



I Support Community Volunteer & Staff Code of Conduct and Child Protection Standards

As an organization working with children, our primary concern is for their safety. All lead volunteers and staff working with children for I Support Community must review and adhere by the standards set forth in this document. This document outlines guidelines for acceptable interactions and behaviors between staff, volunteers and children, and between children and other peers as well as the procedures for child abuse reporting.

The federal definition of child abuse and neglect includes the following:

- **Physical abuse:** physical injury as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.
- **Sexual abuse:** any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, or commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic material.
- **Emotional abuse:** any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats, and rejection.
- **Neglect:** failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

Guidelines

Below are guidelines for acceptable interactions and behaviors between staff, volunteers and children, and between children and other peers.

1. One staff person should never be in seclusion with one child.
2. There should be no physical contact between the children and the volunteers/staff other than high fives or when necessary for providing assistance, if requested with Inside Out Club activities (i.e. help put on goggles, help with cutting).
3. To protect Inside Out Club volunteers, I Support Community staff and program participants, at no time during the Inside Out Club program may a volunteer be alone with a single child where he or she cannot be observed by another volunteer. As volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in such a way that other staff can see them.
4. All staff and volunteers should follow the outlined bathroom break procedures. First, a volunteer should check the restroom to be sure it is empty and safe. That volunteer

remains in the hallway outside of the restroom while the child uses the restroom. Another volunteer keeps eyes on the first volunteer at all times during this process, so an adult is never alone with a child. A volunteer may also, instead send 3 children together to use the restroom. For weekend Inside Out Club events, the child's parent or guardian attending the event with them should escort the child to the bathroom.

5. Volunteers and staff shall not abuse children in any way, including:
 - a. **Physical abuse:** slapping, pinching, etc.
 - b. **Mental/Emotional abuse:** teasing, humiliating, degrading, threatening, shaming, cruelty, etc.
 - c. **Sexual abuse:** touching or speaking inappropriately
6. Volunteers and staff shall use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement instead of competition, comparison and criticism.
7. Physical restraint is only used if necessary to prevent one child from harming him or herself or another child. If physical restraint is used it should be documented in an incident report and reviewed with the Executive Director.
8. Volunteers and staff will respond to children with respect and treat all children equally regardless of race, gender, culture, economic level of the family, or disability.
9. Volunteers and staff will respect children's rights not to be touched or looked at in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. Children should never be touched in areas that would be covered by a bathing suit.
10. Volunteers and staff are not to transport children at any times.
11. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one's personal life, and any kind of harassment in the presence of children, parents, or other volunteers is prohibited.
12. Volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's physical or mental health. If in doubt, an expert should be consulted prior to volunteering.
13. Volunteers and staff will portray a positive role model for children by maintaining a positive attitude, being patient, courteous, and tactful.
14. Volunteers should not give excessive gifts to the children. All gifts should be cleared through the Project Coordinator of I Support Community.
15. Volunteers must appear clean, neat and appropriately attired.

16. Under no circumstances should a volunteer release a child to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian.
17. Volunteers and staff are to report any conduct violations by any other volunteer or staff to the Project Coordinator of I Support Community.
18. Volunteers will act in a manner consistent with the mission of I Support Community.

Illinois Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873)

The Hotline operates 24 hours per day, 365 days a year. In the event the Program Coordinator or Executive Director is unable to make the report, any volunteer or staff member can call themselves. Reporters should be prepared to provide phone numbers where they may be reached throughout the day in case the Hotline must call back for more information.

Information the reporter should have ready to give to the Hotline:

1. Names, birth dates (or approximate ages), races, genders, etc. for all adult and child subjects.
2. Addresses for all victims and perpetrators, including current location.
3. Information about the siblings or other family members, if available.
4. Specific information about the abusive incident or the circumstances contributing to risk of harm—for example, when the incident occurred, the extent of the injuries, how the child says it happened, and any other pertinent information.

**If this information is not readily available, the reporter should not delay a call to the hotline.

Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

In the event of an accusation of child abuse, I Support Community will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

1. At the time of the first report or new allegations of child abuse or neglect, the staff/volunteer that it has been reported to will notify the Project Coordinator, who will review it with the Executive Director or his or her designate.
2. I Support Community will make a report in accordance with relevant local and state reporting requirements and will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved.
3. No ISC staff or volunteer will ever be prevented from making a report to DCFS on their own.

4. In the event the reported incident involves a program volunteer or staff member, the Executive Director will immediately, without exception, suspend the volunteer or staff person until an investigation is complete.
5. The parent or legal guardian of the child or children involved will be notified immediately in accordance with the direction of the relevant local or state authority. If more than one child is involved, I Support Community will contact them separately and will not disclose the other child involved.
6. Reinstatement of the volunteer or staff member will only occur after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the Executive Director or his or her designate.
7. All volunteers and staff should be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information and therefore should only discuss the incident with the Executive Director or his or her designate.

Acknowledgement

All volunteers and I Support Community acknowledge that they have read this document in its entirety and will adhere to the guidelines and procedures covered herein. This acknowledgement is in the form of a signature on the I Support Community Volunteer Release, Confidentiality Agreement, and Child Protection Agreement.

Signature: _____

Name & Role: _____

Date: ____/____/____