

## Introduction

We all know that when you decide to come here to do something different for yourself and for the community, it means that you have embraced a new experience and are ready to take things forward. It includes challenges and opportunities. But it also means that after this time you will have a different perspective on life and more importantly you have left good memories for the people you have met, who have been communicating all the time here.

As a volunteer, we have a lot of options to participate in activities and in each of these areas will bring different experiences, and activities with children, especially those in the group of children with lower conditions is a way to help us take a new look at life around us and make your actions more meaningful.

But working with children is as simple as we think?

Of course it will become easier if you know how to manage your activities and it also makes you feel difficult if you don't have a proper way of doing things.

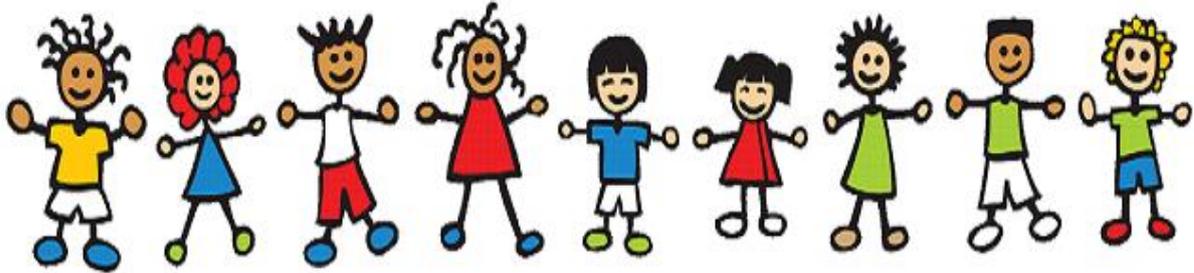


### 1. Who are we working with ?

We will work with children who come from immigrant families in the area, in which centers will take care of them while their parents work during the day.

The child's age ranges from 6 months to 12 or 13 years, due to the different about age and family or

cultural background so you will easily realise that each one will have different reactions and actions in each case.



## 2. Where do we work ?

Social centers, where assistance to immigrant families can get a better care for their children while they work.

- **Foods** : For children under 5 will get lunches and for older children, they will have some snacks after come back from school.



- **Activities** : The center will provide children with basic conditions to be able to have fun, children can play with toys, watch cartoons, dance, read or draw or do homework. Sometimes they also host small events outside, or attend events organized by other centers or the city.



- **Sharing** : An important point, the center is a second home for children, where staffs and volunteers who interact with their children can understand them better, listen to their interests or problems. In addition, the communication between parents and the center also makes the relationship of the children with the family has improved.



### 3. What do we do ?

Support to the staffs at the centre : There are one or two staff (sometimes more) works for each day with children, and your duty is support to them in most of activities.

- Organise toys area,
- Clean up tables, floors
- Help small kids in eating and sleeping
- Making activities (inside and outside)



#### **For babies from 6 months to 1 year old :**

Make sure that, although you are not carrying them in your hand, they are still within your reach

Why ? Because older kids are playing can affect to the babies or they will get fall.

- Helping in eating : These babies are not able to eat alone so you will help for that.
- Communicate to them from the simplest ways.

- Sometimes the staff will ask you to help in changing baby diapers before take them to a nap, but it is not often

### **For kids from 1 to 2 years olds**

They can walk and do some activities alone and there are many things that you could make during playing with them:

- Organize the toys area, showing them some simple pics about animals, fruits, food, or simple join with them.
- Make activities : sing some simple song and start to show them simple dance movement....
- And you have to help them in eating too

### **Kids from 3 to 5 years old**

- These ages are more complicate because they now can independent in many activities and also can conceive things around, so better you should be careful in everything : words you say, act you do .... they will learn everything from you.
- Organize a reading time, dancing time or colouring time are some very interesting activities and help you manage kids in a nice way.
- In my experience, kids also realise that playing in group seems like make more fun and they enjoy it a lot, so you can make some game or activity with group for boys or girls ... to see how they react to everyone around.
- One of my favorite activity is join with them in eating time, during you take care of small babies or help smaller kids to eat, you can teach these kids how to eat and encourage them to enjoy the meal and respect food, sometimes food drops on the table and you will teach them how to fix it or be more careful for next time ...;)
- If you have any talent in any field : painting, singing, dancing, playing football ... don't hesitate to show them something, because every small thing could be a new world for them, you will never know how amazing you are in children's eyes.



### **Kids from 6 to 12 years old.**

- This will be a challenge to your patience and your love for volunteering as well as children.
- These kids normally will go to school every weekday and be back to the center around 3-4pm, As these children go to school and learn a lot of things (both good and bad from the outside world), it's going to be a bit tougher for you. But that also means that it will increase your experience, it will ask you have to be more dynamic and open your mind.
- Outdoor activities will be good for children after a school day, so organizing football games or simple motor games, dancing, etc. will get kids to regain energy, This also leads to more healthy activities.
- It will be very good if you can communicate well in Italian, because you can share more, understand them, and then have meaningful activities with them.
- You can help these kids feel good and mature if you sometimes ask them to help with simple things like controlling groups of babies playing, being a brother or older sister in family. I realized that they loved this and always tried to fulfill their duties very well.
- If you have a good Italian, then you can help them complete their homework, because they are not that hard, but it would be better if you could explain them or teach them how to do it right.

## 4. Benefits

### For children

What the children here get from you is love, sharing and understanding.

You are like a new friend, who will have fun with them every day, will help them to answer questions or simply be the person they are looking for when there are any problems. The cultural difference from you would be a great fun and kids learn a lot if you share this with them.

You are also the one who helps their parents feel safe working because their children are having a great environment to grow up to.

### For volunteers

You will find yourself more mature when you become a responsible person for work, especially work with children.

You will realize that the world has so much to do, and your actions today are part of making the world a better place.

This work will help you a lot in the skills of working with people, managing activity and time. You can also better understand the social issues, especially for a particular city like Palermo.

And most importantly, you will become a different person after completing your work here with a new mindset, more energy and the experience you have gained will be truly valuable.

## 5. Problem and solution :

### From children :

Due to the children of different ages and have different backgrounds in their families and cultures, it is difficult to balance everything, sometimes they will not listen to you or scream for no reason or being so rough with other kids.

**Solution:** Get close to your child and ask them in a calm state, usually when you understand the reason, you can completely explain to them to solve problem or some more complicated cases, you can ask for the intervention of the staff in the center, on the other hand you will stabilize the other children so that the air becomes fun quickly.

#### From activities :

While children play and participate in activities or games, there will be minor accidents such as fighting children, falling children or being hit on hard objects such as desks, chairs, walls ...

Some activities may not be suitable for small kids or boring for older children. Items such as scissors, pencils, crayons, glues or sharp objects should be put on higher places because they can be found by kids to play (even eat).

When children focus on playing, they will not listen to your instructions, disturb or run out of control.

#### **Solution :**

Design activities by age group or gender , daily conversations will help you understand how your child is moving towards activities.

#### Example :

For 2-3 year-olds, you can organize lightweight plastic ball games such as throwing balls, color distinction ... or teaching children to draw simple shapes such as: Circles, squares, flowers, leaves etc.

For groups of 4 - 5year olds: You can hold small contests such as racing cars with toys for boys playing and shopping game for girls.

For older children, organizing football matches or drawing a big picture, making handmade stuff from simple materials like colored paper, bottles .... will make children feel more excited .

It is very important that you fully engage with your child in activities to better observe your child, avoid accidents or handle situations when it occurs unexpectedly.

There are lots of tutorials on the internet if you want to have new ideas on games or making handmade items.

From language and communication or the misunderstanding :

Language and communication are very important to connect you and children here, sometimes with language and culture differences that may misrepresent their problem or you do not know what child wants.

**Solution:** Improve your child's vocabularies or get closer to them by using books or stories at the center, which help you improve your language skills and also help you communicate good messages to your children without having to talk too much. much.

If there is a bigger problem of misunderstanding or can not convey what you want, ask for help from the staff at the center, they willing to make it better.



## 6. Sharing of other volunteers

Madthilde : “So, work with children its amazing because you think you will learn at them but in the end they learn to us, it s very funny and you can improve your skills, after work with children you can do everything, you can draw a princess try to make sleep a baby and give water, I encourage everybody to do it because there is nothing to more beautiful that make a child smile, they need and give a lot of attention and love. Ubuntu make that the diversity it s not anymore a diversity but a strong thing “

Lizzie: “I hope that the share from me and the previous volunteers will help you have a great experience for this work, enjoy every hour of your work because it is bringing a lot of meaning to the community, each difficulty you encounter will help you improve your skills in life. Most importantly, you make the kids around you happy and that is what makes you happy as well”.