



Volunteer Handbook

www.kidscountalachuacounty.org

Executive Director: Keri Neel

Rawlings Elementary: Faith Mission
3701 NE 15th St. Gainesville, FL 32609
(352) 244-9723

Director: Tiffany Morrow

Williams Elementary: The Early Learning Academy @ Duval
2106 NE 8th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32641
(352) 244-9901

Director: Brianna Young

Mailing Address: Kids Count in Alachua County, Inc.
P.O. Box 358272 Gainesville, Florida 32635-8272

Why Kids Count?

Because...

- Fewer than 50% of Alachua County low-income students who entered 9th grade five years ago will graduate this year.
- Rawlings is one of five Alachua County elementary schools with over 85% of students coming from low-income families.
- Research has shown that if a child falls behind in reading as early as first grade, without intervention, there is little chance he will ever catch up to his peers.
- Standardized test scores of third grade students are used to predict future prison population.
- We commit to work passionately to provide the intervention needed to help our students succeed.
- We all lose when children don't grow and develop into all they can be.
- Kids Count is research based.
- We provide students one-on-one literacy tutoring with trained tutors.
- We work with the whole child to inspire a love of reading and learning in our students through character development education and special enrichment activities.

You make a difference!

The Kids Count Vision

The vision of Kids Count in Alachua County, Inc., a nonprofit organization, is that all elementary children in the community who need extra support to succeed in school and life will have that opportunity. In pursuit of this vision, Kids Count partners with schools, churches and other organizations to offer highly effective programs that inspire hope, enhance learning, improve confidence and build life skills. Kids Count provides funding, volunteers and expertise for the programs it supports.

A Message from the Founder of Kids Count

“Our dream for our students is the same dream we have for our own children, to be recognized for their strengths, to learn from their weakness, and to be seen as a person of infinite potential.”

Sarah Brown Wessling, a high school English teacher in Johnston, Iowa & winner of the 2010 National Teacher of the Year Award

This is our dream, too, within Kids Count in Alachua County. Whether we're supporting an after school program such as Kids Count at Faith UMC, collaborating with others to launch a new garden at Rawlings Elementary, or building relationships in the community to help support and improve our schools, our focus is always on Ms. Wessling's dream. Our mission, helping children reach their full potential, provides the motivation we need to work very hard to build and support highly effective programs for the elementary students we serve. The Kids Count board is thankful for all the committed volunteers and donors who make our programs possible. Please remember – we can't serve the children without folks like you giving their time, talent and treasure.

Ward Simonton, Ph.D

Board of Directors:

Dorene Ross, Ph. D., Board President, *Professor, University of Florida, College of Education*

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Bryan Myers, *Associate Professor, UF Agriculture Education and Communication*

Rahkiah Brown, Reading Pal Coordinator, United Way of North Central Florida

Staff

Keri Neel; Executive Director

Brianna Young; Program Director – Williams/Duval Site

Tiffany Morrow; Program Director - Rawlings Site

Robin Desue; Program Assistant

Jacy Jones; Program Assistant

Joy Kuykendall; Program Assistant

Program Structure

The Kids Count program combines research-based, effective literacy tutoring, character development, and community enrichment activities. In this way, Kids Count fulfills its mission of meeting the needs of the whole child. There are three distinct components of the Kids Count after school program:

Literacy and Academic Tutoring: Children in the Kids Count program receive one-on-one tutoring from the University of Florida College of Education students. Key features of the tutoring structure is the use of a successful tutoring structure, ongoing process monitoring of student performance and achievement, lessons designed to meet the needs of each student, and hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities. Tutors are trained in effective tutoring methods, and are fully supported by the Kids Count staff.

Character Development: All children in the Kids Count program participate in activities designed to help reinforce positive character traits. Staff and volunteers facilitate this learning through engaging activities that encourage student participation and generalization of key character traits.

Enrichment: Enrichment activities provide opportunities for children to see that learning can be fun! These activities enable children in Kids Count to experience aspects of learning in which they traditionally had little access. Enrichment activities generally occur on Fridays and will sometimes be facilitated by various community and student groups. Children can expect to be immersed in art projects, field trips, science experiments and investigations, historical explorations, technology-focused projects, and much more!

When these components are combined, the result is a successful and effective community-based after school program. However, a large part of the program's success is you, the volunteer. Your time, energy, and passion for children continue to make Kids Count a place where kids want to be!

Volunteer Opportunities

There are several ways you can volunteer:

- Homework Help
- Art Projects
- Preparing Snacks
- Outdoor Activities
- Performing Arts
- Reading with Students
- Friday Enrichment Activities
- Facility Maintenance
- Organizing and Prepping Materials
- Maintaining the Library
- Gardening
- Cooking Lessons
- Science Projects
- Chaperoning Field Trips
- Playing Games

We will find a way to utilize your gifts and talents!

An easy way for you or your organization to help Kids Count is to organize a supply drive.

- School Supplies and Books
- School Uniforms
- Art and Scrapbook Supplies
- Garden Supplies
- Playground Equipment
- Board Games and Puzzles
- Healthy Snacks
- Cleaning Supplies

Guideline and Information

Qualities of a successful Volunteer

Our definition of a volunteer is a dedicated individual who has the heart and desire to help students that need that extra support in school and life to succeed. Someone who is reliable, loves to work with children, praises the strengths while helping to improve the weaknesses, & who communicates with us so we can best meet the needs of our students.

Volunteer Application

Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application EVERY school year. Statements found to be false will be immediate cause for dismissal. Kids Count reserves the right to refuse volunteer placement to individuals with disqualifying criminal convictions. All volunteers are required to complete an application, background screening, and attend orientation before beginning.

Safety and Discipline

Please refer any safety and or disciplinary issues to the Kids Count staff. All discipline is the responsibility of staff members.

Signing In-Out

All volunteers must sign-in and sign-out each time they arrive at Kids Count. We recommend that you keep track of your hours in a personal log for future reference.

Confidentiality

Work with students is always confidential. We don't mind you sharing your experiences with others, but it is very important not to use full names of students outside of Kids Count. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, a family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, please discuss them with staff.

Reporting

Any volunteer, who believes bullying or harassment has occurred, or suspects child abuse, should immediately report it to the Kids Count Staff.

Attendance/Punctuality

It is imperative that you be prompt, dependable and regular in attendance. Reliability is expected because the staff plans for volunteer assistance. If you know you will be absent, please let the Kids Count Staff know in advanced. If an emergency arises on your scheduled day please contact a staff member at your volunteer site ASAP.

Rawlings – Tiffany Morrow (517) 927-1501

Williams – Brianna Young (352) 281-8825

Guidelines and Information

Continued

Conduct/Dress Code

As a volunteer, you are a role model. Please make sure your conduct and attire is not a distraction to the students (no sagging pants, no bare midriffs, no low cut shirts, no shorts that are above your middle finger when hands are by your side.) If you have any questions about appropriate dress, please ask a Staff member. Cell phones should be put on vibrate and should not be seen while working with students. Never take pictures of students.

Emergencies

In case of an emergency or if you have concerns for students' safety, please report the concern immediately to a staff member.

If you need help

If you need more instruction in order to perform a task or wish to change your assignment, please discuss it with a staff member.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a volunteer, you will be asked to sign the following Volunteer Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the Code or risk being dismissed from your volunteer placement.

1. I will complete and submit a new Volunteer Application every school year.
2. I will sign-in and out each time I volunteer.
3. I never be alone with a student.
4. I will maintain confidentiality of all students' information.
5. I will share any concerns I have related to student welfare and safety with staff.
6. I will report any discipline concerns to the Staff while following the rules, procedures, and discipline policy of Kids Count.
7. I will support the educational plans of the Kids Count program and will make any suggestions for changes to our Staff.
8. As a role model for the students, I will dress and act appropriately including silencing phones and not texting while working with students.
9. I agree only to do what is in the best interest of every child with whom I come into contact.

Suggestions for working with children

Be enthusiastic! Have fun! If you enjoy yourself, your joy will be contagious.
It will communicate a love of learning to our children

- ✓ Introduce yourself and tell the students why you are here and when you'll be volunteering. Learn the student's name and how to pronounce and spell it. It's a good idea to exchange names in writing. Get acquainted. Find out what interests the student has; tell him some things about you. Try to establish rapport, but be patient. It may take time for you both to feel comfortable. By your words and actions, let the student know that you care.
- ✓ Be dependable. You are modeling responsible behavior for the students. If you know you will be absent, please let a staff member know as soon as possible.
- ✓ Build the student's self-confidence. 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.
- ✓ Students love to tell stories and get off task. Listen attentively, but also keep the student focused.
- ✓ Help the student set specific goals that s/he can achieve. Break down long-range goals into achievable increments.
- ✓ Keep your direction and explanations short and very explicit. Try to be very specific and tell the students what you want them to do (rather than what not to do).
- ✓ Rather than giving a student the answer automatically, direct his/her thinking so s/he can discover the answer on his/her own.
- ✓ Do not get discouraged if you do not see immediate, significant changes in the student's attitude or academic achievement. His present situation has probably been building over time, and it will take time to change it. Believe that you ARE making a difference.
- ✓ Volunteers must always work under the supervision of Kids Count staff members. Make sure you are working in an open, visible area and do not allow yourself to be in a situation where your actions might be misconstrued.

Word of Encouragement

The 7 to 1 rule suggests that it takes 7 specific positive, encouraging and affirming statements to offset each 1 redirection or reprimand of a child.

Praise goes a long way. Children need more than the traditional “Good,” “Very Good,” and “Fine” if encouragement is the ultimate purpose. We have found great success when praise is specific, for example, “I like how you read that story,” rather than general such as, “good job.” For ideas of how to start, see this helpful list:

Your handwriting is really nice
This kind of work shows how focused you are.
Thank you very much.
Now you’ve figured it out.
Wow!
Congratulations!
Way to solve that problem & not give up.
I’m proud of the progress you’ve made.
I’m impressed with the way you’re working.
I’m impressed with the way you’re thinking.
I’m very proud of the way you worked (are working) today.
That’s a good point.
Everyone’s working so hard.
You must be proud of your work.
That’s quite an improvement.
You are a super speller.
Why don’t you show the class?
Much better.
Thank you for (sitting down, being quite, getting right to work, etc.)
Keep up the good work.
You make it look easy.
You’re on the right track now.
That looks like it’s going to be great report.
What neat work.
My goodness, how impressive!
You really outdid yourself today.
I’m impressed with the way you are working together.

(Name) got right down to work.
Terrific voice inflections!
It looks like you put a lot of work into this.
Beautiful artwork!
That’s an interesting way of looking at it.
Excellent pauses at periods.
It’s a pleasure to teach when you work like this.
I knew you could do it!
That’s the right answer.
I appreciate your help.
Now you’ve got the hang of it.
Marvelous!
That’s a good observation.
That’s coming along nicely.
That’s one way of looking at it.
That’s an interesting point of view.
Super, you remembered to (blank)!
Thank you for raising your hand (name) what is it?
Nice going on regrouping.
(Name) is really going to town.
I see the way (name) or (the class) has settled down.
(Name) is paying attention.
That’s clever.
That’s a very creative story in your journal.
That’s right! (Name) has it!

Kids Count will not have programming on days when students do not have school.