



Volunteer Handbook

Revised 1/22/25

Kids Count's Mission & Vision

Mission: The mission of Kids Count is to empower children in our community to reach their full potential.

Vision: Kids Count children will become self-aware, resilient, lifelong learners. As adults, they will embrace their community and feel proud to contribute to its well-being.

Values:

EMPOWERMENT – Empowering Students

LITERACY – Build Foundational Literacy Skills

COMMUNITY – Embracing Community

DIGNITY – View Everyone With Dignity

COMPASSION – Treat People With Compassion

Kids Count exists to serve students from low income areas that need extra support to reach their full potential. Kids Count after school programming is offered in a nurturing environment and supports the individual needs of each student using the following three elements:

- **Academics:** One-on-one (or small groups if necessary) reading tutoring is provided twice weekly by volunteers. Homework help and additional academic support is also provided. Literacy activities are implemented by the staff to cultivate a desire for students to read, build their confidence in reading, and make reading fun.
- **Social-Emotional Skill Development/Character Education:** Using literacy activities to teach students how to identify their emotions, handle their emotions appropriately, build healthy relationships with each other and with adults; focus on a different theme each month
- **Enrichment:** Activities are structured to inspire students, broaden the exposure to arts and science, and show that learning is fun. Gardening,

dance, cooking, science experiments, tennis, etc. are all examples of enrichment programming provided at Kids Count. Field trips are also used to further the learning experience and give students experiences that they wouldn't have otherwise.

Program Structure

Kids Count serves 70 students in first through third grade, who attend Rawlings and Metcalfe elementary schools.

We have two site locations.

1. Rawlings Elementary School
 - a. 3500 NE 15th Street **(enter through bus loop)**
2. Duval Early Learning Academy (Serves students from Metcalfe Elementary school)
 - a. 2106 NE 8th Ave **(enter through bus loop)**

Scheduling and Dependability

As a volunteer, you can pick which site you would like to serve at and which day(s) and times. Scheduling requirements are as follows:

1. At least a semester commitment: This semester our last day for tutoring will
2. Minimum of 1 hour every week
3. Same day(s)/time(s) each week as much as possible
4. Kids Count follows the Alachua County school calendar and will be closed on days that school is not in session.
5. We expect you to be **dependable**
 - a. Please be here on the days/times you have committed to
 - b. We will be keeping track of volunteer attendance. If you miss more than 3 days unexcused, you risk being removed as a volunteer
 - i. excused absences- sickness, scheduled exam, etc.
 - ii. unexcused absences- studying for an exam, anything you can prepare for ahead of time
 - c. Being dependable is **extremely important** for our students. They will be expecting you and it affects them, the staff, and the program when we are relying on you to be here and you don't show up.
6. If you need to be absent, **please email your assigned program director** to let us know as soon as possible.

Volunteer Guidelines

1. Signing in and out

- a. Volunteers will sign in/out using the Open Time Clock system, which will be available at each site on an iPad. Volunteers are welcome to download the app directly to their phones as well.
- b. Your username is your first and last name, no spaces. There is no password.
 - i. Example: allysenmarks
- c. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to sign in and out! If you are keeping track of hours for a class, this is how your hours will be recorded.
- d. If you don't sign in or out, we will not have a record of your hours, so please make sure to do so.
- e. If you forget to sign in or out, you will need to leave a note in Open Time Clock. This can be done from the sign in page.
- f. **To leave a note:** enter username, once you enter it, below you should see an option appear to leave a note
 - i. **To see hours:** Login on the sidebar, click the Time Sheet, click into the calendar their start date.

2. General Conduct

- a. Volunteers should never be alone with students or out of sight of a staff member.
- b. Students should not sit on volunteers' laps.
- c. Volunteers should not pick up students, carry them, spin them, etc. This is for the safety of the child and yours as well.
- d. Volunteers should not be on their phone while around the students.

Please be aware that if you are volunteering for a class and are on your phone, you may not receive hours that day at the discretion of the staff member you're working with. It's very distracting for our students to see you on your phone so we ask that if you need to use it you step outside to do so.
- e. Volunteers are prohibited from giving their contact information (phone, email, etc.) to students for any reason and should not contact a student outside of Kids Count hours.

3. Dress Code

- a. Volunteers are expected to dress modestly and appropriately. Low cut shirts, short shorts, sagging pants, etc. should not be worn.
- b. Many days outside activities are planned so please dress accordingly.
- c. If you are not dressed appropriately, staff will have to ask you to leave the site.

4. Abuse and Neglect Reporting

- a. It is required that all volunteers notify a staff member of any suspected physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a student. It is better to be safe than sorry! Please notify staff of any concerning statements or actions made by students.

5. Pictures and Social Media

- a. Kids Count has a Facebook page, a volunteer Facebook page, and Instagram that we encourage all volunteers to be a part of! If you have pictures or videos that would be great for us to post on these pages, please send them to the program director at your location.
- b. Please ask kids before taking their picture and only take pictures at appropriate times that are not distracting students from other tasks (i.e. while playing outside)
- c. Volunteers are prohibited from posting pictures or videos of students on their personal social media pages.
- d. Volunteers are prohibited from being friends with Kids Count students on social media, even after your time as a volunteer
- e. Volunteers are prohibited from messaging or responding to messages from students on social media

Programming Specific Guidelines

1. Homework Time Procedures

- a. Assist the staff in checking all of the students' backpacks and folders, even if the students say that they do not have homework. Reading logs count as homework! If you have any questions, please ask a staff member.

- b. It is so important to encourage the students throughout this time. If they do not want to do their homework, please try to encourage them. If they are still not willing, let a staff member know.
- c. Rather than giving a student the answer automatically, direct his/her thinking so s/he can discover the answer on his/her own.
 - i. Example: "What do you think the answer may be?"
- d. Please make sure the students are doing the homework, and you aren't doing it for them! Ask them questions like, what should we do first, what do we do next, what do you think, etc. so that kids are thinking through the process. Please do not give them the answers, but help guide them through the process.
- e. If students are struggling to read the directions, questions, or sany passages, please do not just read it for them. You can help them along, take turns reading sentences, etc., but please do not do it for them. Most of the time, the student is capable of more than they are showing! If they are struggling and shut down, you may read for them to help get them back on track.
- f. Build the student's self-confidence.
- g. Praise your student honestly and frequently. Attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance. Accentuate the positive; minimize the negative. Everyone makes mistakes. Let the student know that making mistakes is a normal part of learning.
 - i. Example: "Great job trying that math problem! I'm so proud that you kept trying even when it was hard!"
- h. Students love to tell stories and get off task, please do your best to keep them on task.

2. Tutoring

- a. Tutoring will take place twice a week at each site. This is one of our biggest needs that volunteers can help meet! If you are able to tutor Monday – Thursday, we really need your help.
- b. Tutoring is done one-on-one or in small groups and we will place you with the same student each week, unless your student is absent.
- c. We use the UFLI curriculum which is a researched literacy intervention. Training is provided directly by UF. If you have questions please reach out

to your site's program director.

3. Behavior and Discipline

- a. Many of our students come from hard places and can have challenging behaviors.
- b. We expect all students to respect and listen to our volunteers. Please let a staff member know if a student is not listening to you, especially during your individualized tutoring time. We cannot help if you don't make us aware and if the student isn't listening then they likely aren't benefiting from the program.
- c. All discipline issues are the staff's responsibility but we do expect you to assist with simple issues such as behaviors that hinder the safety of the child, a child not listening, etc. It is okay to tell them no!
- d. We utilize a lot of positive discipline practices at Kids Count! If you see a student doing something positive or working hard, please let us know so we can reward him/her!
- e. Please do not give the students candy or other purchased treats. If you'd like to reward a student please let staff know and we will help you recognize their hard work!

Final Reminders

- 1. What you put into this experience is what you will get out of it- be intentional in getting to know our students! They are a lot of fun!
- 2. It takes time to build relationships. Volunteering consistently will help with this!
- 3. You are making a difference!! Our students need your support and while it may not seem like it in the moment, over time your work with them will pay off!