

# Victorian Children's Services

## Volunteers in licensed children's services

Fact sheet | May 2010

Last updated April 2015

### What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is a person who cares for or educates children at a children's service in a voluntary or honorary capacity, and includes a student or a person who is on a work experience program (regulation 5). Volunteers attend children's services to assist staff members in the delivery of the children's program. The roles that volunteers play in children's services are many and varied and include working with groups of children, preparing materials or snacks, assisting with administrative tasks or working one to one with individual children.

Typically there are three types of volunteers who come into children's services:

- volunteers who are considered as part of the staff/child ratio in limited hours or short term services
- volunteers who are not considered as part of the staff/child ratios
- volunteers who are students or persons on work experience.

### Role of the children's service

There are many different volunteers who come into children's services at different times. The children's service is responsible for ensuring that these volunteers are suitable to work with children and to make certain that children are safe at all times.

### Volunteers considered as part of the staff/child ratio in limited hours or short term services

In limited hours or short term services only, there is a provision to count volunteers in the child/staff ratios (regulations 55 and 56), as long as the number of volunteers is not more than half the number of staff members caring for or educating the children (regulation 58(a)). Volunteers cannot be counted as qualified staff members nor can they be included in meeting the minimum staff requirements.

These volunteers:

- must provide an assessment notice (Working with Children Check) or be a teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (regulation 38(3))
- must be 18 years of age or over (regulation 58(b))
- must have a staff record (regulation 38(2))
- do not need to be supervised by the proprietor or a qualified staff member.

*Example: A limited hours service may use a volunteer as part of the child/staff ratio (regulation 58).*

## Volunteers who are not considered as part of the staff/child ratios in children's services

These volunteers:

- are not required to provide an assessment notice
- do not require a staff record
- must be supervised at all times that they are with the children by the proprietor or a qualified staff member, if they do not have an assessment notice (regulation 70(7)).

*Example: A parent comes to a children's service to assist in the program.*

## Volunteers who are students or persons on work experience

These volunteers:

- are not considered as part of the child/staff ratio
- do not require an assessment notice
- do not require a staff record
- must be supervised at all times by the proprietor or a qualified staff member if they are caring for or educating the children at the service if they do not have an assessment notice (regulation 70(7)).

*Example: A student is doing a practical placement at a children's service as part of a teaching degree.*

## Further information

### Department of Education and Training

Phone: 1300 307 415

Email: [licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Web: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation)