

Volunteer Handbook

Introduction

It has been long established that volunteers play an important role in our community, allowing for the improved quality of life for many. Children represent a particular group that benefits greatly from the generosity of volunteers.

The word “volunteer” speaks of generosity, donation, giving, commitment, sharing, and gratifying work. Volunteering is open to anyone regardless of age, sex, race or religion. No previous experience is necessary and there are many qualities that are greatly appreciated. Volunteering is done according to the individual's availability, interests and aptitudes.

Panda Cub House Childcare Centre offers child care services to full-time and part-time students. There are a total of 23 children in the community, ranging in age from four months to five years. This guide addresses those individuals who wish to share their time in bringing a positive experience to the lives of the children of Panda Cub House.

Panda Cub House Childcare Centre is pleased to offer this guide to assist you in your work with our special clientele.

Philosophy

Panda Cub House Childcare Centre philosophy, mission, and vision are the foundation for all decision-making and policy setting of the organization. It is for this reason that the philosophy is referred to here: The philosophy of Panda Cub House Childcare Centre is based on the belief that children learn through hands-on, age-appropriate activities, which enhance their creativity and

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sense of discovery with the learn-through play program.

Children learn about the world around them as they explore their surroundings. Through an individualized approach within a group setting, the Panda Cub House staff members strive to provide the children with a warm, secure, and consistent environment.

The open door policy and emphasis on the “team approach” to childcare makes parental participation fundamental. Together, the staff, parents, and volunteers help to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for the children in our care.

Exposure to the multicultural facets of Canadian life is encouraged. The Panda Cub House Childcare Centre is fortunate to serve a community that reflects the diversity of the Panda Cub House population, which in turn, reflects the rich cultural life of Edmonton, Alberta.

Mission Statement

At Panda Cub House Childcare Centre, we are dedicated to the development of the whole child in a nurturing child-centered environment. Through the expertise of childcare professionals in partnership with parents and the larger community, a multitude of rich learning opportunities is provided to help each child to reach his or her fullest potential. The guiding principles of our Mission Statement are located outside of each classroom.

Staff

Panda Cub House staff members are qualified early childhood professionals. They have many years of experience working with young children. They are very dedicated to the field of Early Childhood Education. Please feel free to ask any of the staff

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members questions you may have, they will be more than happy to help you.

Volunteers

Volunteer involvement benefits both the volunteers and the organization.

In a childcare setting, volunteers contribute to the improved quality of care in the daily lives of the children. For the volunteers, there is a sense of pride and accomplishment to be gained. In general, volunteering your children is a wonderful opportunity to express your generosity and can be a source of personal satisfaction.

Panda Cub House Childcare Centre offers volunteers the opportunity to:

- ✓ gain experience in a child care setting
 - ✓ develop their creativity
 - ✓ develop a sense of responsibility
 - ✓ gain experience working within a team
 - ✓ become familiar with Edmonton, Alberta and Canadian culture
 - ✓ function in a multicultural environment
- Volunteers are an essential part of the team at Panda Cub House Childcare Centre.

Together with the guidance of the staff, they assist us in providing a happy, healthy, and stimulating environment for the children.

The Rights of the Volunteers

The volunteer who offers his/her time to Panda Cub House Childcare Centre is an invaluable resource for our organization. As

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such Panda Cub House recognizes the following volunteers rights:

1. To an orientation at the beginning of his/her volunteering experience, which includes training for inclusion and diversity.
2. To receive information about the organization.
3. To receive support throughout his/her experience.
4. To be treated with fairness and respect.
5. To be assigned tasks that are of interest to him/her and that are within his or her abilities and talents.
6. To refuse to work in an environment where there is personal conflict.
7. To end his/her volunteering either permanently or temporarily having given notice to Panda Cub House Childcare Centre.
8. To keep confidential his/her personal contact information.
9. To offer suggestions that may be helpful towards improving his/her tasks.
10. To request a letter of reference from the cooperating educators for his/her volunteer experience at Panda Cub House Childcare Centre.

Orientation

Orientation at Panda Cub House Childcare Centre is a two-part process. A meeting is set up with the administration to complete necessary paperwork, to address questions and to introduce the volunteer to the assigned group.

The second part of orientation takes place with the educators and tends to be an ongoing process. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and take initiative in the classroom.

Code of Conduct

Professional Work Ethics: Volunteers should conduct themselves

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with dignity, courtesy and consideration and be professional. The conduct of volunteers should reflect the values of Panda Cub House Childcare Centre: caring, integrity, respect, and teamwork.

Attendance

Volunteers should be punctual and are asked to call the center in case of absence.

Cell Phones

Cell phones should be kept on silent or vibrate and should not be used in the presence of the children (or in the classroom).

Photos

The taking of photos is not permitted. Please refer to our FOIP policy.

Dress Code

Volunteers should be dressed appropriately for the day with comfortable closed-toe shoes and appropriate clothing for outdoor play.

Smoking

Panda Cub House Childcare Centre is a smoke-free environment.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of all information they may receive while serving as a volunteer. This information applies to all information whether it involves volunteers, staff and children.

In all situations, it is wise to be constantly on your guard not to discuss or share any privileged information.

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Hours of Operation

The Centre is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00p.m.

Group Structure

The group structure of the daycare is as follows:

Goldilocks and the 3 Bears: 1 educator.

The 4 Musketeers: 1 educator.

Snow White and the 7 Dwarves: 1 educator.

Puss N Boots with 9 Lives: 1 educator.

Typical Daily Routine

8:00 – 10:00 Family grouping (arrival, welcome and free play)

10:00 – 10:30 Toileting routine and snack

10:30 – 11:15 Children-directed activities i.e. cooking, art, circle time

11:15 – 12:00 Gross motor activities (indoor and outdoors) i.e. backyard fun

12:00 – 1:00 Toileting routine and lunch

1:00 – 3:00 Nap

3:00 – 3:30 Slow wake up time and toileting routine

3:30 – 4:00 Snack and circle time

4:00 – 5:00 Children-directed activities or free play

5:00 – 5:25 Quiet free play (indoors or outdoors)

5:25 – 6:00 Departure and farewell will take place in the gym (all groups are to join the closing educators in the gym).

* The schedule is extremely flexible and changes to meet the needs of the children within the group.

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Free Play – is a time when children initiate their own activities and move around freely in the room. Volunteers are encouraged to interact with the 10 children; be responsive and let the children develop and carry out their own play.

Toileting Routine – is directed by an educator and volunteers are welcome to supervise the hand washing routine.

Snack and Lunch – are times when children are expected to sit at the table and we encourage them to use this time as an opportunity for social conversation. Volunteers are encouraged to help serve food, sit with the children and help with cleanup.

Nap Time – occurs after lunch and the length of the nap time varies with the age of the children. Volunteers are encouraged to help with bed setup, reading a story and the settling of the children.

Children-Directed Activities – such as circle time include stories and songs, art projects, music, etc. Volunteers are encouraged to help educators set up for activities, help supervise the activity and assist the educators as needed.

Outdoor Play – in the backyard and other green spaces requires a lot of supervision. Volunteers are encouraged to support educators to ensure the safety of the children.

Backyard and Fieldtrip Guidelines

Backyard and Fieldtrip Guidelines are available in the classrooms. Please take the time to read them if applicable.

Allergies

Some of the children in our care have either food allergies or

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intolerances that we are aware of. These vary from the common nut allergies to milk, fish, eggs and others.

All of the daycare snacks and lunches are peanut and nut free. All adults must be extremely careful with any foods, which they bring into the centre. We ask that you keep this in mind during the preparation of your lunch or any food you may bring into the centre.

Health and Safety

- Should a volunteer be sick he/she should not come to the centre.
- **(780) 475 - 0336** The voicemail is in operation 24 hours daily and a message can be left for any particular classroom. Messages can also be sent via e-mail to pandacubcare@gmail.com
- One of the most common means of germs transmission is via hand contact. The importance of frequent hand washing by children and adults cannot be stressed enough. Hands should be washed thoroughly at the following times:
 - upon entering the daycare;
 - before and after eating;
 - before cooking activities, lunch, and snack preparations;
 - after toileting and diaper changing;
 - after nose cleaning/blowing;
 - after "messy" activities (gluing, sand; play, outdoor play).
- Hand washing is a simple task that is of utmost importance. Hand sanitizers, for adults only, are located at each entrance.

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- Become familiar with fire exits and evacuation procedures. The educators will advise you of your role in the event of an evacuation.
- Be familiar with the location of the first aid supplies in case you may have to get them in a hurry for an educator.
- To avoid spills and burns, hot beverages must be in travel mugs with secure lids in the centre.
- In accordance with our Nutrition Policy, all foods brought into the centre should be healthy and nutritious i.e no soda, candy, gum, etc.

Helpful Hints When working with children....

- Get down to their level – sit on a chair or on the floor to interact.
- Avoid conflict and forcing an issue. Allow the educator to handle these situations. Remember that the aggressive child is upset. To help avoid conflicts or the forcing of an issue give children two acceptable choices so the child feels in control (for example, "Please turn the pages in the book carefully or if you wish to tear paper, I can give you an old newspaper.").
- Avoid giving choices that you are unwilling or unable to allow. For example, "Would you give me the knife? " is not appropriate when you mean, "I must have the knife now. It is very dangerous."
- Whenever possible, it is better to let the children settle their own conflicts. Step into the situation only when it is necessary to prevent injury or when the children are unable to find a satisfactory solution on their own. To assist, move close to the children involved, crouch down to their level, and talk to them using eye contact.
- Allow the children to do everything they can do for

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themselves. Know the children and vary the amount of help you give according to the situation.

- Observe the educator's approach with individual children; her answers and methods of dealing with situations may vary according to the needs of the child. If you have any questions about an educator's approach or methods ask the educator at an appropriate time (not in front of the children).
- Please do not discuss the children or their families in their presence.

Children hear, understand, misunderstand and occasionally repeat what we say out of context.

A TRIBUTE TO OUR Panda Cub House CHILDCARE CENTRE VOLUNTEERS

Valuable is the work you do,
Outstanding in how you always come through.
Loyal, sincere and full of good cheer,
Untiring in your efforts throughout the year.
Notable are the contributions you make,
Trustworthy in every project you take.
Eager to help us achieve every goal,
Extraordinary in the way you fulfill your role.
Ready with a smile like a shining star,
Special and enthusiastic - that's what you are!

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