available for volunteers.
- Do not use child restrooms or accompany children into the child restrooms.

EMERGENCIES

- Check with your teaching team for emergency plan procedures for the classroom location that you are currently volunteering.
- Please report any accidents or unusual incidents to the teacher immediately.

DISMISSALS

- Volunteers may never dismiss a child from school.
- Children who must leave early for any reason must be signed out by the family with the teaching staff before leaving.



Volunteers

MEDICATIONS

- All medication is stored in a locked box, for medication storage, in the classroom with the exception of emergency medications.
- Emergency medication such as an Epi-Pen must NOT be stored in a locked box, but will be kept out of reach of children in a location where it can be quickly accessed.
- Medication for individual staff/volunteers must also be stored in the lock box if brought into the classroom.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

- Please remember that hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infection.
- During the course of your volunteer assignment, do not expose yourself to blood or other human body fluids.
- If a child has a medical emergency, call the teacher.
- In the case of a bloody nose, direct the child to hold and cover his own nose with a tissue.
- Staff has been trained to deal safely with these situations.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO

- Before taking a child(s) photograph, ask the teacher for permission.
- Photos must not be taken on your personal device.
- Rocky Head Start is accountable to assure the proper parental permission is on file.
- If you have a child in the Head Start classrooms please help us maintain confidentiality and take only pictures of your Head Start Child



Expectations of Our Volunteers

1. Please sign-in and pick up a visitor/volunteer badge to wear upon arrival when volunteering at any of our school sites and remember to sign-out when leaving.
2. Great communication is key. Let the classroom team know what types of things you would like to help with and what you are, and are not, comfortable doing.
3. Be a good listener. Encourage children with positive words and comments.
4. Being flexible, especially in the classroom, keeps tasks running smoothly.
5. Contact teachers via email, voicemail, text or before and after class. Class time must be focused on the children.
6. It is not a volunteer's job to discipline a student. It is acceptable to stop unsafe or unkind behavior. The classroom staff must be informed immediately if any discipline issues arise.
7. Be dependable and on time. If you do run late, try not to interrupt classroom instruction.
8. If you are volunteering in your child's classroom, treat your child as you would any other child in the class. Make outside arrangements for childcare for younger siblings instead of bringing them to school during volunteer time.
9. Volunteers may hear or see things that are private information concerning a student. It is expected that our volunteers keep this information confidential.
10. Don't compare one child to another. Accept each child as he/she is.
11. Know and follow classroom rules.
12. Most of all – Be a concerned, helpful, warm, and friendly role model with a sense of humor.

Volunteer Tips

Remember to be:

- HONEST in your approach and attitude which will aid in developing trust
- PATIENT when working with children because when they are having difficulty with a subject, they do not need additional pressure
- FLEXIBLE in responding to the needs of children
- FRIENDLY because with a smile and a thank you, you can accomplish miracles
- RESPECTFUL by treating individuals in the same manner you wish to be treated
- CONFIDENTIAL because it is very important that what is observed in the classroom remains confidential, and child performance or behavior is not to be discussed with other parents



Contact Us

- **Phone**



406-457-7308

- **Message**



headstart@rmdc.net

- **Website**



www.rmdc.net

- **Address**



- Main Office 200 S. Cruse Ave, Helena, MT 59601
- Valley Classroom 1275 Fern Rd.; Helena, MT 59602
- Neighborhood Center Classroom 200 S. Cruse Ave, Helena, MT 59601
- Eastgate Classroom 4010 Gradestake, East Helena, MT 59635
- Helena Housing Classroom 1221 Billings Ave., Helena, MT 59601
- Whitehall 00 405 W. Legion/ P.O. Box 1032 Whitehall, MT 59759
- Townsend 503 N. Pine Townsend, MT 59644