



KALAMAZOO DROP-IN CHILD CARE CENTER

First Congregational Church, U.C.C.

345 W. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Phone (269) 382-3640 Fax (269) 343-0123

E-mail – kzoodropin@sbcglobal.net

Website: kdccc.org

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION

DESCRIPTION OF CENTER AND SERVICES

The Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center provides free, part-time child-care for preschool aged children of income-eligible families in the Kalamazoo area. Families may use our service up to 6 times per month. This gives them a chance to run errands, keep necessary appointments, search for employment or housing, or take a healthy break from the demands of parenting. The Center is fully licensed by the State of Michigan. KDCCC may serve children from 6 weeks through 5 years old and up to 20 children each day. We are open Monday through Friday from 11am-3pm.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

KDCCC relies on volunteers in order to be at our daily capacity. Volunteer child care aides are asked to assist the staff in the child care by supervising and interacting with the children in free play and structured activities. Each week, the Center focuses on a different theme and volunteers may assist with the daily preparation of the structured activities that correspond to that theme. You will be asked to help with daily and weekly light cleaning in the Center or help with special one-time clean-up projects. Volunteers assist with lunch and snack. Volunteers have also assisted with clerical or other “behind the scenes” tasks. Although the tasks are varied, remember that your attention and response to the children will be your most valuable activities. Your eyes, ears, and hands enable the Center to live up to its motto, “*A Safe Place for Children*”.

EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

1. Always have the children in your eyesight.
2. Monitor the children; encourage cooperative play.
3. Sit with the children and interact with them (get down on their level - read stories, pretend play, help with puzzles, help them ride bikes, etc.). The more we talk with the children, the more they learn—including the babies!!
4. If you see a child or group of children playing by themselves, please feel free to play along with them.
5. Encourage their play with questions that expand their imagination.
6. Feel free to encourage the kids to clean up after themselves, but most times they will need help.
7. Volunteers are never alone with the children. They do not take children to the bathroom or change diapers. Please alert a staff member if you think a child needs a diaper change or needs to be taken to the bathroom.

Based on your preference and our needs for the day, we will assign you to either the Infant/Toddler Room or the Preschool Room. Our daily schedule is very relaxed and flexible, but basically the day goes as follows:

INFANT/TODDLER ROOM

Children age 6 weeks up to 2 ½ years old are cared for in the Infant/Toddler Room. The emphasis in this room is “learning through play.” Volunteers are invited to interact and play with the infants and toddlers one-on-one or in small groups. We encourage a mixture of child-directed and teacher-directed activities. While there is a routine, it is flexible and follows the needs of the children.

11am-Noon: Children Arrive, Lesson Plan Activity and Creative Free Play

The teacher will typically have a prepared activity for the children to work on when they first arrive. Creative free play is a very important part of child development, so most of the children’s time at the Center is devoted to creative free play. Children may play anywhere in the Center as long as there is a staff member or their parent present. If a baby or child is sleeping in the sleep area, we ask the children not to play there.

Noon-12:30pm: Lunch

We serve a complete lunch and snack to the children every day. Volunteers are asked to pull up a chair and eat with the children at the same time to create a family atmosphere unless they are helping serve. Staff and Volunteers do not get a break for lunch – we eat with the children as they eat their lunch. Volunteers may bring their own lunch or eat what we are scheduled to eat with the kids. If you bring your own food or drink, please label it with your name and the date. We do not give the children any food or drink that is not prepared for the whole group. Children must sit at the table when eating or drinking. Babies are on their own schedule and are fed when they are hungry.

Volunteer Tasks—

1. Before lunch, assist children with hand washing. Place younger children in highchairs and place bibs on children that need them.
2. Sit with children and eat your lunch and help serve seconds to the children.
3. Keep conversation tones to a minimum while a lesson is taught or a story is read.
4. Help children to clean up with wet wipes and clean kitchen area, table, and high chairs with soap, rinse water, and bleach water solutions after meals. We will show you the process.
5. Help yourself to drinks in the refrigerator; keep drinks in the kitchen area and out of reach.
6. Do not give a baby any food unless it is specifically okayed by the staff. All infants under 18 months must be monitored one-on-one either by a staff member or volunteer.

12:30pm-1pm: Creative Free Play/Clean Up/Diapering/Toileting

While the teacher assists the children with diapering/toileting, volunteers play and interact with the children. Before quiet time, Volunteers help to pick up the toys in the room.

1pm-1:30pm: Quiet Time

We offer a Quiet Time each day and try to get the babies and toddlers to sleep or rest on a mat. In order to have a successful quiet time, it takes the cooperation of all volunteers and staff to keep the room as quiet as possible. Children who are sleeping are allowed to continue to sleep until they wake up, or their parent arrives.

Volunteer Tasks—

1. Help rock babies to sleep. You are not allowed to fall asleep yourself! ☺ Everyone loves to rock the babies, but we cannot guarantee you will get to rock a baby every time you volunteer.
2. Sit beside a child on a mat, pat their back or read to them.
3. Non-sleepers will be allowed to do a quiet activity (puzzles, books, or a special activity).

1:30pm-2pm: Lesson Plan Activity and Creative Free Play

The children who do not sleep (or who wake up) will do an art or sensory activity with the teacher as the others sleep. Please assist the teacher and the children with the activity and with clean-up.

2pm-2:30pm: Outdoor Activity

*See “Going Outside for Walks”

2:30pm-3pm: Snack, Creative Free Play, and Children Depart

Volunteers are invited to greet and talk with the parents as they drop off or pick up their children. You may share a positive story about the child's day. Only the staff will discuss with parents if the child was especially fussy or if there were any behavioral issues. After children depart, volunteers assist with the end of the day chores, such as picking up toys, washing dishes, sweeping and/or vacuuming. You can check with one of the teachers for what still needs to be done, or you can refer to the daily chore checklist posted on the refrigerator. If scheduled until 3:30, we all pitch in to do the end of the day chores and we all leave once everything is done.

PRESCHOOL ROOM

Children ages 2 ½ years through 5 years old are cared for in the Preschool Room. The emphasis in this room is “learning through discovery and exploration.” Volunteers will assist the Preschool teacher throughout the day in working with and teaching the children. The routine in the Preschool Room is more structured than for the infants and toddlers.

11am-noon: Children Arrive/Activity Centers/Creative Free Play

As children arrive, children are encouraged to participate in an activity or create an art project or play in the various areas of the room. Volunteers will assist the children with those activities. After their projects are completed, the children may play in the various areas of the room. Volunteers play and interact with the children as they learn through play.

Noon-12:30pm: Lunch

Before lunch, volunteers assist children with hand washing. During lunch, Staff and Volunteers sit with the children to create a family atmosphere. The Volunteers help serve seconds to the children as the teacher reads a story or teaches a lesson. As the children finish their lunch, volunteers assist with the clean-up and return the lunch cart to the main child care room.

12:30pm-1pm: Toileting, Creative Free Play, and Clean Up

While the Teacher assists the children with toileting, volunteers play and interact with the children. Clean-up is encouraged throughout the day, so as children finish playing, encourage them to put their toys away before starting a new activity. We help the children clean up the whole room before leaving for the Bike Room.

1pm-1:30pm: Large Motor Room (Bike Room)

Volunteers assist the teacher in walking down the hall to the Bike Room. The children are allowed to run, jump, ride bikes, and get their “wiggles” out. Volunteers play and interact with the children. When children are on the climber or the climbing logs, a Teacher or Volunteer will remain with them to supervise.

1:30pm-2pm: Toileting/Outdoor Activity

*See “Going Outside for Walks”

2pm-3pm: Large Group Time, Snack, Creative Free Play, Children Depart

We use our Large Group Activities to help the children “cool down.” Volunteers participate with the teacher and children as they sing songs, listen to stories, discuss the theme of the week, and practice various learning concepts. Any children who want to rest or sleep are welcome to do so. After Large Group Activities, the children eat a snack and then have creative free play until their parents come to pick them up. Everything is the same in this room as far as talking with parents and end of the day cleanup.

GOING OUTSIDE FOR WALKS

When weather permits and we have enough volunteers, we take the children out for a walk around Bronson Park or walk to a nearby playground. It is very important for each volunteer and staff member to be extra vigilant and focused on the children. Please be sure to dress for going outside every time you volunteer. This is not a break time; phones should be put away. Everyone should be actively participating with the children. Please do not interact with the other park visitors.

PICKING UP & CARRYING CHILDREN

Whenever you pick up a child, please lift them by their trunk under their arms. We do not lift them by their arms or hands or swing them around like an “airplane”—which can cause their shoulder to be dislocated. Carry infants on the front of your body, with two arms, and support the heads and necks of small babies. If you are unsure, please ask a staff member.

ROOM RULES

The children that attend KDCCC may only attend up to 6 times per month and since they are coming for different reasons, we practice lots of patience and understanding with them. Here are some basic rules they must follow.

1. ***Keep hands, feet and all other objects to themselves.*** No hitting, kicking, biting or throwing objects at others. Children can be very self-focused and may need extra help remembering not to hurt another child. If a child hits, bites, or kicks another child or volunteer, please inform a staff member who will take care of the situation.
2. ***Children should walk unless in the bike room.*** Running is allowed in the bike room, as long as children are not knocking over other children or toys.
3. ***Children need to keep their feet on the floor.*** No climbing on tables, over partitions, or standing on chairs.
4. ***We use 'inside voices' and 'nice' words.*** Name calling or swearing is unacceptable behavior.
5. ***Avoid horseplay.*** No wrestling—with children or adults. Volunteers are not jungle gyms! ☺
6. ***Children may or may not share their toys.*** Cooperative play is encouraged, but not required. Depending upon their age, they may not be able to play well with a group of children. It is not necessary for a child to share his/her toys, unless it is a basket of toys intended for use by several children. We would suggest another or similar toy to the child or ask him/her to wait until the other child is finished with the favored toy.
7. ***Children have to wear either socks or socks & shoes.*** No bare feet in the Center.

RELATING TO CHILDREN

We understand that some of our volunteers may have very little experience working with young children. Children can be very adorable, yet very frustrating, too. Working with children is a challenge, but a very rewarding challenge. In a child care Center, there are certain ways of relating to children that may vary from how you relate with them at home. Here is a list of Do's and Don'ts for working with children in the child care setting.

- DO:**
1. Relate to all the children in a positive, nurturing, supportive manner.
 2. Model appropriate behavior, such as speaking politely, using manners, etc.
 3. Remember that children are always watching us and listening to us. All conversation topics should be child appropriate.
 4. Respect the children the same as you would an adult.
 5. Use positive language and guidance methods to re-direct inappropriate behavior. Help children to vocalize his/her needs. Redirecting children to another activity often helps to prevent conflicts.
 6. Avoid using the words “no” or “don't.” Rephrase your question or direction in a positive way. (Example: Instead of saying, “No running” or “Don't run”, say “Please walk”.)
 7. Help protect a child from being hurt by another child (if you are the closest adult you are expected to intervene); also try to anticipate and avoid potential accidents.

- DON'T:**
1. Use any form of verbal abuse, such as a harsh tone of voice, name-calling, shaming, ridicule, or threats.
 2. Use any form of physical abuse such as yanking, pinching, inappropriate touching, or hitting. Do not tickle, wrestle or rough house. We like to maintain a calm, peaceful atmosphere as much as possible.
 3. Force a child to say, “I'm sorry”. At this age, they are probably not sorry. We would rather have you encourage them to understand how the other child/person is feeling. (“Look! That made Mary cry!”)

RELATING TO PARENTS

Just like children, we relate to parents in a supportive and respectful manner. Our parents use KDCCC for a variety of reasons and some may be under a lot of stress. When a parent enters the child care to drop off their child or to pick them up, they must always be greeted by the nearest staff or volunteer. We want them to be assured by our actions that we are happy their child is here.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

All child care providers (including volunteers) are required to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities. "Child abuse" means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment. Warning signs of child abuse may be hard to determine, so if you have any questions or concerns about a child's behavior, please discuss it with a staff member immediately.

WORK SCHEDULE

Volunteers are expected to establish a regular set of hours and do their best to be consistent with those hours. Adjustments and changes in the volunteer schedule need to be discussed ahead of time and agreed upon with the Volunteer Coordinator. This will help ensure that we have enough adults to take care of the children.

MEDICAL POLICY

In order to prevent the spread of infection, we ask staff and volunteers stay home if you have any of the following symptoms:

1. Elevated body temperature -- you must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the Center
2. Vomiting and/or Diarrhea
3. Frequent/prolonged, coughing, (producing phlegm), sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, if not allergy related
4. Any draining sore/infection or any type of rash
5. Communicable disease
6. Red, puffy or draining eyes
7. Head or body lice (all nits need to be removed)

Please notify the Center if you contract a communicable disease and check with your doctor to determine when it is safe to return to the Center. We reserve the right to refuse admission to any volunteer who appears to be ill. **Volunteers should be healthy enough to perform the duties required of them. In the event you are ill or cannot make it, you need to call the Center as soon as possible to let us know. You may leave a message on the voicemail.**

DISMISSAL POLICY

Two instances of no show/no call and/or failure to follow KDCCC's Guidelines will be cause for dismissal.

SIGNING IN AND OUT

KDCCC keeps a log of the hours that every volunteer works and reports them to our Board of Directors. Since we want to have an accurate account of how many hours each volunteer works, please be sure to sign in at the time you arrive and sign out at the time that you leave to the nearest quarter-hour. After you sign in, please find your nametag and wear it throughout the day. At the end of the day, please hang your tag on the hooks so we have it for next time. In an attempt to help insure health and minimal illness among staff, volunteers and children, we require all volunteers to include hand washing in their sign-in routine. Please leave any valuables at home or locked in your car. We are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We hope that our volunteers enjoy their experiences at KDCCC and we understand that it is fun to share stories about the children with friends and family. We expect, however, that volunteers help us in protecting our client's privacy by changing their names or simply not discussing/describing our clients outside the Center. Please do not post any pictures or comments about the children, parents, volunteers, or staff on social media.

PROFESSIONALISM

Even though we try to create a relaxed and "home-like" atmosphere, KDCCC is still a business. Volunteers are expected to act in a respectful and professional manner. Volunteers are encouraged to dress comfortably, but appropriately. When you are preparing to come to KDCCC, please be aware that many adults and children have allergies, asthma, or sensitivity to scents that are triggered by the smell of perfume, cologne, heavily scented personal care products, body odor, and tobacco smoke. We want everyone to enjoy a safe and healthy workplace. **No** cell phones or other electronic devices on the child care floor. **They must be put away while you are working with the children.** Staff and volunteers do not have individual break times for smoking or lunch. KDCCC and the church property (including the parking lot) is a smoke-free, vaping-free and drug-free workplace. If you have any health or physical limitations (such as being pregnant, diabetes, epilepsy, back problems, etc.), please inform the Volunteer Coordinator and/or Executive Director so that we may aid or assist you when necessary.

CENTER HOLIDAYS AND CLOSING

New Year's Day, Spring Break (same as KPS), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Summer Break (one week), Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after and Christmas Break (same two weeks as KPS).

Please Note: If the Kalamazoo Public Schools are closed because of the weather, we are closed too!! If the Kalamazoo Public Schools are closed for illness, we are NOT closed. If there is a tornado watch in the morning, the Center will close.

RELATING TO STAFF

We like to maintain a friendly atmosphere in the Center. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions please feel free to discuss them with any staff member. We hope that your time with us is enjoyable. We encourage you to make friends with staff and other volunteers, but please remember that the children's needs always come first.

KDCCC's Staff and Their Roles:

Kathy McNinch, Director (full time) – Responsible for the overall operation/management of the child care which includes licensing, staff, and volunteers.

Heidi Albertson, Assistant Director (part-time) – Responsible for the daily operation of the Center, supervising staff and volunteers and registering new families.

Infant/Toddler Teacher (part-time) – Supervising volunteers/children, leading classroom for younger children, and assisting the Assistant Director with the daily program.

Julie Chase, Preschool Teacher (part-time) – Supervising volunteers/children, leading classroom for older children, assisting the Assistant Director with the daily program.

Liza Norton, Preschool Assistant Teacher (part-time) – Supervising volunteers/children, assisting teachers, substituting.

Beth Walters, Volunteer Coordinator (part-time) – Responsible for recruiting, training, and maintaining enough volunteers for the smooth operation of the Center.

KDCCC's Volunteer Vision Statement

KDCCC's vision for our volunteer program is to create a sustainable culture of volunteer engagement that benefits and supports the mission of KDCCC by:

- Consistent volunteer engagement that ensures we are able to serve at our capacity and increase our donor relationships.
- Creating a caring environment where volunteers feel valued and passionate about their service.
- Encouraging a long-term relationship with the Center.
- Effective training and mentoring for all volunteers.
- Providing opportunities for additional training, feedback and evaluations to students helping them to gain skills that will help in their career choices.

Please ask us if there is anything you are unsure of.

We encourage all questions as we are all learning together.

Thank you very much for donating your time and talents to KDCCC.

Updated 1/12/2022