

## **VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION GUIDE**

**WELCOME TO ERINOAKKIDS!**

***Please read all the information in the Orientation Guide before starting your first volunteer shift.***

Thank you for choosing ErinoakKids as your preferred place to volunteer. We truly appreciate your assistance and want you to know that your contribution plays a key role in our success. We trust that your time at ErinoakKids will be both fun and rewarding. One of the reasons that you were selected as a volunteer is that we believe that you share our Mission, Vision and Values.

### **Our Mission**

To help children and youth with physical, developmental and communication disabilities achieve optimal levels of independence, learning, health and well-being.

### **Our Vision**

Children and youth reaching their potential supported by a full continuum of integrated, family-centered services.

### **Our Values**

Accountability and Integrity, Collaboration, Continuous Learning, Efficiency and Effectiveness Family Centeredness, Leadership and Innovation, Professionalism, Respect and Trust

### **Quick Facts about ErinoakKids**

Since being founded in 1971, ErinoakKids has grown to be Ontario's largest Children's Treatment Centre serving more than 17,000 children and youth annually who have physical and developmental disabilities, autism, communication disorders, blindness/low vision and hearing loss.

Our mission is to help our clients achieve optimal levels of independence, learning, health and well-being. Clients and their families are from Peel, Halton, Dufferin and Waterloo/Wellington.

There are more than 750 staff members and 300 volunteers serving clients at our three locations:

- Halton (behind the Oakville Hospital)
- Brampton (McVean Drive and Castlemore Road)
- Mississauga (Central Parkway West and Burnhamthorpe Road)

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Our locations are mapped on our [website](#).

Our services include (but are not limited to): Assistive Devices Resource Services, Autism Services, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Infant Hearing Services and Screening, Recreation Therapy, Respite Services, Speech Language Therapy and Vision Services. Detailed information about our services can be found [here](#).

Our facilities include: accessible playgrounds, indoor and outdoor therapy areas, snoezelen rooms, staff and family resource area, and at our Brampton site, we have a 26-bed Respite facility and therapy pool.

### **General Volunteer Information**

- Parking at our sites is free for volunteers. Have your parking ticket validated at reception
- We maintain a scent-free environment and are allergy sensitive so no latex, nuts or shellfish
- Our dress code is business casual during the week; jeans and more casual wear is acceptable on Fridays and weekends
- Before coming to volunteer, check our website for information about closures/cancellations due to weather.
- Volunteers are encouraged to use the staff kitchen (fridge and microwaves) as well as staff washrooms and the Longo's Family Resource Centre
- Prior approval is required for taking photographs or using cell phones/other electronics while volunteering
- Contact and/or interaction with clients and families via social media is prohibited
- Volunteers may be asked to assist with equipment set up
- Volunteers may be asked to assist with equipment take down
- Volunteers may be asked to encourage and motivate clients
- Volunteers may be asked to participate and coach clients in group sessions
- Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions if unclear of directions
- Volunteers are respected and are to be respectful at all times
- Staff members, not volunteers, are responsible for personal care of clients
- Volunteers will not be asked to provide food or drinks to clients
- Volunteers will not be asked to provide transportation to clients in personal vehicles
- Volunteers will not be asked to remove any client(s) from their service area
- Volunteers who have missed two (2) shifts without notice, who are consistently late or who have performance issues will be suspended from service

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### **Expectations:**

- Please keep your Supervisor informed of any absences or changes to your availability
- Please maintain confidentiality and privacy of clients and families at all times
- Please wear your ID Volunteer badge at all times
- Please sign in and out at the reception desk
- Please arrive early or on time
- Please call or email your supervisor in advance if you cannot make a shift
- Please represent ErinoakKids in a positive manner at all times

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Clients and families expect the information they share to be kept in confidence.

Confidential personal health information includes:

- Identifying information about the client i.e. name and address
- Information regarding client diagnosis
- Family history
- Any information which could identify the client

### **How to apply for a posted Volunteer Opportunity**

- Emails outlining opportunities are sent to our volunteers. Please check the date, time and volunteer responsibilities to ensure you are available and qualified
- Reply to the email if you wish to be considered. If you respond, confirmation will be provided
- If there is nothing of interest there is no need to respond
- The program supervisor is given your contact information and he/she will email additional details before program start date. Keep this e-mail for future reference for the supervisor's email address.
- If you are going to be late, let your Supervisor know.
- Sign-in at the site when you arrive and obtain a volunteer pass. Sign-out and return the pass when you leave.
- Volunteer, have fun and track your hours

### **Confidential Volunteer Information and Tracking Hours**

Our secure database houses all information about volunteers with access limited to Volunteer Coordinators, Manager Volunteer Resources and volunteers who are dedicated to Volunteer Services.

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The information provided will be stored and held securely. All files will be deleted when the volunteer has been inactive for at least 12 months. Confirmation of volunteer hours will not be possible if the volunteers profile has been deleted.

Volunteers are responsible for submitting hours online via Time Tracker, found in the Volunteering section of our website, after each activity or monthly at a maximum. Volunteers can access a computer in the Longo's Family Resource Centre to submit hours when the centre is open.

### **Health and Safety**

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility. ErinoakKids is committed to providing a safe work environment for all staff, volunteers, clients and families and visitors to the sites. In the event you sustain an injury or have an accident, please inform your supervisor immediately and complete the Client/Visitor Incident Report. Please ensure you wear personal protective equipment if appropriated to the role (i.e. helmet during the skating program or gloves if cleaning toys or equipment). If you have a cough or fever, please contact your supervisor to cancel your shift.

- First Aid kits and eye washing stations are on site
- Use gloves and wipes for all cleaning, and use hand sanitizers regularly
- Trained First Aiders are on-site to use Automated External Defibrillators
- Regular safety inspections are conducted
- Health and Safety Boards are at each site - If you see a safety hazard, please report it

### **Know where to find**

- Telephone and Emergency Numbers- (reception and waiting areas)
- First Aid Kits- (reception and staff lounge)
- Eye Wash- (staff lounge)
- Automated External Defibrillator (AED)- (staff lounge, coat room, Brampton pool and respite)
- Fire Pull Stations
- Fire Extinguishers
- Emergency Exits
- Evacuation Meeting Area(signage to confirm designated meeting areas outside the buildings)

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### **Emergency Codes**

In the event of an emergency, ErinoakKids staff have been trained and are prepared.

Please receive direction from your program supervisor if you hear any of the following announced:

CODE RED – Fire & Disaster Evacuation Plans

CODE BLUE - Accident/Illness

CODE BLACK – Bomb Threat

CODE WHITE – Violent Person

CODE YELLOW – Missing Child – On-Site & Off-Site CODE ORANGE – Disaster

CODE BROWN – Chemical Spill

LOCKDOWN – No one let in or out of building

### **Work Environment**

ErinoakKids is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive working environment by treating our employees, volunteers and clients with respect, fairness and sensitivity. All individuals are asked to report Workplace Violence, Workplace Harassment and Sexual Harassment to the Volunteer Coordinator or Manager Volunteer Resources. All incidents will be investigated and dealt with in a fair and timely manner.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Ontario has developed mandatory accessibility standards that identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The five standards are: Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation, and Built Environment. By January 2025 all standards will be implemented and enforced.

### **Types of Disabilities**

General Types	Other Types
Physical	Intellectual
Hearing	Sensory: Taste, Smell, Touch
Vision	Other conditions: cancer, asthma, etc.
Deaf-Blind	Temporary disabilities
Speech and Language	Intermittent disabilities
Mental Health	
Learning	

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### **Information about Working with People with Disabilities**

- A warm handshake or an occasional gentle pat on the back or shoulder rather than initiating hugs or other traditional displays of physical affection is acceptable. Many clients are especially vulnerable to touch of any sort.
- Ask supervising staff for guidance should the youth be initiating physical contact beyond this.
- Let your reliability, commitment, attentiveness, tone of voice and words of encouragement and praise be your expression of warmth, approval, and affection.
- If a client asks for personal information from you (email address, cell number or ask to friend you on a social media site) politely decline indicating it is against policy.

### **Basic Wheelchair Safety Guidelines**

- Always ask permission before pushing the wheelchair
- If assisting a person transferring in or out of a wheelchair make sure the brakes are on
- If the person uses a power wheelchair make sure the power is turned off before transferring
- If you are pushing the person, check to make sure nothing is caught or dangling near the wheels
- Check to see if the person is wearing a seatbelt and that it is done up when going somewhere
- Be careful of "pot holes" and "bumps"
- Be respectful and do not hang or lean on a person's wheelchair

### **Communication Strategies**

- Be at the same physical level as the person.
- Give the person a chance to communicate (don't do all the talking) pause and wait for a response and act as if you expect one.
- Talk with the person-not as if he or she is not physically present or cannot understand or speak for him or herself.

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- When talking with someone with a disability, remember that sometimes your patience is required. Resist the temptation to interrupt or to answer on behalf of the person.
- Maintain eye contact-sit down if appropriate.
- Use age appropriate language
- Talk to the person with the disability, not to his/ her caregiver.

### **Interaction Techniques and Guidelines**

- Recognize that you are dealing with a person who has needs, desires and feelings like anyone else. This person has a disability; the person is not their disability
- Offer assistance only when needed. Ask if you are unsure if, when and how help should be offered
- Promote independence. Do not underestimate the capabilities of a person with a disability so do not "baby" them. Foster self-confidence and self-esteem using age appropriate language
- Knowledge reduces fear. If you are uninformed about a particular disability, read information written about it
- Put people first! Say "a person with autism" NOT "an autistic person"
- A person who cannot walk would be a person with a physical disability NOT a physically disabled person
- Avoid touching or talking to a service animal as it is working and is not a pet

As a volunteer you will be working with children and young adults with a variety of disabilities. These disabilities will vary in nature from mild to moderate to severe. Remember each person is unique. There are no two people with the same disabilities.

The following are links to sites detailing more information:

[Developmental disabilities](#)

[Cerebral Palsy](#)

[Epilepsy and seizure disorders](#)

[Spina Bifida](#)

[Muscular Dystrophy](#)

[Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)

[Head injuries](#)

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If you have any questions about volunteering, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at the site to which you have been assigned.

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**Signature Required**

*Please fill out this page, then scan or take a clear photo and send to  
volunteer@erinoakkids.ca.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the ErinoakKids  
Volunteer Orientation Guide. I will adhere to all guidelines and speak with the Volunteer  
Coordinator if I have any questions.

Volunteer signature

Date

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Parent/guardian signature (if volunteer is under the age of 18)

Date

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