



## KALAMAZOO DROP-IN CHILD CARE CENTER

First Congregational Church, U.C.C.  
345 W. Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007  
Phone (269) 382-3640  
E-mail – [info@kdccc.org](mailto:info@kdccc.org)  
Website: [kdccc.org](http://kdccc.org)

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION

## DESCRIPTION OF CENTER AND SERVICES

The Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care Center provides free, part-time child-care for income-eligible families in the Kalamazoo area. Families may use our service up to 8 times per month. This gives families a chance to run errands, keep necessary appointments, search for employment or housing, go to work or school, and/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 to be at our daily capacity. Volunteer childcare aides are asked to assist the staff in the Center by supervising and interacting with the children in free play and structured activities. Each month, 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 a 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. Treat all children, parents, volunteers, and staff with respect, fairness, and equity. We serve people from all different religious, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and value each person who walks through our doors.
2. Always have the children in your eyesight.
3. Monitor the children; encourage cooperative play.
4. Sit with the children and interact with them. We get down on their level to read stories, do pretend play, help with puzzles, build with blocks, etc.
5. If you see a child or group of children playing by themselves, please feel free to play along with them.
6. Encourage their play with questions that expand their imagination. The more we talk with the children, the more they learn—including the babies!!
7. Feel free to encourage the kids to clean up after themselves, but most times they will need help.
8. 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.

## INFANT/TODDLER ROOM

Children ages 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.

## 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.

Based on your preference and our needs for the day, we will assign you to either the Infant/Toddler Room or the Preschool Room.

## DAILY ROUTINES

**Our daily schedule is flexible and dependent on the group of children we have that day. It goes as follows:**

### **11am-noon: Children Arrive, Lesson Plan Activity, and Creative Free Play**

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. As children arrive, they are encouraged to play in the various areas of their rooms and/or create an art project. Volunteers interact with the children as they learn through playing and creating. If a baby or child is sleeping in a crib or on a mat, we ask the children not to play in that area.

### **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 seconds. 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. Please label any food or drink that you put in the refrigerator 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. Older children will sit at the table.
2. 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 their dishes and wash up with a wet wipe. You can also help clean the kitchen area, table, and high chairs with soap, rinse water, and bleach water solution. We will show you the process.
5. Help yourself to drinks in the refrigerator; keep drinks in the kitchen area and out of reach. Hot drinks are also available.
6. Do not give an infant any food unless it is specifically okayed by the staff. All infants under 12 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 or Bike Room Time, volunteers help to pick up the toys in the room. Older children are encouraged to clean up their toys, also.

### **1pm-2pm: Quiet Time/Quiet Play for Infants/Toddlers**

We offer a Quiet Time each day so our infants and toddlers can sleep or rest on a mat. In order to have 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 children to sleep. You are not allowed to fall asleep yourself! ☺ Although everyone loves to rock the infants, 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).

### **1pm-2pm: Large Motor Room (Bike Room) or Outdoor Time**

During this time, the preschool children have Bike Room Time. Volunteers assist the teacher in walking the children down the hall to the Bike Room. The children are allowed to run, jump, drive cars, 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.

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

For the last hour of the day, the routine might change with what the children need/want. We use our Large Group Activities, such as playing with play dough, to help the preschool children “cool down” from the Bike Room or Playground. During snack time, 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. Then the children have creative free play until their parents come to pick them up. 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 complete the end of the day chores and leave once everything is done.

## **OUTDOOR TIME**

When weather permits and we have enough volunteers, we take the children out for a walk around Bronson Park or to the playground at First United Methodist Church. 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 let our Volunteer Coordinator or Program Director know if you are not able to go outside.

## **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 children on the front of your body (no piggy back rides!), 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 8 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 must wear either socks or socks & shoes.** No bare feet in the Center.

## **RELATING TO CHILDREN**

We understand that some of our volunteers may have little experience working with young children. 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. We want to try to anticipate and avoid potential accidents or incidents.

#### **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. Example: “Look! That made Mary cry! How can we help her feel better?”

#### **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.

#### **VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE**

Volunteers are expected to establish a regular set of hours and do their best to be consistent with those hours. Adjustments and changes to 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.

#### **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.

In an attempt to help ensure 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.

#### **DISMISSAL POLICY**

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

#### **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 will 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. If you need to step aside to use the phone, please let staff know. 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.

### **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. Covid-19 or any other communicable disease
3. Vomiting and/or Diarrhea
4. Frequent/prolonged, coughing, (producing phlegm), sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, if not allergy related
5. Any draining sore/infection or any type of rash
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 or are exposed to someone with an illness, such as Covid-19 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. Please leave a message on our voicemail.

### **CENTER HOLIDAYS AND CLOSING**

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

Please Note: If the Kalamazoo Public Schools are closed because of the weather, we are closed too!!

### **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**

**Madison Ring, Director (full time)** – Responsible for the overall operation/management of the childcare Center which includes licensing, staff, and volunteers.

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

**Quiana Glide, Volunteer Coordinator/Assistant Infant/Toddler Teacher (part-time)** – Responsible for orienting new volunteers and assisting current volunteers. helping the directors with daily operation and updating the KDCCC website.

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

**Cassandra Macey, 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.

**Allison Mitter, Community Outreach Coordinator (part-time)** - Responsible for identifying funding opportunities and managing our donor database to support and grow the Center.

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 9/11/2025*