



# **VOLUNTEER & PRACTICUM HANDBOOK**

## **& ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
HISTORY .....	3
PHILOSOPHY & MISSION STATEMENT .....	3
TOPP KIDS GUIDING PRINCIPALS .....	4
STAFF .....	4
VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PROGRAM .....	4
THE RIGHTS OF THE VOLUNTEERS .....	5
ORIENTATION.....	5
CODE OF CONDUCT .....	5
HOURS OF OPERATION.....	6
RATIOS & GROUP SIZE .....	6
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD GUIDANCE .....	7
FREE PLAY .....	7
TOILETING ROUTINE .....	7
SNACK AND LUNCH .....	7
TEACHER DIRECTED ACTIVITIES.....	8
TRANSITIONS.....	8
OUTDOOR PLAY .....	8
ALLERGIES .....	8
HEALTH AND SAFETY .....	8
HELPFUL HINTS .....	9
TOPP KIDS- EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM.....	10
TOPPKIDS- VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM .....	11

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

## 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.

Volunteers are an essential part of the team at TOPP KIDS. Together with the guidance of the staff they assist us in providing a happy, healthy and stimulating, and safe environment for the children.

TOPP KIDS 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.

Everyone – regardless of age (16+), sex, race or religion – is encouraged to contact us about volunteer opportunities. 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.

## HISTORY

TOPP KIDS have been in operation since September 2009 and offers child care services to families from multiple locations all over Calgary. The children we care for range from age 5 years old (Kindergarten) to 12 years old (Grade 6).

This guide addresses those individuals who wish to share their time in bringing a positive experience to the lives of the children of TOPP KIDS. TOPP KIDS is pleased to offer this guide to assist you in your work with our community.

## Out of School Care: Philosophy & Mission Statement:

At TOPP KIDS Out of School Clubs, we know each child is unique. There are 4 fundamentals that we both believe in and practice every day in everything we do:

**PLAY, GROW,  
LAUGH & LEARN**

We strive to provide an environment that is safe, nurturing & stimulating, where children learn and develop through play and exploration. The physical environment as well as an age-appropriate program plan is designed to meet the needs of children in all areas of development: Social, Physical, Intellectual, Cognitive and Emotional. Individualized planning and supportive interactions between our staff and the children help us create an atmosphere that feels safe and encourages feelings of self-worth, creativity and leadership.

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

*It is our mission to provide accessible, affordable & high quality child care programs and training to  
Albertan families and Early Childhood Educators*

## TOPP KIDS Guiding Principles

1. **We** thrive on creating fun group and learning experiences for our children and staff using **PLAY, GROW, LAUGH & LEARN!**
2. **We** share ideas and communicate openly (**share fearlessly**)
3. **We** are genuine, considerate, and respectful – we are a family!
4. **We** are problem solvers and have a “can-do” attitude
5. **We** believe every child can be coached to develop leadership skills
6. **We** support creativity and personal growth
7. **We** support a safe and respectful environment for our children and staff
8. **We** are inclusive and embrace diversity through mutual respect
9. We continue to grow and evolve our programs and skills as educators
10. We develop TOPP KIDS!

**TOPP KIDS out of school Clubs** provide a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate program which fosters active learning, support for the whole child, and a child friendly environment.



*TOPP KIDS vision is to provide  
outstanding childcare programs  
and to create and lead a new  
standard in School Age Care.*

## STAFF

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

## VOLUNTEERS IN OUR PROGRAM

### **Policy:**

Each volunteer at minimum, needs a current **Criminal Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Search** (dated not earlier than 6 months prior to the date of commencement with the program and every 3 years after that date) on file, on site at TOPP KIDS programs before volunteering can occur.

- Direct unsupervised access (i.e. when the adult is alone with the children) is not permitted for persons who are not employees of child care program.
- Practicum placement students and volunteers may not be counted in the staffing ratios in child care programs.
- No child shall be supervised by a person under the age of 18 years.

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

- All volunteers must adhere to all supervision policies (including the rule of 3) of TOPP KIDS and sign a Volunteer Acknowledgment form before volunteering can occur.

## **THE RIGHTS OF THE VOLUNTEERS**

The volunteer who offers his/her time to TOPP KIDS is an invaluable resource for our organization.

***As such TOPP KIDS recognizes the following volunteers' rights:***

1. To an orientation at the beginning of his/her volunteering experience.
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 TOPP KIDS.
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 Program Coordinators or CEO for his/her volunteer experience at TOPP KIDS Out of School Clubs.

## **ORIENTATION**

Orientation at TOPP KIDS is a two part process. A meeting is set up with the Program Coordinator 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 primary staff and tends to be an ongoing process. Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and take initiative in the program.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### ***Professional Work Ethics:***

Volunteers should conduct themselves with dignity, courtesy and consideration and be professional. The conduct of volunteers should reflect the values of TOPP KIDS: caring, integrity, respect and teamwork.

### ***Attendance:***

Volunteers should be punctual and are asked to call the program 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 program).

### ***Photos:***

The taking of photos are not permitted. Please refer to the Confidentiality Policy found in our Family Handbook and on our website [www.toppkids.com](http://www.toppkids.com)

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

**Dress:**

Volunteers should be dressed appropriately for the day with comfortable closed-toe shoes and appropriate clothing for outdoor play. Sweat pants and baggy clothing are not acceptable clothing. Please refrain from dangling jewelry as well.

**Smoking:**

TOPP KIDS 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.

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

The program is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

**RATIOS & GROUP SIZE**

TOPP KIDS staff must ensure that, at all times, the following requirements are met with respect to:

- a) the minimum primary staff member to children ratio, and
- b) the maximum number of children who may be included in a group:

School Grade	Primary Staff Member to Children Ratio	Maximum Number of Children in a Group
Kindergarten (5 years old)	1:15	20
Grades 1-6 (6-12 years old)	1:15	30

Where a group of children includes children from the 2 school grade groups specified in the table:

- a) the maximum group size is 25, and
- b) the minimum primary staff member to children ratio is the ratio for the school grade group that constitutes the **majority** of children in the combined group,
- c) where 7 or more children are present at a program, whether on or off the program premises, a minimum of 2 adults, one of whom is a primary staff member, are on duty.

**SIGNING IN**

At TOPP KIDS volunteers onsite with children will not be considered a primary staff member and not counted to ratio. In the case of an incident, if present on site, the volunteer must be listed as a volunteer on site in any Incident report.

All volunteers must sign in on Timesavr as volunteer on their profile created before they begin. This way TOPP KIDS can track time spent and attendance at each.

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

# BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

We strive to prevent difficult discipline situations from arising by providing an environment that is comfortable for children in a group, and provide activities that allow for freedom of choice. We believe it is essential for children to behave with respect for themselves, other children, adults and the equipment at TOPP KIDS. We emphasize role modeling through our staff, redirection and reinforcement through praise and encouragement.

When a child's behavior becomes unacceptable and/or unsafe for himself or others, discipline is a necessary part of guidance. We strive to provide an environment that minimizes conflicts between children by providing many different play centers and activities that keep the children busy and happy, and allows them to interact in a constructive and stress-free manner. By providing age-appropriate equipment and varying activities we hope to minimize the need for discipline.

On occasion, children may become frustrated and act in an unacceptable manner towards other children or adults. In these situations, we apply the following procedures to assist the child in regaining their self-control.

**All volunteers are to bring behaviors needing addressing to the staff's attention so staff can provide guidance. The following are steps the staff will follow.**

## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Child guidance is maintained through careful, active supervision, setting clear limits and giving age-appropriate explanations. Staff approach discipline in a positive manner, using praise and attention to encourage desirable behaviours. Staff treat each child as a unique individual and are fair, firm and consistent. We encourage children to accept the consequences of their behaviour and we engage in problem-solving alternatives where age-appropriate. Methods used include:



1. **REDIRECTION:** Guiding a child into acceptable options
2. **LOGICAL AND NATURAL CONSEQUENCES:** Making the child aware of the results of their actions
3. **LIMIT SETTING:** Staff develop boundaries for the children, either as a group or individually according to the situation
4. **MODELING:** Demonstrating appropriate ways to the children
5. **PROVIDING CHOICES:** Staff outline appropriate choices and children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves
6. **ANTICIPATING:** Staff plan and prepare the environment in such a manner to avoid conflict
7. **IGNORING:** Some inappropriate behavior can be ignored and more attention paid to appropriate behavior
8. **REFLECTION TIME:** A child may be removed from a situation that is distressing them for a short period of time

## 6 STEPS TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. **APPROACH** calmly, stopping all hurtful actions. Place yourself between the children on their level.
2. **ACKNOWLEDGE** children's feelings...asking the child aware of the results of their actions.
3. **GATHER INFORMATION** ...
4. **RESTATE THE PROBLEM** ... Demonstrating appropriate ways to the children.
5. **ASK** for ideas and solutions and choose one together....
6. Be prepared for **FOLLOW UP SUPPORT**.

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

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

## **TOILETING ROUTINE**

This is directed by a staff member and volunteers are welcome to supervise the hand washing routine.

## **RULE OF 3**

The bathroom supervision policy ensures the safety and privacy of children involved in TOPP KIDS programs. It is designed to protect children from peer-on-peer abuse and to protect educators from allegations of abuse.

**Division 1** children who are participating in TOPP KIDS programs are NOT to be sent to bathrooms without a TOPP KIDS educator present and buddy (rule of three). The buddy system or three children together WITHOUT AN EDUCATOR is not acceptable practice and IS NOT permitted at TOPP KIDS.

**Division 2** children who are participating in the distal supervision program at TOPP KIDS programs have the privilege of going to the bathroom alone. Effective supervision must still be maintained. The buddy system or three children together is not acceptable practices and IS NOT permitted at TOPP KIDS.

No child, regardless of age, should ever use a restroom/locker room alone during off-site activities. Educators should assess restroom and locker room areas for safety before a child enters, and monitor the area while children are using these spaces. The procedures allow privacy for the children and protection for the educator (not being alone with a child).

## **SNACK AND LUNCH**

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.

## **TEACHER DIRECTED ACTIVITIES**

Activities such as Community Unity, active play, art projects, music, etc. Volunteers are encouraged to help staff set up for activities, help support the activity and assist the staff as needed.

## **TRANSITIONS**

At transitions a lot of supervision and motivation is required. Volunteers are encouraged to support staff to ensure the children get ready for the next activity.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

On the playground and green spaces requires a lot of supervision. Volunteers are encouraged to support staff to ensure the safety of the children. Guidelines are available in the programs. Please take the time to read them if applicable.

## **ALLERGIES**

Some of the children in our care have either food allergies or intolerances that we are aware of. These vary from the common nut allergies to milk, fish, eggs and others.

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

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Should a volunteer be sick he/she should not come to the program. The voice mail is in operation

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***



24 hours daily and a message can be left for any particular program (1.403.710.8384). Messages can also be sent via e-mail to [ctopp@toppkids.com](mailto:ctopp@toppkids.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:

1. Upon entering the program
2. Before and after eating
3. Before cooking activities, lunch, and snack preparations
4. After toileting
5. After nose cleaning/blowing
6. 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.

Become familiar with fire exits and evacuation procedures. The staff will advise you of your role in the event of any emergency response required.

Be familiar with the location of the first aid supplies in case you may have to get them in a hurry for a staff member.

To avoid spills and burns, hot beverages must be in travel mugs with secure lids in the program.

In accordance with our Nutrition Policy, all foods brought into the program 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 staff 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.
- Remember staff will provide behavior guidance

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

- allow the children to do everything they can do for themselves. Know the children and vary the amount of help you give according to the situation.
- observe the staff members' approach with individual children; their answers and methods of dealing with situations may vary according to the needs of the child. If you have any questions about a staff's approach or methods ask the staff member 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.

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***

# Emergency Contact Sheet

Volunteer File

Name:	
Address:	

Medical conditions:	
Allergies:	
Current medications:	
Is this medication taken on site?:	Yes <input type="radio"/> (if yes, please fill out medication form) No <input type="radio"/>
Are all immunizations up to date?:	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>
Family doctor:	
Alberta Health Number:	

Emergency contact name:	
Home phone:	
Cell phone:	
Address:	

Emergency contact name:	
Home phone:	
Cell phone:	
Address:	

## Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Attach  
Photo  
Here

### My reference letter should be sent out to:

Name:	
Address:	
Email:	

Signature:	
------------	--

Directors Signature:	
----------------------	--

Date:	
-------	--

**PLAY, GROW,  
LAUGH & LEARN**

**Emergency #'s: Ambulance/Fire/Police- 911**  
**Poison Control Centre- (403) 944-1414**



# VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for offering your help to be a volunteer with our program. To ensure the safety of everyone participating, we ask that you read, sign and respect the guidelines below.

- You will be paired with a staff member in a small group. Staff will make decisions in the best interests of the program. Please follow their lead.
- Children must be supervised at all times. No child is to be left unattended. As a volunteer you are not to be alone with a child/ren. A staff member must always be present.
- A staff member of the program must escort children to and from the washroom facilities.
- Areas such as playgrounds or open fields should be monitored for hazards.
- In the interest of health and safety, please only offer food and beverages that have been supplied by the program.
- Please encourage children to walk (avoid carrying children except in emergency situations).
- Smoking and/or cell phone use is not permitted while volunteering the children.
- Please make sure you have previously **read the policies out lined in the Volunteer Handbook**. Volunteers are expected to follow these policies while helping supervise children.
- Please fill out the [Volunteer Emergency Contact](#) form.
- The staff is legally responsible for children at all times. However, we rely on your co-operation in helping us supervise the children and informing the staff of any unsafe situations. If you feel something is not safe, report it to the staff you are with immediately.

Name of volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Our passion is Child Care. Our Secret is people.***