

**Children's Discovery Academy, Inc.  
Board of Directors  
Volunteer Handbook**

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# Volunteer Handbook

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# Children's Discovery Academy Organization Information

## About this Handbook

This document was prepared to give you some essential information about the policies and expectations of Children's Discovery Academy. The handbook has been organized by topic to help you find the information you need easily. You are also encouraged to talk with the Volunteer Coordinator if you have any questions about the content of this handbook.

Children's Discovery Academy reserves the right to modify the policies in this handbook without prior notice. The policies described in this handbook replace all prior policies, handbooks, or policy guidance provided.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to help others. We hope that you find volunteering with Children's Discovery Academy a positive and rewarding experience.

### ***Our Mission is***

to provide high quality, affordable childcare, while fostering a positive community relationship.

### ***Our Vision is***

a community enriched with empowered parents and quality childcare.

## How to Get Started

- Review the various opportunities and read the volunteer handbook
- Meet with the Volunteer Coordinator (digitally or in person), to discuss details of the opportunities.
- Submit an application and all required paperwork.
- Attend required volunteer trainings.
- Provide excellent customer service.
- Have fun!

## About our Future Center

We are working to open a child care center that will feature year-round care 12 hours/day, 5 days/week. There will be childcare classrooms to accommodate children aged 0-13 years old including classrooms for Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School-Agers. Our school-age program will include: before and after school care; availability for school delays, cancellations, and half days; and care during school breaks including a summer program.

## Our Vision for Quality Childcare

- Following the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) 10 program standards for high-quality early childhood programs.
- Low ratios to improve individualized attention, care, and education.
- Highly qualified teachers who continue their training to utilize up-to-date and evidence-based teaching strategies.
- An expanded curriculum to include arts, sciences, music, nutrition, community service, and other extracurricular, community-based experiences.
- Field trips and strong connections with the greater community to expand the students' knowledge and experiences.
- Outdoor play spaces that intentionally reflect and expand classroom interest areas that foster development and open exploration.

## **Children's Discovery Academy is funded in part by:**

Currently, Children's Discovery Academy is seeking grants, donations, and community support to open a childcare center in Gratiot County. Our goals to open are:

- 1. Fundraise \$673,000+ to:** A) Obtain a facility. B) Pay inspections and licensing fees. C) Purchase supplies, furniture, etc. D) Other startup costs.
- 2. Find a location:** Option A: Build a new building. Option B: Renovate an existing building.  
Requirements: enough classroom space indoors and outdoors for at least 70 children ages 0-13.
- 3. Develop center policies, practices, hire and train qualified staff.**
- 4. Partner with local Early Childhood focused groups to provide family and community-centered educational programming.**
- 5. Start a sponsorship program.** All families deserve access to high-quality early childhood education and care.

The main source of income for CDA will be tuition from families for childcare services. Some families may participate in the Department of Health and Human Services childcare reimbursement, and the State of Michigan will pay CDA for childcare services for those families who qualify. CDA will also participate in a food program that reimburses CDA for healthy meals provided to children. Additionally, CDA relies on grants, community donations, and fundraisers to keep childcare affordable while maintaining a high standard of quality.

## **About Our Board Members**

Our Board is made up of volunteer members invested in our community. For more information about our current board members, please visit [childrensdiscoveryacademy.org/about-us/meet-the-board/](http://childrensdiscoveryacademy.org/about-us/meet-the-board/).

The board is always looking for engaged community members to joining our Board of Directors or one of our fantastic planning committees. Currently, the board is actively seeking members with experience in nonprofit, legal, accounting, fundraising, and community outreach. For more information on becoming a board member, contact us by phone or email. We are also seeking people interested in serving on our Fundraising and Volunteer Committees.

Please address any questions or concerns directly related to the children to a board member and the Volunteer Coordinator, who are most equipped to answer your questions or handle your concerns. Please remember that they are familiar with the needs of children as well as the policies and practices in place for Children's Discovery Academy. For the privacy of the children and their families, please only ask them questions directly related to your duties as a volunteer.

## **Children's Discovery Academy Volunteer Program**

### **Who is a CDA Volunteer?**

A CDA volunteer is willing to commit time and effort to help open a childcare center in Gratiot County. That can mean volunteering at fundraising events, community outreach events, board of director's activities, and working at the future center site to prepare for the opening of the center.

A CDA volunteer has an open mind and an open heart.

A CDA volunteer is dependable.

A CDA volunteer believes in and is dedicated to the mission.

A CDA volunteer conducts him or herself in a professional manner, with dignity and courtesy toward everyone.

A CDA volunteer follows the board's policies and procedures.

A CDA volunteer has a great attitude that is encouraging, supportive, helpful and kind.

Remember: each and every person, whether paid or unpaid, brings their unique gifts to the cause. Volunteers enrich the program and the lives of the children. They make an immeasurable contribution to the success of the children they interact with. Each and every volunteer is appreciated by the staff, the agency, and the community.

### **The Goals of the CDA Volunteer Program**

The main goal of the CDA volunteer program is to support the agency's mission in providing high quality, affordable childcare while fostering a positive community relationship.

As Children's Discovery Academy does not have a childcare center yet, the volunteer program will center around community outreach, fundraising, community events, and opening and setting up a childcare center. We hope volunteers that helped develop our dream center would like to continue our partnership into the operating phase, providing direct services to children enrolled in the center.

### **Volunteer Bill of Rights**

1. You have a right to be treated with courtesy, respect, and professionalism.
2. You have a right to be given information in advance about CDA, its mission, its policies, and its programs.
3. You have a right to expect consideration of your interests, preferences, skills, and education and experience when matching you to your volunteer assignment.
4. You have a right to choose or reject any available assignment.
5. You have a right to expect an orientation defining when and where you will work, your duties and any necessary training.
6. You have a right to guidance and direction by the Volunteer Coordinator.
7. You have a right to be heard by someone in authority if you have queries or complaints. (Please refer to Grievance Policy)
8. You have a right to request reassignment if you are dissatisfied.
9. You have a right to accept a paying position if an offer is made to you.

### **Volunteer Code of Ethics**

1. Volunteers make a firm commitment of their time, talents and skills for a definite period of time.
2. CDA volunteers are subject to a code of ethics similar to that of future employees.
3. Volunteers must expect to be accountable for their behavior and the quality of their work. Volunteers must respect the agency's right to dismiss any volunteer for disrespect, poor work, or inconsistent/poor attendance.
4. Volunteers will follow all policies and procedures of Children's Discovery Academy, including keeping confidential all information they may learn directly or indirectly about a child, family, staff, or other volunteers. Volunteers will only seek information on a child that is important to the performance of an assigned task.
5. Volunteers will treat others with dignity and courtesy at all times.
6. Volunteers will follow all recommendations for personal protection when working with children including not spending time alone with children involved with activities and not assisting in toileting.

7. Volunteers will bring to their work an attitude of open-mindedness and willingness for training and supervision. They will follow CDA policies and procedures.
8. Volunteers will act in a professional manner and will not discuss their personal lives, politics, or religion while volunteering.
9. Volunteers will attend trainings and/or meetings as directed by the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Volunteer Responsibilities and Information**

### **Dress Code**

Volunteers must always be dressed appropriately. We suggest observing these guidelines:

- While volunteering, please wear the name tag given to you by the Volunteer Coordinator
- Overall appearance should be clean and neat
- No tank tops (sleeveless shirts are fine)
- No low-cut shirts
- No clothing with inappropriate graphics or phrases
- No novelty buttons
- No flip flops (for safety reasons)
- No short shorts or short skirts
- No low-rise pants
- Bellies and lower backs must be covered
- Clothing should be free from tears, rips, and stains
- Knee-length and longer skirts are allowed, but not suggested since you may be sitting on the floor, playing with the children, etc., which may be uncomfortable in a skirt
- Jewelry and other expensive items are not suggested. Jewelry in some programs may not be allowed for safety reasons
- While CDA encourages professional dress, it is not suggested volunteers wear expensive, difficult to clean, or easily stained clothing. Working with children can cause a wide variety of stains for clothes including, but not limited to bodily fluids, food, paint, playdough, outdoor stains, and more
- Scents: A clean, professional appearance includes the scents on and around your body
  - Children are sensitive to perfumes, colognes, and heavy fragrances. Please use body care products and fragrances lightly
  - Please also be aware of the odors your body has. Working with children can be extremely active and can cause strong body odors if not attended to properly
  - Second-hand smoke is hazardous to children's health; board members and volunteers should be aware and take care to minimize any smoke on their person, clothing, or belongings that will be near children before entering any activities sponsored by Children's Discovery Academy

### **Expectations of Professionalism When Volunteering at Special Events and Fundraisers.**

- Volunteers must follow the dress code outlined in this handbook, adhering to special event dress codes if directed by the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers shall only answer questions from guests they know the answer to, and direct other questions to a board member.
- Volunteers shall only talk about Children's Discovery Academy in a positive way, and direct all grievances to the Volunteer Coordinator, following the grievance policy.
- Volunteers shall arrive on time for shifts as directed by the Volunteer Coordinator or other Board Member and expect to work for the entire time agreed upon before the event.

Volunteers may alert the Volunteer Coordinator if they are interested in working a longer shift, if available.

- Volunteers must submit all required paperwork and trainings to the Volunteer Coordinator at least 1 week before the event.
- Volunteers will be expected to be working during their assigned time. Socializing with peers, use of personal technology and other activities typically deemed unprofessional by workplace standards are discouraged.
- Volunteers shall conduct themselves in a professional manner during the time they are volunteering, refraining from vulgar language or discussion of religious, political, and inappropriate topics.
- Volunteers shall work together as a team with other volunteers and board members to provide a fun event with a safe, clean venue, doing their best to make the event a success.

### **Consistency and Absences**

Keep in mind that consistency is important in the startup of a business. The community will depend on CDA to live up to its commitments for events. Therefore, the CDA volunteer program asks all volunteers to be committed, punctual, and consistent.

We understand an emergency may arise. In this case, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or the CDA phone number, so they can pass the information on to the board members who will be expecting you. It is preferred you relay this information as far in advance as possible.

On occasion, a change in schedule may arise for the event you volunteered for. We will always do our best to inform you of any changes beforehand.

### **Signing In and Signing Out**

At each event, there will be a Volunteer Sign-In binder. Please remember to sign in and out every time you volunteer so we can keep track of your great work! This is necessary for the following reasons:

- Maintaining security and safeguarding our children.
- For auditing purposes. Financial grantors often weigh community participation when awarding monetary grants for needs & services.
- For recognition purposes. We would like the opportunity to thank you for your time, dedication, and all you do to help CDA.

*It is not a bad idea to keep a log of your hours on your own; every hour is considered an in-kind donation.*

### **Meetings and Trainings**

Volunteers will be required to complete trainings based on the type of volunteer activity.

Some volunteer positions will require minimal trainings covering the content of this handbook, up to 1-hour long commitment before volunteering.

Volunteers handling food will require a food safety training before being responsible for handling food to be consumed by others. This training may take an additional hour.

Volunteers working in direct contact with children will require more in-depth training, including sexual abuse prevention, appropriate interactions, mandated reporting, confidentiality, health and safety, and more. These trainings may take several hours to complete.

Before a special event or fundraiser is to take place, volunteers may need to attend a meeting covering event timeline, expectations, and assignments.

## **CDA Hours of Operation**

CDA does not have a campus and does not have regular operating hours. Using the board phone number and email can get you into contact with any board member. If you need to reach someone specific, please address that when using the board email and phone.

## **Questions, Concerns, and Feedback**

Please feel free to voice your opinions, ideas, or observations! Volunteers may share their opinions with the Volunteer Coordinator about volunteer trainings, the Handbook, and the Volunteer Program in general. Volunteer feedback helps us to set goals, measure progress, gather input, and identify ways to improve the volunteering experience as well as assess the volunteer's interest in future opportunities with Children's Discovery Academy. CDA wants the Volunteer Program to be as rewarding and as pleasant as possible. Volunteers may be asked to give feedback or evaluate the Volunteer Program by the Volunteer Coordinator.

We welcome ideas for activities for the children! Please share your ideas with board members.

If your question or concern is directly related to the children, contact a board member. If your concern regards unfair or disrespectful treatment by a board member, please refer to the Volunteer Grievance Policy within the Handbook to make sure your concern is handled effectively.

## **General Guidelines for Working with Children**

A volunteer's role is to assist in children's activities by fully participating in the activities.

Volunteers and staff are addressed by their title (Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Dr.) and their first name (*i.e.* Mr. Mickey or Mrs. Minnie, rather than Mr. and Mrs. Mouse). Introduce yourself to the children accordingly.

If you wish to eat something while volunteering, please do so out of view of the children.

You are welcome and encouraged to bring your own drinks while you are volunteering. Any beverage that is not water needs to be concealed in a spill proof container that does not advertise the beverage you are drinking. For example, if you are drinking a carbonated beverage, your container should not have the brand of the carbonated beverage on it. If you got your beverage from a restaurant or a store, it should not have that logo on your container. We focus on nutrition and healthy choices. Your drink should not be placed in spaces where children will be playing.

If a child is sick or hurt, please alert the Volunteer Coordinator if available. If the Volunteer Coordinator is not available, please alert a board member.

Volunteers should not assist in toileting or changing.

Please reserve discipline for the parents (for more on discipline, refer to page 10 of the Handbook).

Avoid lifting children—instead, sit on a low chair or bend/kneel equal to their eye level. Never let the children sit on your lap.

Encourage children to develop self-reliance skills and a sense of accountability; ask them to clean up their own messes, open their own containers, and manipulate materials themselves. Establish appropriate limits when playing with children- encourage them to ask before taking things from you, and it is acceptable to kindly let them know they can have what you are playing with when you are finished.

Never discuss a child with their parent(s).

## **Giving Gifts, Toys, or Donations**

### **Giving Children Gifts**

It is inappropriate to give gifts to children participating in events. Please do not personally give gifts or toys to individual children.



## **Donations**

We welcome donations to our program. For the most up to date list of our needs and suggested donations, please visit our website.

## **About the Children We Serve**

Children of Gratiot County come from many different backgrounds and exhibit many different behaviors and ways of exhibiting emotional attachment. At CDA, we believe that healthy relationships are built on respect, trust, and dependability, and we acknowledge that unhealthy relationships may cause developmental gaps or delays in the growth of children. It is our job to model healthy relationships, to show our children what a happy, caring, and friendly relationship can be, and how to show emotional attachment in a healthy way.

## **Appropriate Boundaries**

An important part of teaching about healthy relationships is maintaining appropriate boundaries. You can assist in teaching the children the proper way to greet a stranger, respecting personal space, and making a friend by encouraging appropriate boundaries upon introduction and throughout the interaction.

For example, a child may run up to you on your first day volunteering and give you a hug. As a volunteer, we ask you to introduce yourself, ask the child their name and kindly explain to them that you are a stranger and you don't run up to and hug strangers. Try not to rebuff the child's affection in a way that makes them feel like their affection is bad. Then take this opportunity to ask them to shake your hand and introduce themselves to you. The next time you volunteer, let them shake your hand, and the next time a hug may be appropriate. Board members are available to help you maintain appropriate boundaries.

Alternately, some children may be extremely shy and not want to engage with you. This is appropriate. Please address the situation like this: "I see you are feeling shy. That is ok. You don't have to play with me. I will move away if that makes you feel more comfortable."

## **Important Reminders while Working with Children**

- All children deserve to be treated well. They do not need to earn respect, attention, affection, or positive experiences.
- Communicate empathically to help children feel they are understood.
- Provide for creative outlets so that children can release the frustrating and angry feelings they may have in a positive way. This may include art, drama, sports, and other activities.

## **Tips for Effectively Communicating with Children**

- Be sure the children understand what you are saying. We sometimes use words that they do not comprehend. If they don't get it the first time or the first few times, try a simpler synonym or a shorter word.
- Keep your voice calm and low. Do not yell. The children will get louder as you get louder, and it teaches them that the way to get what they want is to be loud.
- Instruct children as though you fully expect them to comply. Give sufficient warnings and time. Example: "In five minutes, our activity will be over. You'll need to stop painting and put your apron away." In five minutes, hold them accountable to your request.

## **Commending Children**

Praising children for their work, improvement or effort is very important to their success in life. *Specific, individualized, varied, and effort/process-based praise* helps children to assess their personal value and build self-esteem. Research shows that children with high self-esteem are slated for success.

All children have the potential for liking themselves and having high self-esteem, provided they are in a nurturing environment. At CDA, we work toward this ideal.

Positive, specific statements greatly influence children's attitudes about themselves. Be creative. Praise is a stronger motivator than gifts or candy. Think of the many things you can say that can boost a child's self-image! Here are some examples:

"You're working hard to solve that puzzle."	"It looks like you put a lot of work into this."
"You figured it out! Good for you."	"I knew you could do it."
"You added onto that stack of blocks. Now it is 17 blocks tall. That's quite an improvement."	"You used (colors, lines, materials) in your drawing."
"You were thinking about how to do that. You figured it out."	"You remembered (rule) this time. Thank you for staying safe."
	"You cleaned up the toys, so we could find them next time. Thank you!"

Please avoid blanket, nonspecific praise such as "Good job!". These statements do not tell the child what you find "good" and could pick any number of activities they were doing when you said those words. It can be confusing for both adults and children.

Please avoid statements where you value the child or their actions, such as "I'm proud of you." This teaches children to rely on other people for their value when it should come from within. Try instead, "You should be proud of yourself!"

### Encouraging Children:

Some children have a hard time believing they can do things. They often say phrases like "I can't." Our role is to encourage children to try their best and remind them that even though it is hard, with practice, they can do anything they set their minds to. Encourage children by responding, "You can't do it, **yet**." Some other examples:

"You've got this."	"I know you can do this."
"You try first. If you need help, I'm here."	"Not everyone gets it on their first try. Sometimes you need to practice."
"Yes, that looks hard. Where do you think you will start?"	"How can I help you do this?"
"You are overwhelmed by all of it. Which part do you want to do first?"	"What part is frustrating you?"

### Discipline

Keeping everyone safe is our top priority. While volunteering, you may occasionally see inappropriate behaviors, including cursing, hitting, biting, etc. Please alert board members with concerns for children's behaviors to alert their parents. **It is not your responsibility to discipline a child. Please inform a board member immediately of any violent or potentially harmful incident. In an emergency, use your best judgement in stopping a child from hurting themselves or someone else.**

CDA volunteers **shall not**:

- a) Use physical or corporal punishment inflicted in any manner on a child's body.
- b) Ridicule, intimidate, or verbally abuse children; including harsh or abusive language or voice tone.
- c) Use immobilizations other than to hold a child to prevent injury to the child (self), volunteers, or peers.
- d) Employ cruel, frightening or humiliating treatment or other emotionally abusive behavior.

- e) Assign excessive exercise or work duties that are inappropriate for the child's age or development.
- f) Assign group consequences for an individual's behavior.
- g) Deny food, clothing, shelter, medical care.
- h) Utilize any kind of seclusion, painful, or aversive stimuli as a consequence.
- i) Associate discipline with rest or toileting.
- j) Do not try to correct children's behavior.

Children's Discovery Academy board members may from time to time administer redirection to participating children in the following manner:

- a) CDA staff will use progressive, age-appropriate consequences to correct negative or inappropriate behaviors in children. Consequences should coincide with active behavioral management programs. These consequences will be done in a logical and common-sense fashion in conjunction with the use of positive reinforcement with the goal to induce positive, adaptive behaviors.
- b) Some of the progressive consequences include:
  - i. Verbal redirection
  - ii. Verbal de-escalation
  - iii. Notify parents of child's behavior
  - iv. Request parents remove their child from the activity (for safety reasons)
  - v. Request parents do not bring their child to future activities (for safety reasons)

## **Children's Discovery Academy Policies and Procedures**

### **Cultural Competency Policy**

CDA makes every effort to recognize and be sensitive to cultural diversity issues. CDA will utilize volunteers of all ethnic backgrounds and work as a team to educate and support each other in meeting the cultural needs of our clients.

### **Cultural Competency Practice**

- CDA does not discriminate against an individual or group because of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, disability, social economic class, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, family medical history, citizenship status, marital status, membership in any lawful organization, or any other characteristic protected by law in any of the activities or operations.
- CDA makes every effort to ensure that all Board Members and Volunteers are educated and sensitive to cultural needs and cultural diversity.
- CDA makes special arrangements to utilize Board Members best equipped to meet any special cultural or ethnic needs of individual clients.
- CDA actively seeks people of various cultural backgrounds with knowledge of various traditions and languages.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

CDA volunteers are bound by all legal and professional guidelines to maintain and protect the confidentiality of the agency's clients and participants. At no time may a CDA volunteer discuss a child or their personal information except in the professional execution of their assigned responsibilities as a volunteer of Children's Discovery Academy. Care and discretion are expected of all staff to assure that the privacy of our clients is neither violated nor compromised.

Remember:

- Use the children's first names only.
- Never discuss a child's personal information outside the agency.
- Please leave the photography of children and participants to board members.

## **Disclosures- Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect**

While volunteering, a child may disclose something alarming about his or her personal life to you. If a child shares something with you that you believe is unhealthy in any way, please alert the board member working with you or Volunteer Coordinator immediately. Please see the information at the end of the handbook for signs of abuse, neglect, and human trafficking.

When a child discloses such information:

- BELIEVE IT
- Listen calmly and carefully
- Do not react strongly
- DO NOT PROMISE TO KEEP IT A SECRET
- Immediately alert Volunteer Coordinator, your volunteer leader, or a board member.
- The volunteer coordinator will support you in filing a report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child.

## **Safe, Sanitary and Smoke-Free Environment Policy**

CDA provides a safe and sanitary environment for all children, board members, volunteers and visitors in accordance with national, state, and county guidelines.

In addition, CDA is a smoke-free environment. Absolutely no smoking is permitted at any CDA event.

## **Safe, Sanitary and Smoke-Free Environment Procedure**

1. Walk-through of the CDA event is conducted by volunteers and board members before and every 30 minutes during the event to ensure the safety and security of the space.
2. Alert board members on site immediately if you notice anything that is unsafe or unusual.
3. Report any and all incidents and injuries immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator or the board member on site.
4. Smoking is not permitted on the site of any CDA event.

## **Volunteer Grievances Policy**

A grievance is a volunteer's perception that he or she has been treated unfairly by the agency or by board members. All volunteer grievances must be handled formally to ensure that no grievance is ignored or forgotten.

All complaints will be heard promptly and considered fairly. The goal is to determine what is right and fair, as opposed to whom, and to resolve differences at the lowest step of the grievance process.

## **Volunteer Grievances Procedure**

- The Volunteer should request a meeting with the Volunteer Coordinator in writing, if possible. If a written request is not possible, a verbal request will suffice, and the Volunteer Coordinator will document the request and the meeting. The meeting will occur within one week, unless the situation is urgent, in which action will be taken immediately.
- If the volunteer's grievance is not resolved at the Coordinator level, the grievance will be forwarded to the Board President, who will respond within one week.
- If the volunteer's grievance is not resolved at the Board President level, the grievance will be forwarded to the entire Board of Directors. At this level, the Board will conduct a hearing for the grievance from all involved. The Board will have the final decision and will communicate that decision to the volunteer in writing.
- Documentation of the grievance process will be kept in volunteer files.

## **Harassment Policy**

Children's Discovery Academy will not tolerate verbal, physical or sexual harassment against anyone. Verbal harassment includes (but is not limited to) consistent unkind or insulting words, intimidation, and defamation.

Physical harassment includes (but is not limited to) any kind of unwelcome physical contact or threat of physical contact.

Sexual harassment includes (but is not limited to) unwelcome sexual advances, unsolicited sexually suggestive conduct, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Volunteers who violate this policy will be immediately dismissed. If you experience harassment while volunteering, contact the Volunteer Coordinator right away.

## **Media Policy**

Occasionally, Children's Discovery Academy may have a media presence on site to report on an event, a story, a program, etc. If media representatives ask you for a word, please refer them to a Board Member.

In addition, during your work as a volunteer, you may be included in photographs, videos, or recordings taken by Board Members or staff to document the Centers' programming. These media may be used in newspapers, websites, or promotional material. Please alert the Volunteer Coordinator if you object to this.

Unless directed to do so, do not take videos, photographs, or recordings of children participating in CDA activities. Unless directed to do so, do not use your personal devices to take videos, photographs, or recordings of children participating in CDA activities. If you do use personal devices for media, email all media to [gratiotcountynonprofitc@gmail.com](mailto:gratiotcountynonprofitc@gmail.com) within 24 hours then delete the media from all devices, cloud storage, email servers, and all other means of storing the files.

## **Background Screenings**

Please note that Federal Law requires background screening for all volunteers working with children. Court-ordered community service is not permitted when children are present.

Before volunteering:

1. Obtain a copy of a Central Registry Clearance from the Department of Health and Human Services. This requires taking your driver's license and filling out a form. This will give a report of

any history of abuse or neglect you have regarding children and the elderly in the State of Michigan. Children's Discovery Academy will need to hold a copy of this form on file for you to volunteer with children. This is free but may take a few weeks to obtain the form after you request it.

2. Get a TB test from a health clinic or your doctor's office. This requires getting a weakened form of TB injected into your skin and going back within 24 to 72 hours to have the site read by a health professional. In some instances, it may require a chest X-ray. They will give you a form stating the results of the test. Children's Discovery Academy needs a copy of this test before you can volunteer with children. This does have a cost, and it varies depending on where you have it done. Children's Discovery Academy will not pay for this screening.
3. Children's Discovery Academy is required to conduct a background check on ALL volunteers prior to volunteering. Please submit the required information at least one week before you will be volunteering.
4. A written statement signed before volunteering confirming notification of CDA's children's protective services policy and requirements of the Child Protection Law.

## Volunteer Dismissal

Volunteers may be dismissed from their assignment temporarily or permanently should they fail to observe the guidelines, policies, and procedures laid forth in this Handbook, or if they exhibit unacceptable behaviors, which include (but are not limited to):

- Failure to observe posted signs or written instructions.
- Failure to show up at scheduled times without calling ahead on more than three instances.
- Theft, including activity materials.
- Misappropriation of anything belonging to Children's Discovery Academy.
- Use of obscene or abusive language.
- Subjecting children to discipline related to pain/discomfort, humiliation, food, rest or toileting.
- Harassment of any kind.
- Directly or indirectly inflicting physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual abuse on any child; participating in human trafficking, or other heinous crimes against children.
- Spreading rumors, untruths, or harmful gossip.
- Interfering with the ability of any volunteer or board member to carry out his/her work assignment.
- Using your personal vehicle to transport children.
- Violating rules set forth on appropriate boundaries to maintain with the children.
- Any behavior which may adversely affect the credibility or reputation of Children's Discovery Academy.
- Violating the confidentiality policy regarding children, families, board members, or other information that should not be disclosed.

***Thank you so much for reaching out to Children's Discovery Academy and for committing your time to the health, education, happiness, and well-being of our children. You make a real difference in the lives of our children and the future of this community!***

# CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY ACADEMY, INC. VOLUNTEER TERMS & CONDITIONS

By submitting the Volunteer Enrollment Form, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete. I understand that if I am accepted as a volunteer, any false statements, omissions, or other misrepresentations made by me on this enrollment application may result in my being removed as a volunteer.

I understand that my services are being offered on a voluntary basis, without anticipation of financial remuneration, or the promise or expectation of compensation, benefits or future employment. I understand that I am NOT an employee of Children's Discovery Academy, Inc., and I agree to serve without monetary compensation. I understand that Children's Discovery Academy, Inc. will not provide me with accident or medical insurance and is therefore not responsible for any accidents or medical expenses that I may incur while volunteering. I also understand that I am not covered by workers' compensation laws in connection with my volunteer affiliation.

I understand that my participation as a volunteer may involve certain risks which will be explained to me. I release Children's Discovery Academy, Inc., its Board of Directors, its officers, agents, and employees from any losses, damages, costs and expenses, claims, demands, rights, and causes of action resulting from any personal injury, death, or damage to property arising from my volunteer activity, and waive any right of recovery that I might have to bring a claim or a lawsuit against them for any personal injury, death or other consequences occurring to me arising from my volunteer activity. I understand that I am to report any on-the-job injury or illness, no matter how minor. I authorize emergency medical care if it should become necessary.

I also understand that as a volunteer, I may become privy to confidential information about my assigned nonprofit organization. I agree to maintain the confidentiality of any information marked "confidential" as well as any information about Children's Discovery Academy, Inc.'s internal procedures, business operations, existing or prospective donor information, proprietary business information, personnel information, client information, and the like that is not otherwise publicly disclosed by the organization. I will not use any confidential information in any manner that would be detrimental to the organization and I will avoid any action that might impair the reputation of the organization. I acknowledge and agree that any intellectual property I may create during my activities at the organization shall be the property of the organization. I agree to abide by all applicable rules and regulations of the organization and any of the department or units where I engage in volunteer activities.

As a part of the screening process, I authorize Children's Discovery Academy, Inc. to conduct a criminal background check. As a condition of volunteering, I give permission for Children's Discovery Academy, Inc. to conduct a background check on me, which may include a review of sex offender registries, child/domestic abuse, and criminal history records. I understand that if appointed, my position is conditional upon the organization receiving no problematic information on my background. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability Children's Discovery Academy, its employees and volunteers thereof, or any other person or organization that may provide such information. I understand that, regardless of previous appointments, Children's Discovery Academy, Inc. is not obligated to appoint me a volunteer position. If appointed, I understand that, prior to the expiration of my term, I am subject to dismissal by the Volunteer Coordinator. If my volunteer work includes access to financial information such as credit card or other financial data, a credit report may also be obtained. A separate background release form will be provided to me for purposes of this authorization. If my duties include driving on my assigned nonprofit organization's business, I understand that I must possess a valid driver's license and that I will be subject to a driver's license background check. I understand that if I use my personal automobile to drive to and from my volunteer station, I will keep in effect automobile liability insurance equal to or greater than the minimum required by the state. I understand that to remain in compliance with Michigan's Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs regulations, I will be subject to paperwork certifying that I am safe to work with children. I understand that some of this paperwork must be repeated on an annual or biannual basis. I understand that I must complete this paperwork before beginning my volunteer service and that I must complete it whenever necessary to continue volunteering at CDA.

I am performing volunteer service for my own purposes, and I may stop performing this service at any time. I agree that if Children's Discovery Academy asks me to stop this service, I will do so immediately.

I have read, and I understand the aforementioned terms and conditions and agree to them as a pre-condition to my serving as a volunteer of Children's Discovery Academy.

I understand that Children's Discovery Academy, Inc. does not discriminate against an individual or group because of race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, disability, social economic class, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, family medical history, citizenship status, marital status, membership in any lawful organization, or any other characteristic protected by law in any of the activities or operations.

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Volunteer Name

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Volunteer Signature

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Date

# Mandated Reporter Information from the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

## Mandated Reporters Are Required by Law to Report

Michigan Child Protection Law requires certain professionals to report their suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Children's Protective Services (CPS) at the Department of Human Services (DHS). These people are mandated reporters and have established relationships with children based on their profession.

### Mandated Reporters Include:

Physicians	Licensed emergency medical care providers.
Licensed master social workers.	School counselors.
Dentists.	Audiologists.
Licensed bachelor's social workers.	Teachers.
Physician's assistants.	Psychologists.
Registered social service technicians.	Law enforcement officers.
Registered dental hygienists.	Marriage and family therapists.
Social service technicians.	Members of the clergy.
Medical examiners.	Licensed professional counselors.
Persons employed in a professional capacity in any office of the Friend of the Court.	Regulated child care providers.
Nurses.	Social workers.
School administrators.	Employees of an organization or entity that, as a result of federal funding statutes, regulations, or contracts, would be prohibited from reporting in the absence of a state mandate or court order (example: domestic violence provider).

The following Department of Human Services employees also have a legal mandate to report suspected child abuse or neglect:

- Eligibility specialists.
- Family independence manager or specialists. -
- Social services specialists.
- Social work specialists.
- Social work specialist managers.
- Welfare services specialists.

In addition to those persons required to report child abuse or neglect, any person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect may report the matter to the DHHS or a law enforcement agency.

## Making a Report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

Mandated reporters are required to make an immediate verbal report to CPS and a written report within 72 hours when they suspect child abuse or neglect. Mandated reporters must also notify the head of their organization of the report. Reporting the suspected allegations of child abuse and/or neglect to the head of the organization does not fulfill the requirement to report directly to DHS.

The verbal report can be completed by calling **855-444-3911** .

The individual who had contact with the child must complete the call and provide as much detail as possible about the following information:



- The child's primary caretaker, including name and address.
- Names and birth dates for all members of the household.
- Name and birth date of the alleged perpetrator(s).
- Whether the alleged perpetrator lives with the child.
- Address where the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.
- What makes the mandated reporter suspect the child is being abused or neglected.

The Child Protection Law requires that the written report include the following information:

- Name of child.
- Description of abuse or neglect.
- Names and addresses of child's parents/guardians.
- The persons with whom the child resides.
- Child's age.
- Other information available to the reporting person that might establish the cause of the abuse or neglect, and the manner in which the abuse or neglect occurred.

DHS encourages the use of the [Report of Actual or Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect](#) (DHS-3200) form when filing the written report, which includes all the information required under the law. If more than one mandated reporter suspects child abuse or neglect based upon the same incident, they may submit just one DHS-3200 form.

#### **Confidentiality of a Mandated Reporters' Identity**


The identity of a reporting person is confidential under the Child Protection Law. The identity of a reporting person is subject to disclosure only with the consent of that person, by judicial process or to those listed under Section 5 of the Child Protection Law (MCL 722.625).

#### **Civil and Criminal Liability**

Mandated reporters, who fail to file a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, will be subject to both civil and criminal liability. In a civil action, the mandated reporter may be held liable for all damages that any person suffers due to the mandated reporters' failure to file a report. In a criminal action, the mandated reporter may be found guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to 93 days and a fine of \$500.

A person making a good faith report is protected from civil and criminal prosecution and cannot be penalized for making the report or cooperating with a CPS investigation.

#### **Mandated Reporter Hotline**

If a mandated reporter is dissatisfied with the response by MDHHS, the mandated reporter may contact the Mandated Reporter Hotline at 877-277-2585 . Prior to doing so, the mandated reporter must first attempt to talk with our local MDHHS office director about his or her concerns.

#### **Mandated Reporter's Resource Guide**

View the [Mandated Reporters' Resource](#) Guide for more information: [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/Pub-112\\_179456\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/Pub-112_179456_7.pdf)