

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Using volunteers in your setting

Volunteers can provide that much sought after extra pair of hands. You can create a more enriching and supportive environment for children and staff while providing volunteers with meaningful experiences and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Here are some tips to help you establish clear guidelines and use volunteers successfully.

1. **Clear policies and procedures:** Establish clear policies, procedures, roles and expectations. This will ensure consistency and sets clear boundaries for both volunteers and staff
2. **Screening and training:** Volunteers should undergo a screening process that includes background checks. If possible, include volunteers in training opportunities that are offered to staff e.g. health and safety, hygiene protocols, paediatric first aid, child protection and safeguarding, emergency procedures etc.
3. **Induction:** Provide an induction programme to familiarise volunteers with policies, procedures, safety protocols and the general operation of the setting. Lead people could meet with volunteers to discuss specialist areas such as safeguarding and behaviour
4. **Supervision and support:** Assign a staff member as a buddy for volunteers to ensure they have ongoing support, guidance and supervision. This will help to ensure that volunteers are aligned with your setting's goals and that children's safety is maintained
5. **Respect for diversity and inclusion:** Make it clear that volunteers should be inclusive and culturally sensitive in their interactions with all children, their families and staff
6. **Utilise skills:** Try to match their skills and interests with appropriate tasks e.g. someone with an arts background could help/lead creative activities



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7. **Confidentiality:** Ensure volunteers understand data protection and follow confidentiality policies. Stress the importance of confidentiality regarding children's personal information and any sensitive matters
8. **Appreciation and recognition:** Recognise the contributions of volunteers and demonstrate your appreciation for their time and effort.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- [Mentoring and Coaching in the Early Years](#) - factsheet

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna