



Rainbow Days Guidelines for Working with Children

Thank you for taking time to volunteer with the children Rainbow Days serves. We appreciate you and your willingness to give of your time to benefit homeless children and youth in our community. Due to safety concerns, please read over our guidelines for safe practices while interacting with Rainbow Day children and youth.

1. If you see a child being left out or secluding himself or herself, please invite him or her to play. At the same time, if a child says they don't want to play, please respect their decision and don't try to persuade them otherwise. We work with the children during the week to use their words so they can be heard. Please listen and don't coax the child into playing if they have said, "No".
2. Play with the child(ren) in the designated playing area. Please, under no circumstances, take the child away from the playing area to play in seclusion with him or her. Play where others can see you.
3. Please do not pick up a child or have them ride piggy back. This is for everyone's safety.
4. Please refrain from frontal hugs during your time with the children. Preferable ways to show affection are: side hugs, high fives or fist bumps (your knuckle bumping the child's knuckle). We do not want to deny children hugs; however, we are also trying to teach the child healthy boundaries. You are a safe person and want the best for the child but unfortunately not everyone they may reach out to is a safe person.
5. Please be encouraging as you play with children and verbalize anything positive that you notice. For example, "I like how you are sharing turns with catching the ball." or "You made a good catch!"
6. If a child gets hurt **immediately** find a Rainbow Days staff person. We are required to complete an incident report for the shelter staff and the parent.
7. Do not focus your attention solely on one child or youth. All children and youth are special and deserve your attention.
8. Understand that there is no "one size fits all" when working with children. Each child is as unique as you are.
9. If experiencing behavioral issues with a child, try redirecting behavior by offering something else for them to engage in or even stopping long enough to take a deep breath. If issues continue, locate a Rainbow Day's staff person.
10. Most important guideline: "HAVE FUN!"