



**AmeriCorps  
Seniors**

**FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM  
TEACHER HANDBOOK**

**SCHRA**

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## **WELCOME TO THE FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM**

South Central Human Resource Agency's Foster Grandparent Program welcomes you as a volunteer station; a location where Foster Grandparents are serving! This handbook has been designed to acquaint you with the Foster Grandparent Program and serve as a guide to the operation and procedures for the volunteer station.

Use this handbook as a reference as you supervise volunteers at your location.

The Foster Grandparent Program could not exist without your participation and support. The continued success of the Foster Grandparent Program is dependent upon stakeholders' trust. Therefore, it is expected of all Foster Grandparents to perform in a professional, businesslike and courteous manner.

We place a high value on our partnerships and deeply respect the staff and the important work you do. And we understand, that you never have enough hands or time to do all things you would like to do for all of your students. The intention is for a Foster Grandparent to be the extra person, the one who has time to do things like reading a story aloud, serving one-on-one with a student until he/she 'gets it' or comforting an upset child.

Our hope is that your time and involvement with the Foster Grandparent Program will be a mutually satisfying experience.

Respectfully,

*Jeana Mills*

Program Director  
Foster Grandparent Program  
SCHRA

## **Introduction**

The Foster Grandparent Program is an intergenerational volunteer program that began August 28, 1965. Foster Grandparents are role models and mentors to disadvantage youth and children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55+ to stay active by serving children and youth in their communities. The Program has a dual purpose – to enhance the lives of children with special needs and disadvantaged youth through a caring relationship and to provide a high quality experience that enriches the lives of the volunteers and the children they serve.

South Central Human Resource Agency's Foster Grandparent Program maintains an average of 50 stipend volunteers in a 13 county area, which are assigned to one of 24 volunteer stations. These stations include elementary schools, Head Start centers, alternative schools, summer programs and child care centers. The Foster Grandparent Program provides opportunities for older adults, age of 55 and over; particularly those with limited income, to serve children in circumstances identified as: limiting their academic, social, or emotional development and children with special or exceptional needs.

The goals of the Foster Grandparent Program

1. Enable children with exceptional or special needs and disadvantaged youth to achieve improved mental, emotional, and social development thereby helping them to reach social, behavioral, developmental and educational benchmarks.
2. Enable low-income persons aged 55+ to remain physically and mentally active. To enhance their self-esteem through continued participation in needed community services.
3. Provide a stipend and other benefits which enable eligible persons to participate as Foster Grandparents without cost to themselves.

## **Volunteer Description**

The Foster Grandparent volunteers can participate in the program a minimum of 5 hours per week up to a maximum of 40 hours per week. On average volunteers participate 25-30 hours per week Monday through Friday and earn a tax-free stipend. While we strive for continuity in hours, there may be times when these parameters change. Please note that all volunteers may be subject to limited hours based on the availability of our grant.

**\*Please Note: Volunteers are required to successfully pass a National Service Criminal History Check which includes a Fingerprint based TBI and FBI check, along with a National Sex Offender Public Registry check.**

## **Being a Foster Grandparent**

It is the goal of the Foster Grandparent Program to bring together individuals and children with special or exceptional needs for the mutual benefit of both. Foster Grandparent volunteers provide individual attention, companionship, academic and emotional support to the children with whom they serve.

The Foster Grandparent Program's primary focus is on education, specifically engaging volunteers in activities designed to improve school readiness and K-12 students' academic engagement. Foster Grandparents provide one-on-one tutoring, mentoring to economically disadvantaged and/or special or exceptional needs children.

Volunteers are paired with students to reinforce or strengthen academic, social skills and provide appropriate positive reinforcement of classroom behaviors. Volunteers also keep students on task with age appropriate skill building activities.

## **Role of Foster Grandparent in the Classroom:**

Work with assigned students in a one-on-one or small group setting to provide classroom/academic support under direction of classroom teacher.

Provide extra help for students in reading and math.

Provide support for mentally challenged students, students with learning disabilities and students of veterans.

Mentor students with behavioral problems or emotional/social issues by encouraging and listening to them.

Teach students manners/social skills at lunch.

Provide extra help for E.L.L. students.

Assist young children/preschoolers with school readiness skills.

## **Role of Foster Grandparent in the Classroom:**

Foster Grandparents are NOT to:

- be left alone with entire classroom of students for any reason.
- perform duties that of a teacher or teacher's assistant (i.e. formal student assessment, disciplining of students, leading instruction for entire class).
- perform custodial chores.
- assist students inside restrooms. Foster Grandparents may accompany to but not go inside.
- displace or replace paid or contracted employees, relieve staff of their routine duties or infringe upon the classroom teacher's role with the children.
- Transport children

## **Outdoor Activities and Field Trips**

Foster Grandparents are expected to participate in outdoor activities with the children as much as possible, within the limits of their health. Participation in field trips is also encourage but not mandatory. If a field trip exceeds normal working hours or is not possible because of physical limitations, the volunteer should notify the site supervisor. The volunteer station may be able to arrange for the Foster Grandparent to serve in another classroom during an overly strenuous outdoor activity or field trip.

## **Absences**

A Foster Grandparent should contact their volunteer station (school, site where they serve) as early as possible to notify them of absences.

## **The Role of a Foster Grandparent Supervisor (Classroom Teacher):**

The Foster Grandparent Program is supported by a federal grant through the Corporation for National and Community Service. To meet the grant expectations and requirements, the Foster Grandparent Program must demonstrate the impact volunteer service is having on economically disadvantaged or children with special or exceptional needs, academic success. Impact is measured by way of:

### *Assignment Plan*

Each Foster Grandparent is required to have a Child Assignment Plan for each student regularly assigned to work one-on-one or in small group with the volunteer; a grant requirement. The Child Assignment Plan documents the need of the student(s) assigned to the Foster Grandparent, outlines the activities the teacher desires the volunteer to perform with the student, frequency of activities and the expected outcomes.

Each teacher is expected to complete the Child Assignment within thirty (30) days of the Foster Grandparent placement. The Child Assignment Plan will be provided to the classroom teacher by the FGP or the FGP program office.

The Child Assignment Plan will serve as the Foster Grandparent's 'job description'. Each teacher is instructed to review the assignment plan with their Foster Grandparent before it is returned to the Program office.

At midpoint and end of school year, a follow up visit or communication will be sent to each teacher, requesting a brief update on student need(s) outline in the Child Assignment Plan. The purpose of requesting the information is to evaluate whether or not the expected outcomes are being met, due in part, to the consistent one-on-one daily/weekly volunteer service.

\*Please note, if for whatever reason a Foster Grandparent discontinues service to an assigned student (i.e., student improved, moved, receives other services) while serving in a classroom, notify the Foster Grandparent office. (931) 433-7182

### *Timesheet*

In addition to the Child Assignment Plan, impact of volunteer service is measured by tracking the number of volunteer hours served in the classroom. All volunteers will record daily the number of hours served in the classroom on FGP timesheet. Foster Grandparent Supervisors may ask the volunteer at any time to review their timesheet. A weekly review of the timesheet by the Foster Grandparent Supervisor is preferred.

Every two weeks, the timesheet must be reviewed and approved by the Foster Grandparent Supervisor (classroom teacher). If an error in time tracking is noticed by the Supervisor, the Supervisor (teacher) may refuse to sign (approve) until the volunteer makes needed correction.

All timesheets must be completed in blue or black ink and do not use liquid to correct errors. Simply draw a line through errors and initial changes. Signed and dated at the end of the pay period. Never sign timesheet before the actual last day the Foster Grandparent serves in the classroom.

### *Annual Evaluation*

The Foster Grandparent Program depends on volunteers to serve in local schools assisting with meeting the academic and social needs of identified students.

During the final semester of each school year, Foster Grandparent Supervisors (classroom teachers), principals, counselors will receive an annual evaluation form/survey to seek comments on the performance of volunteers serving at their site.

All feedback received via the survey will be used for program performance improvement purposes.

### **Suggestions for Foster Grandparent Activities:**

1. Listen to students read sight word lists. Highlight the ones that the child does not know. FG can keep records of each child's progress throughout the school year and use flashcards to teach them the words.
2. Hold up math flashcards for each fact group (+1, +2, -1, -2, etc.) Have FG to track which facts the student has mastered.
3. Listen to students read aloud. Have FG ask comprehension questions, use reading strategies with the students such as rereading text, echo and choral reading, picture clues, etc. Please teach your FG some of the strategies that you prefer to use.
4. Help students learn to write their names. Teach them their address and phone numbers. Have individual name sheets with the names in dotted lines for students to trace over.
5. Listen to students count to 100 and keep records on how far they counted. Have copies of the hundred chart and number lines so students can see the numbers to practice.
6. Create a notebook containing materials on the most critical skills/objectives that students in that grade need to master. Have the FG review the basic skills each day until the child has mastered the skills.
7. Foster Grandparents can keep anecdotal records on the assigned students to show progress made and to show what the students know and are learning when working with the FG.
8. Sit with students at lunch to assist with proper table manners and social skills. Some teachers have found it helpful to have the Foster Grandparents sit at a table for students who need to be mentored and need a little extra attention.
9. Work with students each day to practice weekly spelling words, vocabulary words and to reread weekly unit text to check for comprehension.
10. Provide a space/materials for Foster Grandparent in your classroom/hallway/commons area. A desk and comfortable chair is usually provided along with teaching materials such as white boards, markers, counters, number line, alphabet cards, flashcards, paper and pencils.
11. If the Foster Grandparent serves in multiple classroom throughout the day, create a schedule for the FG based on the needs of the students; allowing the volunteer to know which students/teachers to assist at specific times during the day.
12. Decide what skills/activities you want the Foster Grandparent to reinforce with the students based on assessment scores.

13. Discuss appropriate reading and math strategies with the Foster Grandparent so he/she can reinforce the strategies that you are teaching in the classroom.
14. Include Foster Grandparent on additional training opportunity (pre-service, teacher in-service, workshops) that may be beneficial to them in their role.

### **Handling Conflicts**

The Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator and or Program Director will make periodic visits to the site to observe the Foster Grandparent while serving, as a measure to provide additional supervision.

Most conflicts or concerns can be resolved by the Foster Grandparent Supervisor (classroom teacher) and Foster Grandparent communicating directly with each other.

If a Foster Grandparent's performance is not acceptable, please promptly notify the Program Coordinator or Program Director to discuss the matter and to begin working on the solution.

It is the Foster Grandparent Program's obligation to ensure volunteers are performing duties as assigned and in a professional, courteous manner.

### **In Case of an Emergency**

In case of an emergency, a Foster Grandparent is instructed to follow the policies and procedures of the site in which they are serving. Foster Grandparent Supervisors (classroom teachers) should familiarize all volunteers with these policies and procedures.

The Foster Grandparent Supervisor and Foster Grandparent must notify the Foster Grandparent Program office, as soon as possible or when safe to do so, in the case of all emergencies.

In the event of a medical/health emergency experienced by the Foster Grandparent, please refer to the Emergency Contact form provided by each FG and kept on file in their FGP notebook and well as in the Site Supervisor's notebook. Please notify the FGP Program Office and soon as possible.

**We appreciate our partnership with your school and understand the benefit this program provides to not only your students but to the Foster Grandparent as well.**

**Thank you!**