



Child Protection Policy

It is the policy of Neighbors Community Center to provide adequate supervision of all staff and volunteers working with children attending our programs, events, and activities. The following requirements apply to all adults who have contact with children who are participating in any activity sponsored by and/or in partnership with Neighbors Community Center. These requirements are designed to protect both the children and the adults who work with them.

Approved adult

An approved adult is someone who has met the following requirements:

1. Is 18 years of age or older.
2. Has completed the Neighbors Community Center volunteer application process.
3. Has read and signed the Neighbors Community Center Child Protection Policy Statement.
4. Has received and submitted a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, a Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Record, and an FBI Clearance (or the approved waiver). Copies of clearances completed in the past two years are acceptable.
If applicants are not Pennsylvania residents, they will be required to submit a State Child Abuse History Clearance and Criminal History Record from the state(s) in which they lived.
Clearances will need to be renewed every five years.
5. Must provide written notice to Neighbors Community Center if they are arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying employment or participation in a program, activity or service, or are named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report of child abuse. Such written notice must be provided within 72 hours of the staff person's or volunteer's arrest, conviction, or notification that he or she has been listed as a perpetrator in the statewide database.

Note: when the term "adult" is used below, it refers to an approved adult who has met the above requirements. "Child" refers to anyone 17 years of age or younger.

Protection and safety

It is required that two adults be present in each room during any Neighborhood Community Center program, activity, or event involving children. All doors into children's rooms must have a window. If there is no window in the door, doors to a common area must be left open.

Bathroom and diapering

Encourage the parent/guardian to take their children to the bathroom before coming to childcare and during breaks. If a child needs to use the bathroom at other times, ask the parent/guardian to take the child. If the child has an immediate need to use the bathroom that does not allow time to notify the parent/guardian, you may take the child to the bathroom. Wait outside the bathroom stall; if assistance is required, leave the stall door open.

If diapers or clothes need to be changed, notify the parent/guardian.

Expressions of affection

Use appropriate expressions of affection. Positive reinforcement (verbal praise and encouragement) is the preferred method used to foster appropriate child behavior. True expressions of affection contribute to a warm, healthy relationship. Always respect a child's refusal of affection and don't make them feel uncomfortable. Ask permission before giving a hug. Be aware of hand placement as it could be misinterpreted. Body-to-body embraces and touching private areas (areas covered by a bathing suit) are inappropriate.

Discipline

No humiliation, verbal abuse, or physical discipline should be administered at any time.

Parental permission

Any off-site activity that is part of a Neighborhood Community Center program requires that the parent/guardian sign and return a consent form, which will be kept on file.

Transportation

When transporting children to/from/during activities at Neighbors Community Center, drivers must be 18 years of age or older. The driver must have a valid driver's license and agrees to obey all traffic laws. The driver must provide proof of current insurance for their vehicle, and are required to read, sign, and return a Vehicle Authorization Form, which will be kept on file.

Incident report

In the event that a child is injured during a program or activity sponsored by or in partnership with Neighbors Community Center. First get the child to safety. Second, write a report of the injury using the Incident Report Form (see the program leader for a copy of this form). Submit the form to the director of Neighbors Community Center.

First visit

Upon the discretion of the director, a potential volunteer may visit a program or activity as an observer, with the requirement that he or she has no time in isolation with a child. The volunteer would need to complete the application process to become an approved adult for any subsequent involvement.

Reporting suspected child abuse

Pennsylvania Law indicates that suspected child abuse must be reported out immediately to Child Line. If you suspect child abuse, you must contact Child Line to make a report.

1. Secure the immediate safety of the child involved. If the child is in imminent danger or needs immediate medical attention, call 911.
2. The preferred method of reporting out is to file a report online on the Child Welfare Portal at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis. Before a report can be made, the person reporting must pre-register on the portal. After you pre-register, you can file a report directly through the portal. There is no follow up report needed if you file electronically and receive confirmation that the Department has received your report. Print or download the report to give to the director of Neighbors Community Center.
3. Alternatively, you can call Childline at **1-800-932-0313** to report the suspected abuse, and then immediately notify the director of Neighbors Community Center.
4. Maintain confidentiality. Do not discuss the report with anyone who is not involved in the situation.
5. Any person who, in *good faith* makes a report of suspected child abuse will be free from discrimination, retaliation, and civil or criminal liability related to this action.

Please sign the document on the next page.



Child Protection Policy Commitment

I commit to the following as it relates to child safety:

- I confirm that I have not been convicted of any form of abuse or inappropriate behavior with a child.
- I agree not to engage in any behaviors of unwelcome sexual advances (verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature). This would also include inappropriate touch, sexual jokes, lewd comments, offensive pictures, articles, or cartoons, etc.
- I further agree that as an individual who has engendered trust from a child I will not tolerate physical, emotional, or sexual child abuse or neglect.
- I agree to immediately “report out” any reasonable suspicion of or disclosure of inappropriate behavior between adults and minors and cooperate in helping assist the youth or community to remain safe.
- I will not take or share photos, videos, or audio files of children related to programs of Neighbors Community Center, unless written permission has been granted to Neighbors Community Center by a parent/guardian.
- I have read the Neighbors Community Center Child Protection Policy (above) and I understand and agree to follow it and to protect the health and safety of the children in my care.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please complete and return this form to the director of Neighbors Community Center or email it to info@neighborslancaster.com.