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*We are an AmeriCorps Seniors grantee funded through the FGP Program.*

**FGP Handbook Introduction**

As you have seen in the videos Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for seniors aged 55 and over to stay active by serving children and youth in their communities. When you volunteer, you’re not just helping others—you’re helping yourself. Volunteering leads to new discoveries and new friends. Plus, studies show that volunteering helps you live longer and promotes a positive outlook on life.

**Volunteers serve at thousands of local organizations that:**

* Help children learn to read and provide one-on-one tutoring
* Mentor troubled teenagers and young mothers
* Care for premature infants or children with disabilities
* Help children who have been abused or neglected

There is an orientation to the station or school site to be served.A placement interview attended by a NDSCD staff member, and an opportunity for the FGP to observe in the classroom in which they will serve.

Check-in procedures; introduction to station supervisors and staff supports: After this interview in which information of FGP expectations from volunteer station should be acquired, an orientation of the FGP Program Handbook, the rules and regulation; benefits; reporting and attendance; expectations and all aspects of stipends.

On Sept. 21, 1993, the National and Community Service Trust Act was signed into law. This bipartisan legislation created CNCS and AmeriCorps, merging them with Senior Corps programs and VISTA to form our agency. The signing of the Act ushered in a new era of citizen service in America.

Under **Orientation and Training of Foster Grandparent Volunteers Page 4:**

If accepted and before placement it is mandatory that all new Foster Grandparents will attend 20 hours of **pre-service** training orientation, of which **4 hours** is the first session. At this time the applicants will become familiar with the various operations of the program. The orientation includes: a detailed explanation of the Foster Grandparent policies and benefits, information regarding child development, recognition and reporting of child abuse~~,~~ completion of paperwork and getting acquainted with staff. Any Foster Grandparent who has been inactive for (1) year or longer must attend orientation again in order to be placed in a classroom.

Under **Foster Grandparent Assignments** **Page 7:**

A FGP must be willing to accept an assignment at any volunteer site. The site chosen by the Foster Grandparent staff, taking into account the following factors:

* + Which volunteer sites have openings and children requiring, mentoring
  + Where the FGP lives and what kind of transportation is available
  + What the FGP’s abilities, skills and personal preferences are

After the placement has been arranged, a visit to the volunteer site will be scheduled by FGP staff. The purpose of the placement visit is to introduce the FGP to the sited liaison, complete the placement agreement and familiarize the FGP with the volunteer site.

**Examples are of Foster Grandparent Activities:**

♣ Help with language development by talking and listening

♣ Ask open-ended questions, to encourage children to communicate

♣ Be positive

♣ Be accepting and non-judgmental regarding differences in appearances, behaviors, and backgrounds

♣ Support and assist in learning situations and therapy with assigned child per the Assignment Plan

♣ Assist each child to reach his/her maximum potential

♣ Arrange for positive social interaction with other children

♣ Assist with adjustment of new children to the school

Foster Grandparents in mixed classrooms (with their assigned children and others) should focus their attention on the children assigned to them. However, there will be some social interaction on the Foster Grandparent’s part with the other children. It would be impossible, inappropriate, and possibly harmful to ignore the other children. Foster Grandparents are responsible for keeping anything of personal value, and anything that could be dangerous to children, in a safe place away from the children. Foster Grandparents are expected to be clean and neat. Comfortable shoes and washable clothing that's appropriate for working with active and sometimes messy children are recommended. Each volunteer station has its own policies about food handling, health practices, discipline, safety issues, etc. It is the responsibility of each Foster Grandparent to learn and follow these rules. Any child abuse observed by Foster Grandparents must be reported to the volunteer site staff and the Foster Grandparent Program. Foster Grandparents should also report any evidence of possible abuse that they notice -- for example, habitual bruising or burns. Foster Grandparents are encouraged to attend appropriate training at their volunteer site. This will be considered paid time if the training and hours have been approved by Foster Grandparent Program staff.

Under **Children Served By Foster Grandparents** **Page 8:**

When a Foster Grandparent volunteer is assigned to a child, she should be made aware of the goals set for that child and what activities are involved to help achieve these goals. An individual Assignment Plan that identifies a child’s needs must be completed prior to a volunteer being placed at a school. Foster Grandparents are expected to provide the individual attention, unhurried help or personal care required by the particular special needs of the assigned mentee. Foster Grandparents serve in a variety of settings. However, all Foster Grandparents have the following responsibilities:

• To spend one-on-one time with assigned children

• To be dependable and call the volunteer site if they are going to be late or absent

• To keep promises and be good listeners Find ways to help and interact with children.

**It is important to**:

• Have a positive attitude

• Be flexible

• Communicate about problems

• Take a stress break when you need to

• Not let the children’s problems become your problems

Under the section **“Prohibited Activities” Page 13:**

Do not argue or disagree with other adults in front of children. If issues need to be discussed, they should be discussed privately. Do not engage in political activities, Foster Grandparents may not engage in any political activity during service hours.

**FOSTER GRANDPARENTS MUST NOT**

• Call children negative names or openly reject them

• Criticize children (instead, reinforce good behavior when it occurs)

• Yell at children for any reason

• Stay behind when children move to another area

• Treat children differently because of their sex or race

• Favor one child over others

Under **Disciplinary Action Page 14:**

It is the policy of The Foster Grandparent Program to abide by federal, state, and local laws governing confidentiality of mentee/client/and/or volunteer records or information. Because of the services The Foster Grandparent Program provides, client/mentee/volunteer confidentiality is an extremely important issue. Employees and volunteers of The Foster Grandparent Program must always be aware of their responsibility to protect mentee/client/family information when engaged in the collection, handling, or dissemination of any client/family information, including, but not limited to: identity, address, social security number, physical/psychological condition, emotional status and/or financial situation. Because The Foster Grandparent Program volunteers interact very closely with children and school personnel, volunteers shall at all times maintain the highest standards in terms of protecting the integrity of persons and the confidentiality of privileged communication/information obtained in the line of duty. Any disclosure of confidential or privileged communication/information without authorization is grounds for dismissal.

The Foster Grandparent Program is vitally interested in the professional development of its Foster Grandparent volunteers. Each Foster Grandparent volunteer is required to attend twenty (20) hours of pre-service orientation and after that twenty-four (24) hours per year of in-service training thereafter. Attendance at In-Service Trainings is **MANDATORY**. Foster Grandparents will receive a stipend to attend In-Service Trainings. If you cannot attend an In-Service Training for any reason, you are required to notify the Agency in advance. Failure to notify the office will result in your absence being unexcused. After 3 (three) unexcused absences, you will receive a warning letter. If any more absences are unexcused, you may be terminated from the Program.

Under **Timesheets** **Page 17:**

Foster Grandparents are expected to arrive at their volunteer site at the scheduled time. Time sheets should reflect the actual time spent one-on-one with children, the number of children you worked one-on-one with, and how many children you are with during lunch. Time sheets have an area for travel from home to school and school to home which is identified by the odometer reading. If meals are provided, please identify with (MP), if you purchased a meal at your location please identify with the cost of the meal.

**New Volunteer Foster Grandparent Volunteers Orientation Program**

Foster Grandparents help children develop skills, confidence, and strength to succeed in life. They advise, teach life skills, and give the consistent love and emotional support some children may not know. Foster Grandparents help children learn to read, provide one-on-one tutoring time, and guide children at critical times in their lives. Foster Grandparents may serve a minimum of 5 hours a week up to 40 hours per week in community organizations including faith-based groups, Head Start Centers, schools, and other youth facilities. Foster Grandparents help strengthen the community by providing youth services that community budgets cannot afford. They give their life experiences and their talent to improve the lives of children in need.

**Becoming a Foster Grandparent Volunteer**

And remember: When you volunteer, you’re not just helping others—you’re helping yourself. Volunteering leads to new discoveries and new friends. Plus, studies show that volunteering helps you live longer and promotes a positive outlook on life. So, get involved and join Foster Grandparents today!

**REQUIRED annual in-service training** - Need twenty-four (24) hours per year.

- We have Go-To meeting -training every two weeks one at 1:00 and 3:00 central time

- These trainings are accessible on the website and can be completed by each volunteer at their convenience.

- The volunteer must text or email us and let us know the date and training topic they completed.

**Assignment plans**, Each child we work with is required to have one, signed by both the Teacher and the volunteer

**Timesheets**, Monthly - Must be filled out – identifying the child – time worked with in 15 minute increments – supervised time about 25% – signed by Volunteer and Supervisor

Timesheets must be received by Us at the office

- to document the number of children the program is helping, - to document the number of volunteers we have, - and to document the number of hours the volunteers are working.

Volunteer 5 hrs weekly Minimum ( average )