



Sunset Elementary Peer Volunteer Program

Sunset Elementary is a site for one of three Early Childhood Special Education (ECE) Programs in the Issaquah School District. A typical early childhood classroom would consist of up to 13 children with special needs and up to 4 typically developing peers.

Research supports the concept of having children with special needs in learning opportunities with their peers who are typically developing. To increase these opportunities a peer volunteer program has been developed. These peers will participate on a no fee basis.

In order to meet the needs of our special education children, we must have selection criteria for our volunteers and an application process. We strive to make our program the very best however it will still vary from community-based preschool programs. You will need to take that into account when making the decision to participate.

Selection criteria, application process, and program requirements and limitations are included.

Thank you very much for being interested in our Peer Volunteer Program. We look forward to meeting you and your child.

The Sunset (ECE) Team

Jackie Funk, Special Education Teacher
Kabre Richards, Special Education Teacher
Kelley Couvillion, Occupational Therapist
Kristy Riggs, Speech Language Pathologist

Gina Caulton, Psychologist
Linda Smith, School Nurse

Application Process and Timeline:

1. **Wednesday, March 26th**: Application deadline. Please complete the early childhood peer volunteer information application and return it to the office in care of **Jackie Funk or Kabre Richards**.
2. **Wednesday, April 2nd** an informal screening will be conducted at **9:15-10:15am** in classrooms A5/A6. At this time we will observe your child's speech/language skills, fine/gross motor abilities, preacademic and adaptive development. A developmental history will also be taken.
3. **April 14 -May 13**, you and your child will be invited to visit our early childhood classroom for **2** visits. The first visit will be both of you together and the second visit your child will stay by him/herself. You will be contacted by phone to arrange those visits.
4. **May 16, 2008**: Confirmation letter will be sent out.
5. This is a yearly commitment by the school and parent. A new application must be submitted for each school year. Continuing placement is not guaranteed, therefore, we recommend securing a temporary placement with a community preschool to insure a preschool experience each year for your child.

Selection Process

A peer volunteer must be **three years of age by June 1, 2008**. He or she must demonstrate the following skills:

- independent in toileting skills
- model strong verbal skills in English
- ability to participate in group and play situations freely
- small and large muscle development that allows them to appropriately interact with materials in the classroom and on the playground
- demonstrate age appropriate skills in the areas of independence and social behavior

- no significant health concerns (i.e. severe allergies requiring an epipen, seizures, diabetes, and severe asthma). Peer models cannot have an impact on the school nurse or early childhood staff in terms of health needs.

In order to meet the needs of our special education children, we must have these selection criteria. It is important in the inclusion model to achieve balance within classes. Therefore, in selecting peer volunteers, we must also consider the age, gender, and availability of peer volunteers. Race or ethnicity is not a factor in volunteer selection. Infrequently, classroom placements are not always satisfactory for a student, parent, or staff. If this situation presents itself, you may be asked to consider other school/play options for your child during the school year.

Program requirements and limitations:

- Parents are required to volunteer in the classroom at least twice a month (6 hours). Areas where a parent may be asked to help are: assisting children in class, preparing classroom learning materials, coordinating monthly volunteer schedules, planning special events such as holiday parties, field trips, etc.
- We are able to offer parent-teacher conferences to our peer volunteers.
- We follow the Issaquah School District calendar.
- We cannot accommodate siblings in classroom activities when parents volunteer.
- All children must have private medical insurance to cover any medical emergencies.
- Immunization for each early childhood child is required according to state law.
- All parents will be asked to sign a statement that they will not discuss individual children with staff, friends or other parents, affirming the confidentiality of every student. We believe very strongly in protecting the rights of every child in our program.