



CHILD DEVELOPMENT
laboratory school

Volunteer Orientation Letter

Lab ____, Program for _____

Semester _____ Year _____

Head teacher: _____ (Office Phone # _____) (E-mail _____)

Assistant Teacher: _____ (Office Phone # _____) (E-mail _____)

Welcome to the ISU Child Development Laboratory School. You have agreed to volunteer for our accredited program. Since we are expected to be a model for best practices, the expectations for you are also high. We are so glad you are here and look forward to getting to know each of you. Teaching is an exciting profession and a wonderful adventure. We hope you will enjoy your time with us and learn lots of practical teaching techniques.

You will need to know a variety of information as you begin your volunteer experience with us, so here are the details:

Attendance and participation:

As volunteers, we know you have a love of learning! The best way to learn in the laboratory school setting is to be highly involved. You also need to be responsible. This means you show up for all your scheduled times. The children are counting on you and so are we! Upon arrival, wash your hands and check the student and staff bulletin board for any pertinent information. You may store your book bag and coat _____. Don't forget to put on your nametag each time you come as well. We may know your name, but it is helpful to parents who come into our room and for those observing. Thanks!

Once you are signed in and have washed your hands, you will need to choose a place to start your day. If we are in a structured activity, such as group time or snack – please join in and help us. If it is self-selection time, we ask that you do a variety of things once you have chosen the activity where you will start your day. For instance, you might encourage children to participate in an activity, you might help to make sure children are safe in the activity (i.e. block building – build only as high as your shoulders), you might discuss the activity with the children (keeping focused on their individual goals), or you might be involved in helping the children clean up an area as they get ready for the next activity. If the children are resting – you may need to help teachers set up for the next activity, set up for snack, or help children transition from rest time. The possibilities for participation and learning are endless! If you do have difficulty finding a place to start – please ask for help. We are **always** willing to help you get started and answer questions.

The key to a successful volunteer experience is involvement!

If you are ill or have an emergency and are unable to participate your assigned volunteer time, please call _____ (classroom #) immediately or 294-3040 (Malisa in the Lab School office).

Questions?????

Sometimes it is difficult to come into a new situation and ask questions. However, asking questions or clarifying information that is not clear is a wonderful way to learn new things. Please ask questions! Ask, Ask, Ask! It will really help you understand all that happens in our classroom. We do know it is occasionally difficult to catch the teachers and graduate assistants when we are not busy for questions, but we will make time for you. If it is not possible for us to answer the question immediately, we will be happy to answer at another time, or set up a time to meet with you. Feel free to exchange information using e-mail. We welcome your questions and will answer them the best we can!

Classroom rules and guidance techniques:

We have established classroom rules with the children, but children need reminders. As we go through our year, the children will be learning social skills through large and small group activities, as well as daily interactions. We encourage you to be positive with the children, stating directions in a positive manner (see examples below). When children are unable to follow directions, you may need to redirect them. Especially help the children use their words to express feelings and what they want another child to do or remove them from an activity until they are ready to do what was asked of them. If you need help with guidance techniques, please let us know – or if we observe a difficult situation, we may step in to assist you. Otherwise, it is our hope that you will begin to use the experience you have gained thus far to handle guidance situations on your own. (Again, we are available if you need us!)

Examples:

What not to do

“If you don’t do what I told you, you’re going going to be in trouble.”

“If you throw that sand, you’ll be sorry!”

“Will you put your coat on?”

“Will you please be quiet?”

“You must work at the game center.”

“I want you to clean up now!”

What to do

“It’s time to come in. You can walk or I can carry you.”

“Put the sand down or you’ll need to leave the area.”

“It’s time to put your coat on before we go outside.”

“You need to find your place in the circle. I have something special for you to do.”

“Would you like to work at the game center on a puzzle, or a pegboard?”

“After all the centers are cleaned, we will be able to go outside.”

As you are giving positive directions, you will want to reinforce children for a job well done. Here are some ideas to get you started that are used in some rooms:

Social reinforcers:	Verbal	Non-Verbal
	Thank you	Smiling, hugging, nodding
	Wow!	Holding hands

That was nice.	Looking interested
I like that!	Physical closeness
Good –	
Listening	A pat on the back
Waiting!	A wink
Thinking!	Arm around the child
Awesome!	High 5, Thumbs up

Material Reinforcers: Objects	Activities
Stickers	Feeding pets
Stars	Watering plants
Stamp on thumb	Playing with a special toy
	Earning a puzzle piece
	Listening to a story
	Listening to a tape or CD
	Painting or playing with Play-dough
	Bubbles
	Choosing a game with an adult

Emergency Procedures:

Please do check the emergency procedure posters near our door. If there were to be a real emergency, it is important for you to be aware of how we handle these procedures. Thanks!

Classroom Injuries and First Aid:

While we will take all precautions to be safe in our classroom, bumps and scrapes will happen. Our teachers and teaching assistants have received first aid training to deal with minor injuries and emergencies. It may happen that as you are working in our classroom, you will be with a child when they are injured. Please do call for a staff person’s help immediately, while staying with the child to comfort and calm him or her until one of us can help you. We may ask you to report what happened so we can fill in the necessary accident report.

*The teaching staff wear fanny packs with first aid equipment outside.

Reminders:

Finally, we are pleased that you are here, and look forward to having you involved in our program. Your participation and new ideas help to enrich our program. We expect you to have a positive experience with us!

Remember –

- **Wash your hands**
When you come into the room
After toileting
After using a Kleenex (Please cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hand)
Before and after using sensory materials (playdough,etc.)
- **Respect the confidentiality of the children and families in our classroom!**
- Ask questions as they arise!
- Tell us if you need help!
- Enjoy the wonder and delight of working with young children!

You can find our Parent Handbook and other information related to the Lab School on our website at www.fcs.iastate.edu/cdlab.