

## Extra Details From a TPS for Marvelous, Appreciated Volunteers

We are really excited to have you! Unfortunately, we don't really get to express it much when the kids are around. They are our focus, and sometimes we're so busy giving them attention and direction that we need you to ask us questions when you're unsure of what to do.

Your main task as a volunteer is to be a model child. This includes getting a Therapeutic Preschool Specialist (the snazzy title teachers get, more often shortened to TPS) when there is a problem. This can be as simple as checking in with a "Look how much fun Popeye and Batman are having over here!" or giving us a heads-up if you think there may be a problem ahead.

During inside or outside free time, the "big people" try to spread out and spend attention on as many children as possible.

Make kids proud! Their experiences at TCC may be their best chances to get recognized as special, talented, or even cute. The more positive comments the better (we try to say four good things for every corrective comment). "Look how well you came right into the classroom when you got here!" "You're doing a great job eating your lunch!" "I saw you listen to your teacher really well!" etc.

It works great to hold children in your lap, but many children are working on boundaries. Please remind them to stand up and ask first, especially if you have just met them. You could ask them if they remember your name first, too.

It's ok to come and not let kids sit in your lap, for any reason (maybe you haven't been around children much, they just rolled around in the snow and have wet clothes, you're feeling a bit under the weather, etc.) Just make sure that you're consistent so that you're not giving affection to only the cute children.

We do relationship-based therapy at The Children's Center, which means that we develop relationships to support and coordinate therapeutic practices. Many of TCC kids develop these relationships at different speeds, both too quickly and quite slowly. Sometimes they will refuse even simple help from you (like opening their juice) because of slower speed of building trust. Feel free to continue offering but don't take it personally if they refuse.

Sometimes TPSs ignore bad behavior, and sometimes we just don't see it. When in doubt, ask! That way everybody can be on the same page so that intentional ignoring can be an effective therapeutic strategy. It's not okay to correct a child's behavior without direction from a TPS.

Our schedule is posted on the wall. Some activities might feel repetitive, but this is important because the more a child knows what to expect the more in control they feel.

Sometimes children like to climb on adults and this is ok outside, if you enjoy it. If not, explain so clearly to the child and offer an alternative game or idea. While inside, sitting calmly is preferred. Some TCC children have inappropriate or very little contact with men, so calm time with male volunteers shows them that they can still interact positively without aggression.

\*\*Let your TPSs know when your last day will be. That way we can have a little party and say goodbye to you. Some children may feel they have done something wrong or that you have abandoned them if they are not given the proper goodbye. You're also welcome to bring a store-bought treat that we will have at the end of the day.

Eating:

You are welcome to bring a lunch to eat with us.

Please wipe the table before and after lunch and snack.

Feel free to pour juice or milk at snack (go ahead and pour without actually offering—some say no but will drink it by them).

Food Rules in J & J's class (other classes may have different rules):

No sharing food from home.

You have to eat two healthy foods before having any candy or treat from home (fruit snacks are neutral.)

If you finish all of your food from home you can tell a TPS and a big person will take you to the kitchen for a treat: M & Ms, chocolate kisses, jelly beans from the Tupperware containers with green lids in the kitchen behind the door. Just enough to cover the bottom of the Dixie cup.

Do not:

Be alone with a child.

Try to resolve conflict or pick up a child who is angry.

At the end of our afternoon group, we would like to meet with you to quickly go over blue sheets (therapeutic goals) but sometimes we get distracted. We like you to help us with this because you see behaviors that we miss, and it helps you to know what each child is working on. Let us know if you're in a hurry so that we can get blue goal sheets done.

Those distracting jobs we need to get done and would love you help with are:

Wipe tables

Sweep floors

Stack chairs

Return toys to toy room

Put towels in dirty laundry basket

A different job each week (put away playground toys, laundry, clean up kitchen, or organize toy room)

TCC Catchphrases:

Own space (as in Stay in your own space)

Inside voice

Calm body

Calm voice

Use your words

Put on your listening ears

Feet on the floor

Point your eyes at me

Use your big kid voice

I don't like that

She looks (angry).

That's not ok.

Same same!!!