

High Point VILLAGE

"Recognizing Abilities, Not Disabilities"

Volunteer Handbook



Our Mission is to create a village where individuals with intellectual disabilities can live, learn, work, worship and achieve their full potential.

We provide activities that promote, develop and enrich the lives of our villagers.

Who We Are

High Point Village, Lubbock, Texas is a faith-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization developed for the purpose of providing an enrichment facility and residential living community for individuals with special needs. High Point Village enriches the lives of individuals with special needs through a variety of vocational, educational, social, and motivational activities.

Who We Serve

Individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

What We Offer

Programs and activities to enrich the lives of our Villagers and their caregivers. Referral sources that help families across the South Plains learn about and obtain assistance for their individual needs and plan for their future needs.

Volunteer Dress Code

Volunteers are expected to present themselves in a professional manner at all times. The dress code is casual; however, please keep in mind the following:

The following clothes will not be permitted:

- Excessively ripped, patched or stained clothing
- Clothing with offensive language or displays of alcohol, tobacco, etc.
- Excessively short, tight or revealing clothing.
- Exposed midriff or undergarments
- No Sleeveless shirts
- Shorts must be knee length or longer.

10 Volunteer Tips

1. Be on time
2. Know your responsibilities for the day. Ask what you need to do or how you can help.
3. Talk to the Villagers! Be aware of communication differences some may have difficulty expressing themselves.
4. Put away all mobile devices during volunteering.
5. Please give a 24 HOUR NOTICE if you will not be able to volunteer when you are scheduled.
6. Ask for help if you need help with something.
7. Be aware of each student's individual differences and needs. Don't do for them what they can do for themselves.
8. Help with set up.
9. Help with clean up.
10. Have FUN!

Examples of People First Language

- People with disabilities
- She/He receives special education services
- Individuals with autism or autism spectrum disorder
- Individuals with Down Syndrome
- Individuals with an intellectual disability
- Individuals with a learning disability

Working with People with Disabilities

- Never do for a villager what they can do for themselves. One of our goals is fostering independence. Encourage them to try. Reward success. Perfection is not our goal. Give them time to process the information and figure out a way to do something.
- Keep language simple and talk slower than usual to allow for slower processing time. Talk in a normal tone of voice; not too loud or too soft.
- Respect the individual's disability
- Structure is important and organization is a must for our Villagers.

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Definition

Any physical or mental condition in which an infant or person develops more slowly in the areas of language development, thought processing, personal, social and/or movement skills. The delay may be mild or severe and may be in one area or several. Specific examples in each area include delays in movement skills, (interacting with other people), and/or caring for self (brushing teeth, dressing, etc.)

Common Characteristics

It is usual for the person to have challenges in feeding and eating, toilet training, language development, behavior, hearing, vision, muscle strength or coordination and socialization.

Suggested Helps

1. Ignore temper tantrums (anticipate and avoid situations which may cause frustration)
2. Praise good behavior ("Good job, Susie, I am proud of how well you waited for your turn.")
3. Teach skills through playing with toys and games (practice sharing, learning to use the toys appropriately, taking turns, learning social skills by playing tea party, house or non-contact sports, etc.)

4. Provide opportunities to use all 5 senses and to use more than one sense at a time (such as toys that make sounds, are brightly colored and have interesting textures)
5. Provide play that involves the higher functioning senses of the individual person (read with the person who enjoys reading, etc.)

SENSORY INTEGRATION DISORDER

Definition

Sensory integration describes the brain's ability to process information received from the senses (touch, smell, taste, vision, hearing and movement). In the condition known as Sensory Integration Disorder, the brain and the senses cannot connect in the normal manner. It may be compared to a traffic jam in the brain, where some of the sensory information gets stuck in traffic, and the brain does not get the information it needs to respond correctly.

Common Characteristics

Sensory Integration Disorder involves very complicated parts of the brain that control coordination, attention, emotions, memory and higher level functions. Any or all of these areas may be affected, making it difficult to form a list of symptoms. The more common problems include: distractibility, hyperactivity, uninhibited behavior, sensitivity to light or sound, playing repetitively, clumsy behavior, asking about sounds that most people ignore (refrigerator hum, fan, distant airplane, etc.), difficulty with sleeping patterns, inability to calm or control themselves when agitated, mood swings, an abnormal response to sound or touch, and movement difficulty (not wanting to climb up steps or stand on uneven ground).

Suggested Helps

1. Remember the person can be awkward – try to keep him from falling (no rugs or toys lying on the ground)
2. Don't touch the person if he dislikes being touched, or learn the method of touch that is comfortable to the person
3. Remember that the person might not respond to his name or to simple requests (be patient)
4. Help the person to regain control if he starts to lose control of his behavior (suggest a time away from the action, talk to him calmly, remove him from the situation)
5. Try to keep the environment free of excess noise and odors; turn down the lights if they are too bright
6. Expect mood swings and irritability (again, be patient)

DOWN SYNDROME

Definition

A genetic disease also called Trisomy 21 that is caused by having one extra chromosome (group of genes).

Common Characteristics

- Low muscle tone (muscles are relaxed and 'floppy')

- Eyes may slant upwards and have small skin folds on the inner corners
- May have problems with vision
- Tongue may protrude from the mouth
- Flattened nose
- Only 1 creased-line on the palm
- Soft, fine, sparse hair
- Medical problems with the heart and bowels are common
- Some degree of developmental delay may be present
- A social and friendly nature

Suggested Helps

1. Focus on the person's strengths and not weaknesses
2. Find tasks and activities in which the person will be able to succeed thereby reducing frustration
3. Help others to accept the person with Down syndrome
4. Help the person's development of physical abilities by engaging him or her in games that practice running, skipping, jumping or arts and crafts with painting, drawing, and cutting (with blunt scissors)
5. Encourage play opportunities with other individuals.

AUTISM

Definition

A specific type of developmental disorder that causes various languages, social and behavioral problems for affected infants and persons. It is often described as a tendency of the person to withdraw into oneself, ignoring much of what goes on in the environment.

Common Characteristics

- Moderate to severe speech problems (unusual speech volume, rate or pitch, speaking in monotone, repetitions)
- Engages in little if any imaginative play (pretending, etc.)
- may have problems making friends or interacting with others
- Makes unusual repeated movements (spinning, head banging, rocking, etc.)
- becomes attached to a specific object
- May have some degree of developmental delay, from mild to severe; others have

Suggested Helps

1. If physical contact upsets the person, avoid touching him
2. Allow person to have favorite object and help him keep it with him
3. Encourage good behavior by providing a reward such as a favorite treat, special attention or a desired privilege
4. Don't force person to play with others but encourage awareness of and interaction with others as he is able
5. Don't expect the person to participate when imagination is required
6. Social interactions are difficult; don't take it personally if there is a lack of "connection" or warmth

CEREBRAL PALSY

Definition

A group of various disorders that all cause problems for individuals in the areas of posture and movement, especially with abnormal muscle tone (either too relaxed and floppy or too tight and tense) and poor coordination.

Common Characteristics

- Poor posture and movement (trouble with walking, running, sitting up)
- Trouble with eating, speaking, and control of saliva
- Vision and hearing problems
- There may be some challenges with cognitive and intellectual abilities
- Problems with daily activities and self-care (bathing, dressing, toileting, Hygiene, etc.)

Suggested Helps

1. Assist the person with movement and keep him safe from falling or injury (no rugs or toys or other objects left on the ground, use caution with steps or uneven ground, etc.)
2. Help the person with eating as needed
3. Find out the person's self-care limitations (example, using bathroom) and help him with these activities as needed
4. Encourage the person to participate in activities he is capable of doing
5. Help the person to 'fit in' and to be accepted by other individuals
6. Speak clearly and allow him to see your face if he has hearing problems
7. Use soft cloth to wipe drool if needed