

A Brief History of CARES

South Kingstown CARES, Connecting All Resources for Educational Support, recruits, screens, trains and supports volunteers in South Kingstown public schools. CARES provides a vital link between the community and the schools by coordinating resources in support of literacy development, mentoring and enrichment.

South Kingstown CARES grew out of a 1995 District PTO survey on volunteer usage in schools. That survey showed that the use of volunteers in the schools was dependent on the efforts of an individual teacher or community member. It concluded that a coordinated district-wide program would benefit both our students and our community. That conclusion was reinforced by the School Committee's primary strategic goal of community involvement and by Rhode Island's Goal 2000, which specified parental and community involvement as one of the key components of school improvement. This led to a series of strategic planning team meetings in 1996 attended by over 60 people from throughout the school district and the community. At that time, it was noted as being the most diverse team ever assembled to work on a school department issue. CARES was seen as the vehicle to accomplish the School Committee's goal of community involvement with its mission of "promoting community collaboration by identifying and connecting diverse talents and resources to encourage and support the success of every child."

In January 1997, CARES opened its doors in an office in the school administration building enabling work to begin on by-laws, non-profit status, needs assessment, publicity, fund raising and training. That year, a pilot program ran at three elementary schools: Peace Dale, South Road and Wakefield. By the 1998-99 school year, programs were offered at all schools at all grades levels and a mentor program had been established. CARES obtained 501(c)3 status in 1998 and moved its office to Hazard School in 2002. CARES is currently governed by a Board of Directors, who hire paid staff to implement programs and supervise a core group of volunteers who act as building coordinators at each school and oversee individual programs. This structure has allowed CARES to screen, train and place hundreds of volunteers and mentors, who have contributed tens of thousands of hours to increase learning for students in South Kingstown schools.

General Goals for Our Volunteers

Help students develop a
love of learning.

Help students feel good
about themselves.

Help students in many
areas of the curriculum.

South Kingstown

CARES

Connecting **All Resources** for **Educational Support**

**Parents + Teachers + Volunteers + Business Partners =
Increased Learning for Children**

**Literacy
Development**

Mentoring

**Guidance
&
Support**

**Classroom
Volunteers**

**After School
Homework
Clubs**

Mentoring

**Career
&
College
Center**

Guidelines for Volunteers

Volunteer Responsibilities

Dependability

- Arrive on time and commit to a regular schedule.
- Sign in and out at the school office every time you come to school.
- Call the school, before school starts, and ask them to notify the teacher if you will be unable to be present on scheduled day.
- Be prepared.

Professionalism

- You are a volunteer, yet your commitment is professional.
- Serve respectfully under the supervision and direction of the teacher.
- Work as a team member.

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is to be observed by all volunteers.
- Follow the same ethical standards expected of all staff members.
- Remember that students must be able to trust you. Keep your time together confidential.

Communication

- Understand and use the appropriate channels of communication for comments and suggestions.
- Feel comfortable to ask a teacher questions or clarification of any instructions.
- If you have questions or concerns, first ask the teacher; second the School Coordinator, and third the CARES office.

Guidelines for Volunteers

Volunteer Rights

A volunteer has the right to:

- an assignment that will promote learning and growth.
- receive orientation and training.
- expect the teacher to have planned tasks.
- be trusted with necessary confidential information.
- respect and recognition.
- be given a place to work and to hang their hat.
- be informed if the schedule changes.

Tips:

- Be sure to ask every teacher with whom you work about his or her preferred method of communicating information concerning students. This will be individual to each teacher: some may have sheets for you to fill out; others may want to talk before or after class and some may prefer to be called at home. There is no “one correct way” to do this, so please ask.
- Good communication with your teacher is essential. Speak with your teacher about any questions or problems as soon as they arise. If necessary, call the CARES Office (360-1304) as well.
- Notify your teacher through the school office if there is a change in your schedule. Please be aware of the holidays and vacations that you may have that are different from those of your classroom and notify the teacher. Also be aware of snow days. Please call the school as early as possible, so they can notify the teacher, if there is a change. School contact numbers can be found on the back cover of this handbook.

Information for Volunteers on Confidentiality, Disclosure, Harassment, Physical Interaction with Students, and Crisis Situations

What follows is a brief description of issues that are important to be aware of while volunteering in a classroom. The information is meant as a general guideline. Please ask a teacher any questions you may have concerning the information. Also, feel free to contact the CARES office at 360-1304 with any questions.

Confidentiality:

- You have a *legal* and *moral* responsibility not to discuss anything about students and their families. Think about yourself and your family.
- If the only source of knowledge you have about something is because you were a volunteer in the classroom or a mentor, then that information is confidential. This is true whether the information is positive or negative.
- **Maintaining confidentiality is about trust.** A child, a teacher, a staff person or a family must be able to trust that they won't be a topic of public conversation.
- **Teachers need to feel comfortable that you are there to help students and not to observe them.** A teacher's teaching methods and classroom management style are conscientiously thought out taking into consideration many circumstances of which you may not be aware. Please respect his or her judgment. Even if you want to share positive things you see happening in the classroom outside of that classroom, ask the teacher if it is okay to do so.
- Don't talk to a spouse in front of your children or other children about your experiences as a volunteer.
- If asked about a child or a classroom outside of school, it is best to respond with a positive "I" statement, such as, "I really enjoy working with Johnny." "I love my time in Mrs. So and So's class." Do not comment specifically on a child's behavior or a teacher's style or classroom.
- You may encounter situations or behaviors that concern you. Ask the teacher about concerns at an appropriate time and place, but not in the classroom if students are present.
- Teachers may not always be able to say a lot when you present a concern because of legal obligations.

Disclosure:

- Like many states, Rhode Island general law requires that cases of suspected child abuse or neglect be reported to the Department of Children, Youth and Families. If a student suggests or you suspect that he/she is at any risk for being harmed, you (as the person who receives the information) must report it to the state (1-800-RI-CHILD). **You should not investigate. When**

reporting to the state, do not do so alone. Talk to the teacher and make the call with the principal or appropriate staff person. If you are in doubt about a disclosure or have any behavior or mental health concerns, talk to the teacher first, in private. There are also consult teams (psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, etc.) in the district to deal with concerns about social/emotional issues. See pages 9-10 for additional information on reporting and signals that can indicate potential child abuse or neglect.

- Should you have a concern about potential child abuse or neglect, bring the situation to the attention of the teacher or a school administrator. In situations where you feel it is necessary to make a report to DCYF, make the call with a school official. Bringing these situations to the attention of school staff allows them to arrange for additional support services as quickly as possible. In addition, as one or two indicators in isolation may not be cause for a reportable suspicion, information you provide may supplement observations made by school staff and, in aggregate, can raise a reportable level of concern.
- As filing a report triggers a DCYF review, your involvement in the investigation should end at this point. In addition, please note that individuals who, in good faith, report suspected child abuse or neglect to DCYF are protected from liability.

Harassment

- District-wide policies exist with regards to student conduct, sexual harassment and hazing. While each school can establish its own disciplinary policies for dealing with bullying, teasing, verbal abuse or physical harassment, they are, in no instance, acceptable. All incidents of harassment should be reported to your school contact and/or a school administrator.

Physical Interaction with Students

- For your protection, physical interaction with students is generally discouraged. For students beyond the primary elementary grades (K-2), physical contact should be limited to handshakes or “high fives”. With younger students, returning a hug is appropriate but further physical contact should be discouraged. For example, if working on a reading exercise, do not have the child sit on your lap.
- If a student seeks physical contact with which you are uncomfortable, discuss the situation with him/her. If the behavior persists, discuss the situation with the teacher in order to work out a

solution. It is important for children to understand appropriate physical limits and it protects you as well.

- You should also be aware that a change in a student's seeking, or withdrawal from, physical interaction can be a trouble indicator and should be brought to the attention of the teacher.

Crisis Situations & Threats of Harm

- If a student makes any statement or engages in behavior that suggests he/she plans to harm himself/herself or threatens to harm others, you need to notify the teacher or a school administrator. All threats of harm must be reported and a school psychologist will see the student involved before leaving school that day.
- By reporting all threats of harm, school staff can take the steps necessary to see that students are not released into potentially hazardous situations and, at a minimum, are counseled on appropriate ways to express frustration or resolve problems. Prompt notification also allows school officials to initiate further investigation as necessary and to be prepared to communicate with other members of the school community.
- All incidents that occur within the last two hours of the school day should be reported to the teacher or a school administrator immediately. If prior to the last two hours of the school day, depending on your evaluation of the situation, reporting can occur at the end of your classroom assignment or mentoring session.

A Final Word about Working with Students:

- In working with students, especially once a trusting relationship has been established, it is possible that you will become aware of difficult situations that need to be brought to the attention of school department staff. In addressing these situations, you may be conflicted as to whether reporting your observations to school department staff violates the trust that you have established with a student. In facing this dilemma, remember that student welfare and safety are the paramount concerns and that your effectiveness as a volunteer also depends on school staff having confidence that you will bring to their attention issues they are responsible for in their jobs.
- **In all instances, volunteers should not make decisions concerning mental health or behavioral issues, initiate independent investigations of reported situations or take disciplinary measures. The role of the volunteer in such instances is to report their observations to school department staff who are responsible for the safety of students, conducting necessary investigations and implementing disciplinary policies.**

IT'S A CRIME.



Kids. They're breakable... inside and out. Unfortunately, more than a thousand Rhode Island children each year suffer from abuse and neglect. Some hurt on the inside, from emotional abuse. Others are harmed physically. Still others are left on their own without adult care, or supervision, without enough food or proper shelter.

If you're aware of such a child, please call us toll-free. Our trained staff will take your report anytime, day or night, and special investigators are prepared to visit a family within 24 hours.

We can't do it alone. But working together, we can make a world of difference for Rhode Island's children.

**Report Child Abuse and Neglect.
It's the Law.**

**1-800-RI CHILD
(1-800-742-4453)**

Signals

Certain signals should suggest the possibility of child abuse. One or two of these signals do not necessarily indicate abuse. If, however, several of these signals are present, or there is a recurring pattern of these signals, abuse should be suspected. Such clues occur when a child:

- is habitually away from school and constantly late;
- arrives at school very early and leaves very late, or indicates s/he doesn't want to be at home;
- is unusually or chronically compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive, or uncommunicative;
- is nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive, or destructive;
- has any unexplained injury (e.g., missing hair, a bump, limp, or bruises);
- has an inordinate number of "explained" injuries over a period of time;
- complains about frequent physical punishment;
- goes to the bathroom with frequency or difficulty;
- is inadequately dressed for the weather conditions;
- has clothing that is soiled, tattered, or too small;
- is dirty has neglected teeth, or poor hygiene;
- is thin, emaciated, and constantly tired, suggesting malnutrition and dehydration;
- is usually fearful of other children and adults; or
- has been given inappropriate food, drink, or medication.

Abuse should also be suspected if the parents:

- show little concern for their child's problems;
- do not respond to communications, never attend parent's nights, or never inquire about the child's progress;
- take an unusual amount of time to seek health care for the child or show ignorance of health conditions of the child;
- do not adequately explain an injury or are unaware of child's injury;
- give different or contradicting explanations for the same injury;
- suggest that the cause of an injury can be attributed to a third party;
- are reluctant to share information about the child;
- respond inappropriately to the seriousness of a problem;
- are abusing alcohol or drugs;
- have unrealistic expectations for the child;
- are very strict disciplinarians;
- were themselves abused, neglected, or deprived as children; or have taken the child to different doctors, clinics, or hospitals for past injuries (often called "doctor shopping" or "hospital shopping," i.e., the attempt to avoid suspicion by medical personnel).

It should be emphasized that one or two of these indicators in isolation may not be cause for a reportable suspicion.

From: A Guide to Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse in Schools, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of School Support Systems, 22 Hayes Street, Providence, RI 02908; Peter McWalters, Commissioner.

Information from the School Nurse

As a volunteer in the school, of which health and safety issues should I be aware?

- Do not touch any body secretions. Give a student a tissue or paper towel and get help from a staff member or the school nurse.
- Do not accompany a student to the bathroom. If you are passing a bathroom and are asked to help, do not go in. Give advice from the doorway.

Are classrooms equipped with emergency first aid kits?

- All classrooms have plastic gloves and band-aids, but these are for the staff to use, not the volunteer (see exception below). The volunteer should just notify the staff member if first aid is needed.

If a volunteer is certified as an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) or to do CPR, should they do first aid?

- Yes, if they are the first person on the scene.

What is the school medication policy?

- The school nurse must keep all medications, even over-the-counter medications. Parents need to fill out a form for over-the-counter medications and prescriptions require a note from a doctor. The school nurse must give all medications.

What are the symptoms of allergic or diabetic reactions?

- Paleness, irritability, crying easily, inability to make decisions, uncontrollable screaming, unconsciousness. For hypoglycemia or insulin shock: shaking, rapid heartbeat, sweating, tingling, dizziness, staggering, hunger, and drowsiness.
- **Peanut allergies are prevalent in our schools. Please do not bring any peanut products into our schools. Please read page 12 of this handbook, "Rhode Island's New Peanut Law."**

Are there epi pens for allergic reactions available in the schools?

- Yes, but they may be used only by the school nurse, an administrator or trained personnel, not a volunteer.

How will I be notified of health bulletins at school?

- The school nurse will put the same notices that are posted in the Teachers' Room in the CARES notebook in the front office. You should let your contact person or the school nurse know if you have any health condition (e.g. pregnancy, a weakened immune system from medical treatment, chronic condition) that would necessitate special notification about contagious diseases in the school (e.g. Fifth's Disease, measles, chicken pox, strep throat).

RHODE ISLAND'S NEW "PEANUT LAW"
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

What is the new "peanut law?"

The new peanut law, H5671, was passed during the 2007 legislative session. The purpose of the law is to protect students who have allergies to peanuts or tree nuts while they are in school. The goal of the law is to help schools provide a safe environment for all students.

What is a peanut or tree nut allergy?

Allergies to peanuts or tree nuts are quite common. Some people have a mild reaction to these products, like developing a rash or hives. However, some people have a very severe reaction to these products that can be life-threatening. A person with this severe type of allergy may stop breathing (anaphylaxis) in less than a minute of smelling, eating or touching peanut or tree nut products.

What does the law require from schools?

Schools must work to provide a safe environment for students identified as having a peanut or tree nut allergy. If there are no students in a school with a peanut allergy, the school does not have to do anything related to this law. However, as soon as a student with a peanut allergy enrolls in the school, the school must implement the measures described in the law. If there is a student in the school that has a peanut allergy, the law requires that schools:

- Post a sign at each point of entry to the school and at the cafeteria entrance, alerting people that there is someone in the building with a peanut allergy;
- Prohibit the sale of peanuts/tree nuts in the school cafeteria;
- Designate a peanut/tree nut free table in the cafeteria;
- Designate a peanut/tree nut table in the cafeteria;
- Designate one classroom per grade level where there is a student with a peanut/tree nut allergy as peanut/tree nut free.

Does the law apply to all schools?

The law applies to all public and non-public schools serving elementary and middle school students. The law does not apply to high schools.

Can my child bring peanut products in to the school?

Yes. The law does not prohibit any student from bringing peanut/tree nut products from home. However, if your child is assigned to the "peanut-free classroom," then the school must arrange for your child to store his/her peanut products outside the classroom. The student may not store or eat the peanut/tree nut product in the designated peanut-free classroom. The student may eat peanut/tree nut products in the cafeteria.

Does my child have to sit at a special table?

The law requires that the school designate a table or tables that are peanut/tree nut free so that those students that need this type of protection can sit there. Other children may also sit at these tables, as long as they do not have peanut/tree nut products as part of their lunch, so as not to isolate any group of students. The law also requires that the school designate peanut/tree nut tables. These tables will help contain peanut smells and residues for those students eating peanut products during lunch, especially if there is a student in the building with the most severe type of allergic reaction. Again, other students may also sit at these tables, even if they are not eating peanut/tree nut products so as not to isolate any group of students.

Volunteer Tips

Today's teachers are busy with discipline issues, proficiency testing, changing curriculums and student safety. All these stress factors are reasons teachers really need help in their classrooms, but are the same reasons that make it difficult for them to have work organized for their volunteers. Here are a few tips to help your teacher...

- Ask the teacher for a few minutes of their time to explain their grading matrix, the child behavior plan in their classroom and if there are any students with special needs.
- Ask your teacher where supplies such as paper, pencils, scissors, and glue are kept so you can access them when you need them.
- Offer to help with Bulletin Boards. Teachers often welcome help with these kinds of tasks.
- Do not judge teacher's teaching methods and discipline strategies. It may appear a teacher has a diverse range of expectations for their students, but the fact is they may know confidential details about the student you do not know.
- Be clear about your boundaries with the students you are working with.
- Communicate with your teacher. Ask for their email address or if they wouldn't mind your calling them at home. Realize it is important to share any information or concerns you may have about a student.
- Ask your teacher how they handle positive and negative behavior so that your method is consistent with theirs.
- Ask your teacher which students could use the most help and ask, if you find yourself with nothing to do, if you might help that student.
- If possible, try to know what the teachers is going to be doing before you start in the classroom so that you can model the student's attention to that assignment.
- Upon completion of an assignment help to refocus students to the teacher and the next assignment.

How to Encourage Students to Become Active Learners

Information extracted from in-service workshops given by
Roberta Sherman, Elementary Reading Teacher

Language for Classroom Volunteers

With the help of volunteers, a student's self esteem can be lifted and the love of learning can be developed. **Encouraging words can be the most useful tool a volunteer has.**

- Look for honest reasons to enhance self-esteem:
 - Wonderful.
 - Great.
 - Terrific.
 - Excellent.
- Praise the child for his/her effort:
 - You did a lot of work today.
 - You're really trying hard.
 - One more time and you'll have it.
 - I can see your brain working.
- Praise for problem solving:
 - You've figured it out all by yourself.
 - Good thinking.
 - I knew you could do it.
 - First class work.
- Praise for improvement:
 - That's better.
 - You have the idea now.
 - You are learning fast.
 - You out did yourself today.
- Praise for encouragement:
 - Keep it up.
 - I knew you could do it
 - You're on the right track.
 - I've never seen anyone do it better.
- Share your pleasure:
 - You make my day.
 - You make coming here worthwhile.
 - I am so happy with your progress.
 - Yes!
- Praise the student for every effort:
 - even if the answer is wrong, - You're trying!
 - even if he/she received help getting the correct answer, - Good for you!
 - and especially when he/she has found the error him/herself. - Hooray!

Effective Ways to Work with Students

Be a good listener:

- Let the student know he or she matters. If your student thinks that you are not interested in being with them, you will have lost a lot of ground.

Encourage students to do their own thinking.

- Be patient and give them plenty of time to answer on their own. Silence can mean they are thinking or organizing what they want to say or write. Be careful, though, not to leave your student hanging if they do not know the answer.

If you don't know an answer or are unsure of what to do, admit it to the student(s) and work it out together.

- Feel free to ask the teacher for help when you need it.

Comment or apologize when you make a mistake.

- It is important that students hear how to apologize and to know that no one is perfect.

Use tactful and positive comments.

- Encourage students. Seek something worthy of compliment, especially when the student is having difficulty with a problem or exercise.

Accept each student as he or she is.

- Do not feel responsible for judging a student's abilities, progress or behavior.

Respect a student's privacy.

- If a student or a teacher reveals personal information, regard it as confidential unless it is something dangerous to the student or someone else. If so, tell a teacher or the principal.

Keep your commitment.

- The students will expect you and look forward to your coming to their school. If you know you will be absent, tell them in advance. Do not make promises you cannot keep as students remember everything.

Be gracious, sympathetic and supportive with student efforts.

Maintain a sense of humor and enjoy yourself.

The ABC'S of How to Help Students Become Independent Learners

Create a Supportive Atmosphere

- Be warm, friendly, relaxed, calm and flexible.
- Possess a sense of humor.
- Have a sense of direction.
- Accept the student's efforts even if only partially correct.
- Observe and respond to what the student is doing.
- Personalize or reinterpret to help the student.
- Be positive and reassuring so student feels good about his/her effort.

Have a goal of Active Learning

- Allow time for independent problem solving by being quiet.
- Question and prompt the student to do what he/she already knows.
- Ask questions designed to help the student think and act.
- Ask the student to self-evaluate.
- Require the student to self-check their work.

Encouraging Active Learning

- Question in a way that leads the student to check several different sources of information:
"Does it make sense? What do you see in that picture? What would you expect to see at the beginning? What can you use to figure this out?"
- Help the student discount or verify predictions based on a closer visual look: "Does it look right? What did you put down? Does it make sense?"
- Help the student use a feedback system: "Can I say it another way? How could I write that? Get my mouth ready for that first sound."
- Encourage, expect and confirm the student's use of strategies: "You made a mistake. Can you find it? How did you know? Were you right? Check to see if that looks and sounds right. I like the way you figured that out."
- Foster an atmosphere where it is more acceptable to take the risk of trying out an idea and not have it work than not trying at all. The process is more important than the product and to be challenged with something that is difficult is not something to be feared.

A Student's PERSPECTIVE

What to do when I do not know the answer

- Show that you have confidence in me. Give me some "wait" time to problem-solve by counting to ten before you help.
- Help me to refocus and think about what I am doing. Have me reread directions or tell you what the teacher expects from the assignment.
- Persist with guiding questions and promote what I already know.
- Talk to me about something that will give me a hint as to how to figure it out.
- Help me check several sources of information.
- Help me predict what something might be.
- Help me discount or verify my answer based on a closer look.
- Give me another hint.
- Make sure that I go back to the beginning and try again.
- Make sure I try something else even if it is a guess
- Only after I'm completely stumped do you give me the answer, but remember to show me how.
- Ask me to evaluate what I did. How close was I to the answer?

Praise me for my effort

&

Don't do anything for me that I can do for myself!

General School Procedures

- After completing the training session, you will be contacted by CARES of your volunteer assignment. Please ask office personnel or your teacher for a school map and the location of the adult lavatories.
- **If you have to call to cancel a scheduled meeting on the assigned meeting day, be sure the office personnel understand that the teacher needs to be notified as soon as possible before your scheduled meeting time. Most schools have answering machines, so you can call before school opens and leave a message.**
- Report to the school office. **Sign in to the Volunteer/Visitor Sign-in Sheet or computer screen as a CARES volunteer. Please wear the volunteer badge provided.**
- Go to the classroom to begin working. Ask any necessary questions, but don't have a lengthy discussion with teacher, because this may take away from class time.
- **Sign out when you are finished and return the CARES badge.**
- Review the fire drill codes and plans for evacuation.
- If you have any questions or concerns, first talk to the teacher or call/email the CARES office at **360-1304/cares@skschools.net**.
- In the event of inclement weather, listen to WPRO, 630 FM, beginning at 7:00AM. The radio station will broadcast school closings. When in doubt, call the school directly. The office staff will be glad to assist you.
- Please give your teacher your contact information (phone & email). This will allow teacher to contact you if there is any change in schedule (i.e. field trips, conference days, sick day etc.) . Ask teacher for an alternative plan should your regularly scheduled volunteering not be possible.
- Check the school calendar for holidays and special events. See Calendar inside cover

Students' Behavior Expectations

All elementary students have been taught the PBIS matrix (Positive Behavioral and Intervention Support). The behaviors listed in this matrix below are expected of a child while being mentored. Please familiarize yourself with this matrix.

Positive Behavioral and Intervention Support (PBIS) Matrix

I.

Expectations:

	All settings	Hallways	Classrooms	Bathrooms
Respect all others	Be kind Hands and feet to self Help and share	Walk quietly Hands by your side Go directly to destination	Follow directions Good listening Quiet inside voices One speaker	Respect privacy. One student at a time
Respect yourself	Be in task Give best effort Be honest	Walk safely	Be prepared Take care of yourself	Flush. Wash hands
Respect surrounding	Clean up after self	Pick up litter	Clean up. Use materials properly	Keep it clean Respect property

Students are expected to demonstrate good citizenship and appropriate social behavior at all times. Behavior should never infringe upon the rights of other students or adults thereby disrupting the learning process.

Child Development Process 5-7 Year Olds

Adapted from Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

General Characteristics:

- Eager to learn, easily fatigued, short periods of interest.
- Learn best when they can be cooperative.
- Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive.

Physical Characteristics:

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Need rest periods. Good quiet activities would be reading books together or doing simple art projects.
- Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles will be difficult (e.g., working on models with small pieces).
- May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics:

- Like organized games and are very concerned about following the rules.
- Can be very competitive. May cheat at games.
- Are very imaginative and involved in fantasy playing.
- Are self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first, less cooperative than at five, and boastful.
- Learn best through active participation.

Emotional Characteristics:

- Are alert to feelings of others, but are unaware of how their own actions affect others.
- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Inconsistent in levels of maturity evidenced; regresses when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders.

Mental Characteristics:

- Are very eager to learn.
- Like to talk.
- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Have difficulty making decisions.

Developmental Tasks:

- Sex role identification.
- Early moral development.
- Concrete operations – the child begins to experience the predictability of physical events.
- Group play.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies:

- Be patient, encouraging and flexible.
- Give supervision with a minimum amount of interference.
- Give praise, opportunities for successful completion, and suggestions on acceptable behavior.
- Suggested activities: bake cookies, play UNO, checkers or bingo, read stories, activities involving animals, throw a ball, visit a playground or zoo.

Child Development Process 8-10 Year Olds

Adapted from Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

General Characteristics:

- Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give more to others but expect more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, accident-prone, interest in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest, may make plans on own.
- Decisive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion, often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval.

Physical Characteristics:

- Are very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are fun for them and involve use of energy.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early maturers may be upset with their size. A listening ear and your explanations will help.
- May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics:

- Can be very competitive.
- Are choosy about their friends: BOYS LIKE BOYS/GIRLS LIKE GIRLS.
- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
- Team games become popular.
- Worshipping heroes, TV stars, sports figures are common.

Emotional Characteristics:

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adult rules and friends' rules.
- You can help by your honesty and consistency.

Mental Characteristics:

- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Are very curious, and are collectors of everything; however, they may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Developmental Tasks:

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation.
- Skill learning.
- Team play.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies:

- Recognize allegiance to friends and “heroes.”
- Remind child of responsibilities in a 2-way relationship.
- Acknowledge performance: “Hey, watch this!”
- Offer enjoyable learning experience. It’s a great time to teach about different cultures. Provide frank answers to questions about upcoming physiological changes.
- Suggested activities: Little Leagues, board games, miniature golf, video games, craft projects and drawing, and swimming.

Characteristics of Middle Grade Students

Intellectual development of middle grade students:

- Display a wide range of individual intellectual development as their minds experience transition from the concrete-manipulatory stage to the capacity for abstract thought. This transition ultimately makes possible:
 - Propositional thought
 - Consideration of ideas contrary to fact
 - Reasoning with hypothesis involving two or more variables
 - Appreciation for the elegance of mathematical logic expressed in symbols
 - Insight into the nuances of poetic metaphor and musical notation
 - Analysis of the power of a political ideology
 - Ability to project thought into the future, to anticipate, and to formulate goals
 - Insight into the sources of previously unquestioned attitudes, behaviors and values
 - Interpretation of larger concepts and generalizations of traditional wisdom expressed through sayings, axioms, and aphorisms
- Are intensely curious.
- Prefer active over passive learning experiences; favor interactions with peers during learning activities.
- Exhibit a strong willingness to learn things they consider to be useful; enjoy using skills to solve real life problems.
- Are egocentric; argue to convince others; exhibit independent, critical thought.
- Consider academic goals as a secondary level of priority; personal-social concerns dominate thoughts and activities.
- Experience the phenomenon of meta-cognition – the ability to know what one knows and does not know.
- Are intellectually at risk; face decisions that have the potential to affect major academic values with lifelong consequences.

Physical development of middle grade students:

- Experience accelerated physical development marked by increases in weight, height, heart size, lung capacity, and muscular strength.
- Mature at varying rates of speed. Girls tend to be taller than boys for the first two years of early adolescence and are ordinarily more physically developed than boys.
- Experience bone growth faster than muscle development; uneven muscle/bone development results in lack of coordination and awkwardness; bones may lack protection of covering muscles and supporting tendons.
- Reflect a wide range of individual differences, which begin to appear in prepubertal and pubertal stages of development. Boys tend to lag behind girls. There are marked individual differences in physical development for boys and girls. The greatest variability in physiological development and size occurs at about age thirteen.
- Experience biological development five years sooner than adolescents of the last century; the average age of menarche has dropped from seventeen to twelve years of age.
- Face responsibility for sexual behavior before full emotional and social maturity has occurred.
- Show changes in body contour including temporarily larger noses, protruding ears, long arms; have posture problems.
- Are often disturbed by body changes:
 - Girls are anxious about physical changes that accompany sexual maturation.
 - Boys are anxious about receding chins, cowlicks, dimples, and changes in their voices.
- Experience fluctuations in basal metabolism, which can cause extreme restlessness at times and equally extreme listlessness at other moments.
- Have ravenous appetites and peculiar tastes; may overtax digestive system with large quantities of improper foods.
- Lack physical health; have poor levels of endurance, strength, and flexibility; as a group are fatter and unhealthier.
- Are physically at risk; major causes of death are homicide, suicide and accidents.

Psychological development of middle grade students:

- Are often erratic and inconsistent in their behavior; anxiety and fear are contrasted with periods of bravado; feelings shift between superiority and inferiority.
- Have chemical and hormonal imbalances, which often trigger emotions that are frightening and poorly understood; may regress to more childish behavior patterns at this point.
- Are easily offended and are sensitive to criticism of personal shortcomings.
- Tend to exaggerate simple occurrences and believe that personal problems, experiences, and feelings are unique to themselves.
- Are moody, restless; often feel self-conscious and alienated; lack self-esteem; are introspective.
- Are searching for adult identity and acceptance even in the midst of intense peer group relationships.
- Are vulnerable to naïve opinions, one-sided arguments.
- Are searching to form a conscious sense of individual uniqueness – “Who am I?”
- Have emerging sense of humor based on increased intellectual ability to see abstract relationships; appreciate the “double entendre”.
- Are basically optimistic, hopeful.
- Are psychologically at risk; at no point in human development is an individual likely to encounter so much diversity in relation to oneself and others.

Social development of middle grade students:

- Experience often-traumatic conflicts due to conflicting loyalties to peer groups and family.
- Refer to peers as sources for standards and models of behavior; media heroes and heroines are also singularly important in shaping both behavior and fashion.
- May be rebellious towards parents but still strongly dependant on parental values; want to make own choices, but the authority of the family is critical factor in ultimate decisions.
- Are impacted by high level of mobility in society; may become anxious and disoriented when peer group ties are broken because of family relocation to other communities.
- Are often confused and frightened by new school settings, which are large and impersonal.
- Act out unusual or drastic behavior at times; may be aggressive, daring, boisterous, and argumentative.
- Are fiercely loyal to peer group values; sometimes cruel or insensitive to those outside the peer group.
- Want to know and feel that significant adults, including parents and teachers, love and accept them; need frequent affirmation.
- Sense negative impact of adolescent behaviors on parents and teachers; realize thin edge between tolerance and rejection; feelings of adult rejection drive the adolescent into the relatively secure social environment of the peer group.
- Strive to define sex role characteristics; search to establish positive social relationships with members of the same and opposite sex.
- Experience low risk-trust relationships with adults who show lack of sensitivity to adolescent characteristics and needs.
- Challenge authority figures; test limits of acceptable behavior.
- Are socially at risk; adult values are largely shaped conceptually during adolescence; negative interactions with peers, parents, and teachers may compromise ideals and commitments.

Moral and ethical development of middle grade students:

- Are essentially idealistic; have strong sense of fairness in human relationships.
- Experience thoughts and feelings of awe and wonder related to their expanding intellectual and emotional awareness.
- Ask large, unanswerable questions about the meaning of life; do not expect absolute answers but are turned off by trivial adult responses.
- Are reflective, analytical and introspective about their thoughts and feelings.
- Confront hard moral and ethical questions for which they are unprepared to cope.
- Are at risk in the development of moral and ethical choices and behaviors; primary dependency on the influences of home and church for moral and ethical development seriously compromises adolescents for whom these resources are absent; adolescents want to explore the moral and ethical issues which are confronted in the curriculum, in the media, and in the daily interactions they experience in their families and peer groups.

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Self Evaluation for the Volunteer

- Have I shared with the teacher my skills and interests which might be useful to my volunteer service?
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- Do I make suggestions as to how I could be of further help?
- Am I effective in helping students who have problems?
- Am I discreet and tactful in working with students and teachers, and careful to observe the rules about confidentiality?
-
- When I am unable to come to school do I contact the school promptly?
- Am I reliable and prompt?
- Do I take advantage of training opportunities to enhance my skill as a school volunteer?
- Do I share my enthusiasm for my work at school with friends and community members?

Conclusion

Remember, you are wanted and needed in the schools. We hope you will find satisfaction in knowing that you are filling this need. The most important thing you have to offer is your attention and caring. Listen to and respond to the student's feeling without judging. Show by your manner that you respect and accept the student. Validate any contribution made and do not expect quick results. Your sincere interest may be far more helpful than your skill. Be reliable. The student needs to feel you can be trusted. Finally one of the greatest gifts you can bring to children is greater self-esteem.

Thank you for your invaluable service
as a CARES classroom volunteer
in a South Kingstown school.