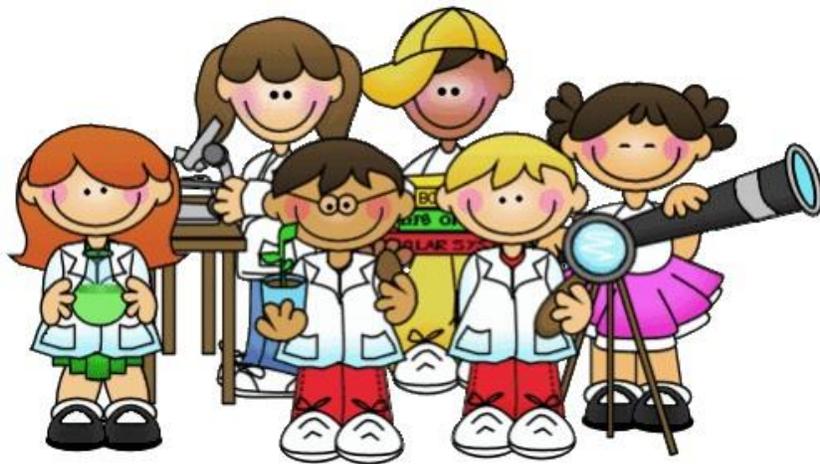




Alta Head Start Volunteer Handbook



**Help Your Child
Succeed Tomorrow by
Volunteering Today!**

Welcome Alta Head Start Volunteer!

Thank you for spending your time helping us to support children in succeeding during the preschool years and beyond! Children benefit from having adults participate in Head Start as each volunteer brings a unique personality, heritage and life experience to share in the classroom. Memorable educational experiences for children occur when the family, early childhood educators and community all work together.

In addition, volunteers play a very important role in supporting the Head Start staff, children and parents. Head Start is a federally funded program which requires us to involve parents and community partners. This is called In-kind. Our Primary source of In-Kind is through parent involvement/volunteers and donations. Every hour you spend with us helps us to meet our goal of supplementing 20% of our total budget through In-kind contributions.

A happy, healthy, and secure environment for children provides the best foundation for learning. We will ask you to become familiar with the rules in which ever learning environment you join. Our staff will help you to become familiar with the educational, performance and licensing standards which we follow. Always ask a question if something occurs which you may not understand – we assure you there is a reason for our policies and procedures!

Please join us by volunteering up to four times a month. If you would like to volunteer on a more frequent basis, let the classroom's Education Supervisor know and we will help you obtain the needed paperwork.

Now have some fun and laugh aloud a lot (well, not during naptime!).

The Alta Head Start Staff



Alta Head Start is a part of the Alta Care Group, which also includes Alta Behavioral Health. We recognize that program quality and commitment begins with positive beliefs which reflect the beneficial changes we hope to make in our community. We ask you as a volunteer to read our mission, philosophy, and values and to incorporate these principles in your interactions with Head Start children and their families.

Alta Care Group MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND VALUES:

The **Mission** of Alta is:

To support the social, emotional, behavioral, and physical well-being of children, adolescents, young adults and their families.

The **Philosophy** of Alta is that:

- In order to achieve our mission, we must see the person we are working with as part of a family system and that family system plays a key role in helping the person achieve their goals.
- We are one of many systems in the community that play a role in helping the person's we serve achieve success in their lives. It is essential that we collaborate with all organizations or systems that might help the persons we serve achieve their goals.
- Members of the organization, at all levels, equally share a commitment to excellence in their roles, in serving the community, and fulfilling the mission of the Center.

The **Values** of Alta are:

- Compassion: We will work to understand the points of view of those we serve and work alongside with.
- Trust: We will demonstrate integrity and reliability to those that we serve and to the community.
- Fairness: We will be consistent and equitable in how we treat those we serve and those we work alongside with.
- Excellence: We will continuously strive to improve in all areas of the organization so that the persons we serve recognize our commitment to excellence.
- Transparency: The rationale for decisions made by the organization and its staff in all of its dealings will be clearly communicated.
- Collaboration: We will work in partnership to achieve shared goals with the people we serve, with our staff, and with other systems and organizations in the community.
- Ethical: The practices at all levels of the organization will be based on both professional ethics, as well as the golden rule of treating all with dignity and respect.

Alta Head Start values our volunteers and their contributions to the children and families in our program. Please know that Alta incorporates the following philosophies in our oversight of volunteer activities.

Volunteer Bill of Rights

Every Volunteer has:

- The right to be treated with the same respect as a co-worker
- The right to an assignment which matches their talents and interests
- The right to know as much about the Head Start program as possible
- The right to any needed training to perform in their service to the program
- The right to sound guidance and direction
- The right to enriching experiences
- The right to be heard
- The right to be recognized

Volunteer's Role:

- Be a positive language and behavioral role model
- Interact with children at child's level
- Respect the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Expand on children's learning experience
- Use positive guidance techniques when helping children to regulate their behavior
- Dress in an appropriate style of clothing for working with small children
- Sign Volunteer Sign-In sheets and/or In-kind forms

Confidentiality Policy

We ask you to follow the Alta Head Start's confidentiality policy concerning information about our children and families. As a volunteer, you may see or hear children in the moment they are struggling to learn a new skill or dealing with an overwhelming situation where they feel insecure or act in a challenging manner. There also may be occasions where you overhear a parent or staff member sharing necessary information with others. We ask that you conduct yourself with character and compassion through respecting and protecting this information. Please let what you see or hear at Head Start to stay at Head Start even after your time of volunteering with us has ended. While volunteering if you witness something you do not understand, please ask the teaching staff for further explanation. If you have a concern that involves a situation, staff member or policy, call the Education Manager at (330) 750-7103 or the Head Start Director at (330)736-0071.

Cell Phone Use at Alta Head Start

Please do not use your cell phone within the classroom or main areas of the building. If during your volunteer time you must use your cell phone, please use the staff lounge area.



Volunteer Activities

Outside the Classroom

Attend Parent Meetings every month!

Attend Parent Training/Education events.

Become involved in our Male Involvement groups.

Be a Classroom Mom or Dad for your child's classroom.

Help the Family Advocate as needed by inviting other parents to special events, participating in recruitment events or assisting with special activities.

Sit on a Parent Advisory Committee to help review policies and procedures including areas such as Health/Nutrition, Human Resources, Self-Assessment, Social Services, Education, or other program content areas.

Assist with clerical duties in the offices.

Teach a craft/hobby to the Parent Group or at your child's classroom.

Teach other parents a new skill such as using the computer/computer software, recipe ideas or any other talent you want to share.

In the Classroom

Read or Tell Stories.

Lead songs, rhymes, or games.

Keep classroom orderly and clean.

Assist in preparing materials for work or play to be available when needed.

Assist in brushing teeth and/or washing hands.

Assist in setting out cots.

Assist with individualized School Readiness goals.

Play a musical instrument.

Teach the children your home language or a foreign language you know.

Tell the children about your job and bring kid friendly props to donate to the classroom (example if you work in a restaurant you can bring menus and empty clean takeout containers such as cups for stacking or pizza boxes for pretend play).



Volunteering in the Classroom

Arrival at School

- Greet parents and children as they arrive. Make sure the parent signs the Sign In Log.
- Let children remove their own outside clothes and find their place to put them.
- Give children assistance when they need it – encourage the children to help themselves.

Meal Time

- This is a time for children to talk to others around the table, try new foods, learn facts about food, and practice mealtime manners. Talk to children about the food, their friends, and their favorite games.
- Help them when they need it. Remind children of positive mealtime manners, i.e. use “please” and “thank you,” use napkins, sit on chair, feet on floor.
- Use disposable gloves when handling food.

Bathroom/Hand Washing/Tooth Brushing

- Volunteers will **NOT** be asked to take children to the bathroom.
- Wash hands upon entering the classroom and when moving between groups.
- Wash hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom and before each mealtime.
- Each child has his/her own toothbrush and will be provided with toothpaste.
- Toothpaste is to be placed on a swish cup and not on the individual toothbrush.
- Let the children help themselves, i.e. rinse own brush. Help children to wipe up spills and toothpaste.

Group Time

- This is a time for the children, teacher, and you to come together for name recognition, story time, songs, music, and games.
- Help children participate by listening, singing, answering questions, and following directions.
- Sit with the children, sing songs, and have fun!

Free Play/Outdoor Play

- An opportunity for children to play and be with other children. They may choose from many toys, games, art projects, and special activities.
- Join in their games and activities. Pretend and talk with the children. Follow their lead in a play topic. For example, by using pretend food in housekeeping, play could include a conversation such as “What are you making?” “Spaghetti -I love spaghetti!”; “What is your favorite lunch?” “How do you make that?” Role model pretend eating and manners.

- Encourage social skills such as sharing, waiting, turn taking, trading, asking, peaceful play, using a friend's name to get his/her attention, being kind
- Follow their lead in his/her deciding what activity the child may choose
- When helping with artwork, let children create their own "Masterpieces"; describe the colors you see in their artwork, ask "Tell me about your picture?" instead of guessing what the child has created.
- Try to spend a few minutes with each child.
- They like to feel that you are interested in what they are doing – it makes them feel good.
- Be positive, smile, laugh, and have a good time!



Volunteering at home

You may not be able to join us by volunteering in the classroom but no worries! Let your child's teacher know you are ready and willing to help.

Some ideas include:

- Check with teachers to see if you can help by preparing materials or activities for use in the classroom. Often staff needs help in cutting out materials for the classroom. Staff will provide ALL supplies needed.
- Help the teaching staff to create and/or type the classroom monthly newsletter.
- Complete the Family Projects that are sent home and return the attached In-Kind Form.
- Complete Education and Nutrition Learning Links and return with the attached In-Kind Form.
- Repair damaged toys or assemble new toys.
- Wash a load of doll clothes or dress-up clothes.
- Mend or sew items for center.
- Other creative ideas you may have are welcome.
- Also, please see/call your Family Advocate for other ways you can help the program if you are not able to volunteer in the classroom!

You may take pictures of you and your child participating in an activity and share them on our Alta Head Start Facebook page