

Greeter/Story Reader

A Greeter/Story-reader at The Kids' Place is often the first person the families see when they arrive at the house for their evening group experience. You will be the representative, the ambassador, the smile of The Kids' Place.

- Volunteers will complete a volunteer training application form. They will then complete The Kids' Place training and on-the-job observation/training with current facilitators.
- As a volunteer Greeter/Story-reader, you will need to understand the rules of The Kids' Place and the philosophy of working with grieving children, as set forth in the handouts entitled Rules of Safety, We Believe That... and What Will Children Get From The Kids' Place.
- Your total time commitment for evening groups is usually an hour and a half, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., two times per month. You will join the team for sharing during the first part of the pre-session meeting, then leave to greet the families by 6:40 or 6:45 p.m.
- Your primary role is to meet, greet, and supervise the children as they arrive at The Kids' Place. Two or three people will be scheduled in the role of Greeter/Story-reader for each meeting. You will see that the "Adult Rule" is followed: Children/teens must be with an adult at all times while at The Kids' Place. They may not play in the yard or driveway without adult supervision. They may not leave the building unless accompanied by an adult.
- Your secondary role is to read or tell a pre-assigned story to the entire group or individual groups of children. The story-reading role will not necessarily be utilized every meeting and is typically scheduled for the first fifteen to twenty minutes of the session.
- You will be under the supervision of and responsible to the on-site group coordinator. The group coordinator is the person to talk to about any questions or problems. The coordinator is also the person to notify when you cannot be in attendance for your assigned time.
- You are to respect that what is said at The Kids' Place and who attends our meetings is held in confidence by volunteers and staff. Exceptions include cases of suicidal ideation, child abuse as defined by Oklahoma state statute, chemical dependency on the part of a child, adolescent, or adult, or when a parent or legal guardian has signed an information release.
- You must report any suspicion of suicidal ideation, child abuse as defined by Oklahoma state statute, or threats to harm self or others directly to their group coordinator before the support group concludes. This allows the coordinator to ensure the safety of the child or adult before they leave the premises.
- Volunteers and staff are expected to respect that their relationship with participants is a helping relationship. The establishment of personal relationships outside of The Kids' Place Ministry may interfere with the healing process. We advise that you not initiate any outside contact with families due to confidentiality purposes. We encourage ministry-based relationships and assistance to families as needed or requested.
- You should indicate your presence on the sign-in sheet each time you are present for a session at The Kids' Place.

Facilitator Information

Training: Initial and Ongoing

Volunteer facilitators will complete a facilitator training application form. They will then complete The Kids' Place training and on-the-job observation/training with current facilitators.

The training prepares potential facilitators to volunteer twice each month as a member of a support group leadership team with children, teens, adults, or young adults who are grieving the death of a family member or friend. We ask for a one-year commitment from our volunteers. If a training participant has a scheduling conflict and must miss some or all of a training session, the missed material must be covered by watching video tapes of the session(s), or other training as deemed appropriate by the Director.

Additional training sessions for current volunteer facilitators are held as needed throughout the year. Outside reading and learning from audio and/or video tapes will be part of the ongoing training of facilitators.

Screening and Criminal Record Check

Along with this application, prospective volunteers will authorize a criminal and sex offenders background check through the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI). They agree to maintain consistency with children and their families by regular attendance at group meetings during their one-year commitment, and have a working knowledge of The Kids' Place Facilitator Manual.

Characteristics Of A Volunteer Group Facilitator

- Be a good listener from the time the group members arrive until they leave. Be sensitive to their needs, both expressed and non-verbal.
 - Be aware of individual differences and sensitive to mood swings.
 - Remember that you are in the group as a facilitator of sharing, not as a teacher of facts.
 - Identify safe behaviors and restrict unsafe ones.
 - Enforce rule breaks.
 - Note and discuss individual group member's needs with your coordinator.
 - Hold to time limits.
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General Guidelines:

1. The activities for each evening are pre-planned by the program leaders. Additional ideas and resources can be submitted to the leaders for possible use in future sessions.
 2. Whatever takes place in the support group is confidential, except for information pertaining to harming oneself or others. (See Seven Exceptions Privacy which follows.) It is important for the children's facilitators to interact with adult family members for the purpose of building trust. Generalized statements about the children's progress are appropriate between a facilitator and a parent. For example: "Jacob is doing well. He has made some important strides. He is expressing himself more and more." Or: "Jacob seems troubled. Is there anything you could share with me to assist him in any way?"
 3. If adults have specific concerns with regard to the progress of their children or the activities in the children's group, facilitators should encourage them to check with the group coordinator for that evening.
 4. Confidentiality must be observed with regard to any and all information disclosed by participants and facilitators in group meetings, pre-meetings and post-meetings. (See #2 above regarding exceptions.) Discretion must be used so that meetings can remain safe for the telling of personal truths.
 5. The group coordinator will be available to address the adult group meeting concerning the children's group (using general terms).
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Responsibilities Of A Volunteer Group Facilitator

A group facilitator participates as one who shares and one who cares in a child, teen, or adult support group. There is no formal counseling or therapy as a part of these groups. Staff and facilitators support each other, and facilitators and participants share as well as teach and learn about life.

Volunteers will demonstrate a working knowledge of The Kids' Place Group Facilitator's Manual.

Facilitators will participate in a one-hour pre-meeting immediately before each group session and a debriefing post-meeting immediately after each group meeting. The total time commitment for evening groups is from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. two times per month.

Facilitators of both the children's and adult groups will be under the supervision of an on-site group coordinator. If a facilitator is going to miss a meeting, he or she is to arrange for a substitute facilitator, then notify the group coordinator 24 – 48 hours in advance. The coordinator needs to be given time to prepare for the change in the group.

Volunteers are to respect that what is said in a support group is held in confidence by volunteers and staff. Exceptions include cases of suicidal ideation, child abuse as defined by state statute,

chemical dependency on the part of a child, adolescent, or adult, or when a parent or legal guardian has signed an information release.

Volunteer facilitators must report any suspicion of suicidal ideation, child abuse as defined by state statute (see The Kids' Place training notebook), chemical dependency on the part of the child, adolescent, or adult, and/or threats to harm self or others directly to their group coordinator immediately. Do not wait until the post-meeting. This allows the coordinator to ensure the safety of the children and adults before they leave the premises.

Volunteers and staff are expected to respect that their relationship with participants is a helping relationship. The establishment of personal relationships outside of The Kids' Place Ministry may interfere with the healing process. We advise that you not initiate outside contact with the families due to confidentiality purposes. We encourage ministry-based relationships and assistance to families as needed or requested.

Facilitators should indicate their presence on the sign-in sheet each time they are present for a group session.

My Intent As A Volunteer Facilitator At The Kids' Place

When working with individuals or a group, the following principles will guide me, so that the work of The Kids' Place will remain uniform, and I will be clear about my role in the process:

- I am a trusted volunteer of The Kids' Place.
- I will set aside my personal "stuff" when I am working with bereaved children. If something arises during one of the sessions, I will take care of it in the post-session meeting and/or with one of the staff members, my group coordinator, or a counselor.
- I will strive to trust my intuition and be flexible. It is more important to connect with a child than to accomplish all that is spelled out in my session objectives.
- I will try to remember that I am not expected to "fix" each child or each situation, recognizing that we are not serving as a counseling center or a therapy group. I will remember that my role is to be a caring support person to grieving children and their families. Being a good listener and reflecting words and emotions are more valuable than "preaching or teaching."
- I will look for opportunities to empower children, to help them find their own solutions and answers.
- I will be open to what the children can teach me about grief and mourning.
- I will attempt to follow the plan for my group during our sessions, knowing there are valid reasons and principles underlying each planned activity. I will ask for feedback from my group coordinator if I feel the need to pursue a different course in a situation.
- I will offer a gentle approach to the children in my group.
- I will be a continual learner about children and grief, seeking opportunities for continuing education. I will also attempt to continue my own spiritual growth in whatever ways are best for me.