

Volunteering in an Early Learning Facility

The Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) recognizes that volunteers in early learning facilities are a valuable resource. If early learning programs implement and support volunteers in their facilities, there are certain requirements that must be met. This document highlights these requirements.

About Volunteers

- All volunteers are considered early learning providers that are not to be left alone with children and must be under the supervision of program staff at all times. [WAC 110-300-0005](#)
- All volunteers in licensed early learning programs must be 14 years of age or older. [WAC 110-300-0100\(10\)](#)
 - If under the age of 18, volunteers must have written permission from their parent or guardian. [WAC 110-300-0100\(10\)](#)
- Some volunteers must have the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine or proof of immunity. To learn more about this requirement, [read the update on House Bill 1638](#).
 - *Centers:* All volunteer types in licensed child care centers are required to provide immunization records indicating that they have received the MMR vaccine or have proof of immunity.
 - *Family Homes:* The MMR vaccination or proof of immunity is not applicable to volunteers in licensed family child care homes.

Ongoing Volunteers and Occasional Volunteers

Licensed programs determine the **type** of volunteer they are allowing into their program and the volunteer must meet the requirements as listed below.

Ongoing Volunteers

- Ongoing volunteers must be under the continuous oversight of a lead teacher, program supervisor, center director, assistant director, assistant teacher or family home licensee.
- Ongoing volunteers **can** count in ratio when all the requirements below are met:
 - Must complete a portable background check per [WAC 110-300-0100\(10\)\(c\)\(i\)](#).
 - Complete health and safety requirements outlined in [WAC 110-300-0106\(4-10\)](#) prior to being in ratio.
 - Must complete a tuberculosis (TB) test per [WAC 110-300-0105](#).

Occasional Volunteers

- Occasional volunteers must be under the continuous oversight of a lead teacher, program supervisor, center director, assistant director, assistant teacher or family home licensee.
- Occasional volunteers **do not** count in ratio.



Chart of Volunteer Requirements

Volunteer Type	Training Requirements <u>WAC 110-300-0106</u>	Background Check	Counts in Ratio	Examples
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizing and Reporting Abuse Emergency Preparedness Prevention of Shaking Baby Syndrome Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness Safe Sleep: only if volunteering in an infant room Food Handlers Permit: only required for those who will prepare or serve food 	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent that takes children to the bathroom on field trips Anyone who counts in ratio and is not compensated (e.g., household members)
Occasional	<p>No requirements unless volunteers will be in an infant room or plan to prepare or serve food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Sleep: only if volunteering in an infant room Food Handlers Permit: only required for those who will prepare or serve food 	No	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College student observing or supporting a learning environment Monthly librarian visit Classroom help

Frequently Asked Questions

What are college students considered?

College students or other student volunteers (e.g., high school students) are occasional volunteers when they are observers or helpers in the learning environment. In this situation, they must not have unsupervised access to children and do not need a background check or training requirements ([WAC 110-300-0100\(10d\)](#)). In the event a program wants a college student to be an ongoing volunteer and to count in ratio, they must complete all requirements noted above for ongoing volunteers prior to counting in ratio.

What is unsupervised access?

Unsupervised access occurs when an individual is left alone with a child receiving early learning services and is not within constant visual and hearing range of the early learning provider, an employee authorized by DCYF or a relative or guardian of the child. [WAC 110-06-0010](#)

Do volunteers become staff after a certain amount of hours?

As long as the individual is not compensated, they remain a volunteer.

Additional Questions?

If you have questions about volunteers, please contact your local licensor.

