



Volunteer: Application Process, Age Limits, Training

We are very grateful that you wish to volunteer! In order to provide the best volunteer experience, we have developed these processes and guidelines:

We ask that all volunteers:

- ✓ Complete an application which includes a Holds Harmless Agreement and Photo Release.
- ✓ Agree to a Child Abuse Clearance and a Criminal Background Check.
- ✓ Attend volunteer trainings as they are scheduled.

Completed paperwork will be filed securely.

Youth ages 13-18 may volunteer in a staff supervised setting with permission of their parent or guardian. Youth need to complete an application and attend any scheduled trainings.

After you have completed and submitted your application, you will meet with the Volunteer Coordinator to schedule your first volunteer date!

Volunteer: Best Practices

UPT has had the extraordinary privilege of working with many dedicated volunteers. Over time we have identified some practices that make the volunteer experience better for everyone:

- ✓ Volunteers who work directly with children cannot begin volunteer service without Child Abuse Clearance.
- ✓ Sign in when your shift begins and sign out when it ends.
- ✓ When you are on site, wear a volunteer lanyard which identifies you as a volunteer.
- ✓ Check in with a staff member when you begin your work for any updates or information.
- ✓ If you are unable to fulfill your volunteer obligation, please notify staff as soon as possible.
- ✓ Attend monthly Volunteer Meetings regularly. (Second Tuesday of most months.)

Safety

- ✓ Dress comfortably and wear clothing appropriate for your task...remember, young children can be messy!

- ✓ If you work on a hot day, it is important to drink plenty of water. We will always have water available.
- ✓ In the event of an incident, volunteers are expected to notify a staff member immediately and to file an incident report which can be obtained from a staff member. Incidents include accidents, violent actions of any kind or verbal disagreements which escalate.
- ✓ If you are injured at one of our sites, please NOTIFY A STAFF MEMBER IMMEDIATELY!
- ✓ If there is an emergency and no staff member present, please call 911.
- ✓ You may store your personal belongings in a dedicated spot at the site where volunteer. Please don't bring valuables or large amounts of cash with you when you volunteer.

Working With Other Volunteers and Staff

- ✓ Kindness is the key!
- ✓ As a rule, we do not comment on the clothing, hair, or any other points of appearance to another person. An example of this is: "You would look pretty if you smiled more." These types of comments are not compliments and are not welcome at UPT.
- ✓ We do not gossip about other volunteers or staff. Gossip is a polite form of character assassination and unwelcome at UPT.

Volunteer: Working with Children

Child Safety Guidelines for Urban Promise Trenton Volunteers

To reduce the risk of child abuse and unfounded claims of abuse, all volunteers should observe the policies outlined below. Remember; when you work with children, it is about their experience first and foremost.

Touching Policy

- ✓ Physical affection such as hugging between workers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in the ministry setting.
- ✓ Touching should be initiated by the child or youth and should be a response to the child's need for comfort, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based on the adult's emotional need.
- ✓ ***A child's preference not to be touched at all should be respected at all times.***
- ✓ Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child or youth. However, some forms of affection, such as sitting in a volunteer's lap, are not appropriate for a child or teen.
- ✓ Touching and affection should only be given when in the presence of other adults or youth workers.
- ✓ In general, adults should not accompany a child to the bathroom unless it is an emergency. Two adult workers should be present if a child needs help with changing clothes.
- ✓ Inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior should be reported to the

Executive Director, Program Director, Site Director or Volunteer Coordinator.

Classroom Management

- ✓ To reduce the risk of child abuse and unfounded claims of abuse, volunteers should not be alone with students. If a 1 on 1 situation is required during a tutoring session for example, the door to the room should be open at all times.
- ✓ Many of the students we serve have learning challenges or are neurodivergent or are affected by ongoing trauma. These students often have different learning styles which require creativity and imagination.
- ✓ UPT does not “shame” children in front of their peers in a classroom setting. There are no “bad” children.
- ✓ We do not raise our voices in the classroom.
- ✓ UPT supports a policy of **redirection** which is part of our training for volunteers.
- ✓ If a child is displaying disruptive behavior that cannot be resolved by you, contact a staff member for assistance.
- ✓ If you are frustrated, get a staff member to step in and take the time to cool down before returning to the classroom.
- ✓ Corporal punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain is unacceptable and cause for immediate termination as a volunteer.
- ✓ If a volunteer encounters a situation that includes escalated physical violence and/or multiple children who are acting out (or misbehaving), they should seek additional help from a staff member.

Outside of the Classroom

- ✓ Informal contact (phone calls, letters, face-to-face contact) between adult workers and youth that is not connected to official UrbanPromise Trenton activities is acceptable **ONLY IF** the child’s parents and UPT administrative staff have given their permission. **UPT requires that the Volunteer Coordinator be notified of such activities via email, text, or phone call.**
- ✓ No adult worker is to be romantically or sexually involved with a child or teen worker.
- ✓ If you as a volunteer elect to transport children to or from UPT activities, please be aware that it is at your own risk and is allowable only if the child’s parents have given their permission. When providing transportation for an UPT event, volunteers will be asked to sign a Hold Harmless form. This form is part of the application packet.
- ✓ All workers must report if a minor discusses harming him/herself or others, committing a crime, or having been abused, to the Executive Director, Program Director Site Leader or Volunteer Coordinator.
- ✓ Any person who observes violation of UrbanPromise Trenton’s guidelines or has reasonable suspicion of inappropriate activity is required to report these concerns to an appropriate leader.

Communication with Staff

When working with children, anything can happen on a given day. Most of the times it does not rise to the level of staff intervention on the day. However, you may have an observation about a child that you

wish to share please do. You can speak to a Site Director or Volunteer Coordinator, or any other staff member can help. If you email staff about your observations, please email the Site Director and the Volunteer Coordinator. We know that you care about these kids and your work with them gives us insight to their daily lives which will help us provide the best support possible.

Termination of Activity with UPT

- ✓ UPT reserves the right to terminate a volunteer's activities with UPT if a volunteer disregards UPT Volunteer Guidelines on a regular basis.
- ✓ Yelling at or shaming a student is grounds for immediate termination.