

# English as a New Language Preschool Volunteer Manual

Robinson Community Learning Center

Jennifer Wittenbrink Ortega  
Director  
Literacy Program  
[wittenbrink.1@nd.edu](mailto:wittenbrink.1@nd.edu)  
W (574) 631-9432

Samantha Musleh  
Amanda Conmy  
574-631-0513



It is with a great deal of gratitude that we welcome you to the Preschool at the Robinson Community Learning Center.

We began the Preschool in 2011 in response to a need in the community. While English classes have been offered at the Robinson Center for years through the South Bend Community School Corporation, parents of young children were often precluded from attending. The majority of our families are new to South Bend, in fact, most are new to America, either coming here as refugees or immigrants. All of them speak languages other than English. Because of their status, childcare can be difficult or impossible to find.

The Preschool is now a beloved addition to programming at the Robinson Center, and we have served children from over 30 different countries speaking 14 different languages. This program is successful because of volunteers and community members like yourself. Funding for this program is minimal, and yet the work that we do is invaluable.

It is true that the most personal experiences are also the most universal, and caring for children is one of these experiences. By sharing in the responsibility for childcare with families, we have created a community where there wasn't one. Families from all over the globe have a place here where they are welcomed, cherished and given resources to succeed in their new home. Parents can improve their English and receive valuable job skills; children can learn to thrive in an American school system. All of us can find a community of mutual respect and belonging.

The information on the following pages is to help us all to continue to create an environment that is in the best interests of all participants—students, staff, parents and children. Thank you for your time, attention and caring.

From many hearts, many thanks,

Jennifer Wittenbrink Ortega  
Literacy Program Director



**Goals-** It is our goal to help each child feel safe and secure in our ENL Preschool. We strive to make the preschool experience an extension of the security that children feel at home with their families. We also strive to nurture the “whole child” through a variety of activities that are developmentally appropriate and allow the children to learn and grow physically and mentally, and expand their knowledge of the English Language through experience and interactions with others.

**Philosophy-** We believe that each child is unique in his or her own way and has his or her own different and valuable experiences in life. We recognize that children learn, grow, and thrive in a positive, loving, respectful and nurturing environment.

**Training-** All staff members will be trained prior to interacting with children in the classroom. Trainings may be done in a group setting or one-on-one. Trainings may also be done before or after preschool.

**Collection of Information-** We ask for a variety of information from staff and volunteers and from our families.

Parents of the children complete our intake form prior to enrollment. A home visit is then conducted to complete the waiver, photo release and review the parent handbook. All children that enter the preschool must be up-to-date on their immunizations, as defined by the Indiana Department of Health.

**Work Performance-** We greatly appreciate your time as staff members and volunteers. We want to be sure that our work environment is inviting to all children, parents, staff and volunteers. We are here to focus on the children. The director and lead teacher are willing to meet with any staff or volunteers outside of preschool hours to discuss techniques and tips on working with this age group.

**Behavioral Expectations-** We expect the behavior of University faculty, staff, students, alumni, volunteers, and others associated with the University to align with the University’s core values and the specific expectations for interacting with children, both found later in this document. Adults must be positive role models for children and act in a caring, respectful and responsible manner to all children.

**Background Checks-** The University must ensure all non-student volunteers and non-university employees affiliated with the preschool program have been subject to a check of the national sex offender registry. ND Student volunteers will be required to sign a sworn statement revealing any criminal background. The Office of Risk Management, in consultation with the Office of General Counsel, will review any adverse findings revealed during a criminal background check or national sex offender registry check and make appropriate accommodations. **Non-ND volunteers will need to respond to an email from HireRight to complete a background check.**



Office	Telephone Number	Email or website
Robinson Community Learning Center	574-631-8759	rlc.nd.edu
Notre Dame Security Police	574-631-5555	ndsp@nd.edu or ndsp.nd.edu

Policy or Document	Web Address
Ethical Conduct Policy	<a href="http://policy.nd.edu/policy_files/EthicalConductPolicy.pdf">http://policy.nd.edu/policy_files/EthicalConductPolicy.pdf</a>
Non-Retaliation Policy	<a href="http://policy.nd.edu/policy_files/NonRetaliationPolicy.pdf">http://policy.nd.edu/policy_files/NonRetaliationPolicy.pdf</a>
Drug & Alcohol Policy	<a href="http://hr.nd.edu/nd-faculty-staff/forms-policies/drugs-and-alcohol/">http://hr.nd.edu/nd-faculty-staff/forms-policies/drugs-and-alcohol/</a>

**Absenteeism and Tardiness-** We rely on our volunteers in the classroom. If you are unable to attend your normal shift, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can arrange coverage. The classroom number is 574-631-0513, or you can text part of the preschool team.

**Personal Belongings-** Coats, backpacks, purses, must be stored in the closet in the hall or in the kitchen. Please do not keep your belongings in the classroom. There is also a small cabinet for smaller items.

**Beverage Policy-** Please do not drink any beverages while working with children, except during snack time when they eat and drink what the children are served. Hot beverages especially can be a safety hazard.

**Dress Code-** Please dress comfortably and in something suitable for working with children. Dress appropriately for all weather conditions. Although we want you to be relaxed and comfortable, and certainly don't want you to ruin any special clothes with paint or glue, it is important for you to dress in a professional manner while working at the preschool. Casual clothing such as t-shirts and jeans are generally appropriate if they are neat and clean.

Avoid the following

- Exposed undergarments
- Low-cut tops exposing cleavage
- Bare midriff or half shirts
- Bedroom attire, such as pajama bottoms
- See-through clothing
- Short shorts or mini skirts
- Attire with messages or illustrations that are obscene, vulgar, violent and/or advertise alcohol or other products which laws prohibit minors from using.

**Additional training-** Please let us know if you would like some additional information on policies in the classroom that may not have been covered in your orientation. Possible topics may include:

- Documentation
- Health and safety, nutritional guidelines
- Personality of a child
- Child development
- Handling of emergency situations
- Gender/racial stereotyping
- Parent-staff relationships
- Environment of the classroom

**Conversations with other adults-** Keep attention on children at all times in the classroom, bathroom, outside, and during family time. Teachers need to distribute themselves throughout the preschool and playground rather than grouping together. Your attention needs to be on the children; observing, guiding, encouraging creative efforts, problem solving, and attempts at friendship.

**Evaluations-** Evaluations may be required for Community Based Learning students or for some internships. The program director will be responsible for completion of these documents.

### ***Health and Safety***

#### **Universal Health Care Precautions**

Treat everyone as potentially infectious.

1. Wash your hands:

- On arrival for the day.
- After toileting (self or child).
- After handling any bodily fluids blowing nose, coughing, blood, vomit, etc.
- Before meals and snacks, before preparing or serving food, or handling any raw foods that requires cooking (meats, eggs, poultry).
- After handling any pets or any materials such as sand or dirt.
- Before or after feeding a child.
- After handling garbage or cleaning.
- Before leaving the preschool (recommended).

2. Latex gloves must be worn when:

- Helping a child with toileting.
- Contact with blood, vomit, nose discharge, etc.
- Cleaning surfaces that have been contaminated.
- Wash your hands after you remove gloves.

3. Use disinfectant to:

- Sanitize all table surfaces before snack/lunch time with the bleach solution provided
- Sanitize toys/objects used by children (weekly).

**Safety** - Every caution must be taken to guard against accidents to children and adults. It is the responsibility of every staff person to correct unsafe conditions such as liquid, paper, extension cords, etc. on the floor or any other condition that could cause an accident. Report unsafe conditions and fire hazards immediately if you are unable to correct them. All accidents should be reported in writing immediately.

**Hand washing-** Wash your hands properly and frequently.

1. Use warm running water and liquid soap.

2. Rub your hands vigorously for about 60 seconds (sing the song "Tops and Bottoms") including:

- Backs of hands                      Wrists                      Between fingers                      Under fingernails

3. Rinse well.

4. Dry hands with a paper towel.

5. Turn off the water with a paper towel, not your clean hands. Throw the towel away.



## **First Aid**

- A first aid kit is kept in the classroom at all times.
- If a child has an accident such as a bump on the head or falling down a teacher will reassure the child that they are here to help.
- The staff member or volunteer will then either provide a frozen paper towel in a Ziploc bag, (these are located in the freezer portion of the refrigerator in the classroom), or a band aid.
- If skin is broken one teacher may provide a band aid.
- If a child has a toileting accident in the classroom or the restroom, call a teacher. Do not touch any of the clothing on the child unless you have gloves on.

## **Plan for Meeting the Needs of Mildly Ill Children While at the Preschool**

If a child becomes ill while at the preschool, the parent or authorized family member is contacted to immediately take the child home. Volunteers do not provide medication.

## **Plan for Identifying Special Health Care Needs/Allergies etc.**

- Parents provide information regarding any allergies or other health care concerns at registration. Information is listed in child's folder.
- A list of all allergies is posted on the refrigerator. Allergies and other medical information are posted in a manner that protects the privacy of each child. All staff is made aware of the list and the children identified.
- The preschool will provide reasonable accommodations to meet allergy or special environment conditions of staff and children. Information on children with specific conditions including allergies will have a food allergy form and special care form completed by parents at enrollment or before a child attends.

## **Ensuring Safety and Growth**

Be alert to all possible hazards to the safety and health of the children (climbing on splintered fences or tables, wet clothes, running with scissors). Avoid turning your back on the group when helping one child.

## **Food Safety/Dishes, Utensils and Surfaces**

Our lunches are provided by the South Bend Community School Corporation. Lunches meet all requirements for nutrition set out by the USDA. We use only disposable items for lunch. We do sanitize the tables before and after use. Food is only served with gloves on.

## **Plan for Emergency Situations**

The preschool will retain responsibility of all children on premises until they are released to a parent, guardian or other designated person, or until they have been transported to an official evacuation center, in which case selected staff will remain with the children until they have reunited with their families. Children will be released only to parents, guardians, or other designated persons known to them or to their parent guardians. Evacuation routes are posted in the classroom.





Parents and staff should follow announcements of University closings, delayed openings, or early closings on the following radio stations: WSBT, WNDU, and local television stations. If the University or the South Bend Schools are closed, we will cancel preschool for the day.

### **Mandatory Duty to Report Suspected Abuse and/or Inappropriate Behavior**

Indiana law requires anyone who has reason to believe that a Child is a victim of child abuse or neglect to make an oral report immediately. RCLC staff and volunteers are considered “mandatory reporters.” If an RCLC staff member suspects child abuse, he or she must contact the Child Abuse Hotline immediately at [1-800-800-5556](tel:1-800-800-5556). They have 24 hours to make contact with the child.

If a student volunteer suspects child abuse, he or she must report this immediately to an RCLC staff member (typically the volunteer’s direct supervisor, the RCLC manager or assistant manager). The RCLC staff member must contact the hotline immediately. Ideally the reporting volunteer would be present at the time of the phone call in case questions need to be asked. If not the volunteer’s contact information will be provided to the hotline and he or she will be contacted later. The volunteer must provide a written account of the child’s disclosure of abuse to the RCLC Program Director, which will be kept in a locked confidential file in the RCLC Manager’s Office.

If the person reporting the abuse is afraid that the child is in imminent danger he or she should call 911 or the South Bend Police Department at [574-235-9361](tel:574-235-9361). They will make sure that the response is immediate. Notre Dame Security Police should always be made aware whenever a child abuse report has been made; call 574-631-555 and ask for Captain Dossman.

If Child Protective Services (CPS) arrive at the RCLC to take a child into protective custody following the report of suspected abuse, the following procedures will be observed:

- An RCLC staff member should make a copy of the CPS worker’s ID badge and the documentation from the court. These copies should be given to the RCLC Manager to keep in a confidential file.
- The event should be logged by the RCLC Manager into a confidential DCS/CPS notebook, kept in the Manager’s locked files.
- Have the child brought to one of the front offices to talk privately with the CPS worker away from other RCLC children.
- Let the child leave the RCLC with the CPS worker. The CPS worker should leave contact information to be given to the child’s parent should they arrive at the Center before they have been contacted.
- Notify the NDSP (574-631-555, Captain Dossman) and send a copy of the CPS documentation, so that they are aware of situations that could arise at the RCLC.
- If parents are unaware that their child has been taken into CPS custody, and staff are concerned that the parents might become volatile on arriving at the RCLC to find their child gone, call 911 and request a “stand-by.” They will send an officer to the RCLC.
- If questions arise about CPS protocol, call CPS supervisor Regan Harding at 236-5322.

## Interaction

### Daily Routine

Some goals for parts of the day include the following-

- Children and adults share control.
- Extend language by conversing with children.
- Model actions as opposed to instructing.
- Observe children's strengths.
- Form authentic partnerships with children.
- Support children's intentional play.
- We value children's active learning.
- Take a problem-solving approach to conflict as opposed to correction and time out.

The ENL Preschool uses the HighScope Curriculum in the classroom. Children learn best through hands-on experiences with people, materials, events and ideas. That principal is the basis of our approach to teaching and learning

1. **Gross Motor-** This may happen in the theater, outside on the playground, at the playground two blocks away, or on a walk. Children are never allowed to walk out of the building without their hand being held. Be sure to keep a constant count of the kids.
2. **Individual Reading Time-** Get down on the ground and read with a child or read in parallel.
3. **Greeting Time-** Use the message board to do calendar, greet the children in the room, and present the plan for the day.
4. **Music Time-** Get up and dance and sing. You can use the rhythm sticks, use the CDs or just sing.
5. **Large Group Time-** This will be a planned activity that a teacher will lead.
6. **Bathroom Time-** Children use the bathroom attached to the classroom except after outdoor time when we use the bathroom down the hall.
7. **Snack Time-** All staff and volunteers should sit down and share snack with the children.
8. **Family Time-** Twice a month we have a time where parents and children do a planned activity together.
9. **Planning Time-** Children are encouraged to plan what they would like to do during work time to help them become accustomed to planning before taking action.



10. **Work Time-** This is a time when children choose to be in any area of the classroom. Teachers are to be in multiple areas within work time to be sure children do not feel that a teacher is reluctant to play with them. This is also called Free Play.
11. **Clean Up Time-** Adults and children work together to clean up.
12. **Recall Time-** Children are encouraged to recall what they have done during work time. This will help them to become accustomed to reflecting on their decisions in the future.
13. **Small Group Time-** This will be a planned activity that teachers will lead with small groups of children.
14. **LEAP Packs-** These prepared activity bags with books and games go home with children once a week and are returned to the classroom the following week to be restocked. LEAP means Literacy Exploration Activity Packs, and they are meant to be able to extend learning while at home in a developmentally appropriate manner.

### **Play and Conversation**

Children engage in many different kinds of play, and each kind of play encourages particular kinds of conversations. Here are some different kinds of play that are typical of young children:

- Exploratory play- offers a relaxed occasion for the child to initiate a conversation about a topic of personal interest like a new pet or a recent visit with Grandma.
- Constructive play- the child makes or builds something. This is more goal oriented play and usually an opportunity for talk that is *related* to the activity.
- Pretend play- role playing or pretending usually stimulates lots of role-related conversation among children. An adult who takes part in the pretend play – by assuming a role related to the ongoing play or taking on a role assigned by the players – will naturally be included in these conversations.
- Games- playing games, including action games like tag, or quiet games like card games or board games, is another common kind of play for young children. Such games often involve verbal negotiations over how to proceed and what to do next, and these are natural conversational opportunities.

### **Interaction Strategies that Encourage Active Learning**

#### **Offer children comfort and contact**

- Look for children in need of comfort and contact.
- Offer reassuring physical contact.
- Offer simple acknowledgement.

#### **Participate in children's play**

- Look for natural play openings.
- Play in parallel with children.

- Play as a partner with children.
- Refer one player to another.
- Suggest new ideas within ongoing play situations.
- Address the role person rather than the child.
- Respect the child's reaction to your idea.
- Join children's play on the child's level.

#### **Converse with children**

- Look for natural opportunities for conversation.
- Follow children's conversational leads.
- Converse as a partner with children.
- Ask questions responsively:
  - Ask questions sparingly.
  - Relate questions directly to what the child is doing.
  - Ask questions about the child's thought process.

#### **Use scaffolding strategies to encourage new learning.**

- Keep in mind content areas and key developmental indicators so you can recognize the learning that is occurring in children's activities.
- Make comments that may encourage the child to describe, extend, or add new elements to what he or she is doing.
- Use new vocabulary related to the child's actions and the learning happening.
- Model new skills that are related to what the child is doing and thinking.

#### **Encourage children's problem solving.**

- Look for children involved in problem situations
- Allow children to deal with problem and conflicting viewpoints.
  - Sit down with children.
  - Give children time to use their own problem-solving skills.
  - Refer one child to another.
  - Listen to conflicting viewpoints.
- Interact with rather than manage children.
- Assist matter-of-factly with unresolved conflicts.
  - Elicit, listen to, and acknowledge children's descriptions of problems.
  - Encourage children to talk with one another about the situation they are experiencing.
  - Interpret for less articulate children when necessary.
  - Help children generate alternatives.



Assessment information and techniques includes:

- Children received a developmental screening using the Peabody Language Test that will be completed within two months of child's enrollment into program.
- Results will be shared with parents during parent/teacher conferences and included in the comments on child's progress reports.
- Child Portfolios – tools may include checklists, social inventories, anecdotal records, progress reports, samples of work, drawing, paintings, writing, stories, block building, etc.
- Assessment tools are used to inform parents meeting their family culture, experience and language needs.
- Progress Reports are completed on each child twice during the year. Copies are provided to each family; parents also have an opportunity to sign up for a parent/teacher conference held twice a year to discuss the child's report and collaborate on goals for the child.
- All educators, parents, specialists, and consultants are given the opportunity to contribute to the progress report.

### **Referrals**

Referrals will be made for extra services when deemed necessary. The preschool works with Head Start and other agencies in case referrals to support families in lifelong, healthy development. We may also schedule dental, hearing and other screenings throughout the year.



*This page is taken from the Notre Dame Protection of Children Policy.*

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Behavioral Expectations for Working with Children**

Those associated with Programs involving Children shall observe the following “dos” and “don’ts” in order to maintain a safe and positive experience for Program participants, encourage parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations.

#### **DO:**

- Report any instance or suspect instance of Abuse or neglect involving a Child to Notre Dame Security Police immediately (574-631-5555).
- Maintain the highest standards of personal behavior at all times when interacting with Children.
- Whenever possible, try to have another adult present when you are working with Children in an unsupervised setting. Conduct necessary one-on-one interactions with Children in a public environment where you can be observed.
- Treat all Children in a group consistently and fairly, and with respect and dignity.
- Be friendly with Children within the context of the formal Program while maintaining appropriate boundaries.
- Maintain discipline and discourage inappropriate behavior by Children, consulting with your supervisors if you need help with misbehaving youth.
- Be aware of how your actions and intention might be perceived and could be misinterpreted.
- Consult with other adult supervisors or colleagues when you feel uncertain about a situation.

#### **DON’T:**

- Don’t spend significant time alone with one Child away from the group or conduct private interactions with Children in enclosed spaces or behind closed doors.
- Don’t engage in inappropriate touching or have any physical contact with a Child in private locations.
- Don’t use inappropriate language, tell inappropriate jokes, or make sexually suggestive comments around Children, even if Children themselves are doing so.
- Don’t give personal gifts to, or do special favors for, a Child or do things that may be seen as favoring one Child over others.
- Don’t share information with Children about your private life or have informal or purely social contact with Children who are Program participants outside of Program activities.
- Don’t strike or hit a Child or use corporal punishment or other punishment involving physical pain or discomfort.
- Don’t relate to Children as if they were your peers, conduct private correspondence or take on the role of “confidant” (outside of a professional counseling relationship).
- Don’t date or become romantically or sexually involved with a Child. Don’t show pornography to Children or involve Children in pornographic activities.
- Don’t provide alcohol or drugs to children or use them in the presence of children.

We look forward to having you on our team, and becoming part of our family here at the Robinson Community Learning Center.



*I acknowledge that I have received the Robinson Community Learning Center's ELL Preschool Procedures Manual and that I have read and understand the policies.*

*I understand and agree to comply with the rules, regulations and guidelines provided within this manual, including the Behavioral Expectations for Working with Children and the Mandatory Duty to Report Suspected Abuse.*

*Please sign and date below to indicate your receipt and understanding of the English as a New Language Preschool Staff and Volunteer Operating Procedures Manual.*

---

Signature of Staff or Volunteer

Date

---

Print your name