



# Foster Grandparent Handbook

Foster Grandparent Program administered by



Foster Grandparent Program funded by



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# Foster Grandparent Personnel Policy Manual

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## APPENDIX



## Section 100 Introduction

### 101 Welcome Letter

Dear Foster Grandparent,

*Thank you* for choosing to donate your time to the Foster Grandparent Program administered by **Your Aging Resource Center**, your local Area Agency on Aging. The Foster Grandparent Program provides volunteer opportunities for individuals 55 years and older to mentor children one-on-one and help them with their identified special needs. It is also an opportunity for volunteers to learn new skills, share expertise and gain useful experience.

Your Aging Resource Center considers volunteers a part of its family and recognizes that you have special skills, talents and certain goals you might wish to attain as well as experiences you would like to share. We aim to meet your needs and interests whenever possible.

We appreciate and are very grateful for your time and your talents. We hope in your tenure as a Foster Grandparent, you will acquire treasured assets like new relationships, accomplishments, gratification and happiness.

This handbook provides basic information about the Foster Grandparent Program. The Handbook is written in compliance with the policies and regulations of the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Foster Grandparent Program.

The policies in this handbook replace any others that precede them. Since it is impossible to anticipate every situation, special circumstances that are not covered in the handbook will be addressed by the Foster Grandparent Project Director, and if necessary, the appropriate committee of the Board of Directors. Changes in these policies may occur as the Program evolves and as the Corporation for National and Community Service makes changes to its policies and regulations. You may periodically receive updated pages of the handbook to reflect any changes.

***Thank you for being a Foster Grandparent!***

Foster Grandparent Program Staff

## 102 Overview of the Foster Grandparent Program

The Foster Grandparent Program is an intergenerational volunteer program that provides valuable aid to children with special and exceptional needs. The Program has a dual purpose – to enhance the lives of children with special needs through a caring relationship and to provide a high quality experience that enriches the lives of the volunteers and the children they serve.

The Program began August 28, 1965 as a national demonstration effort to show how income-eligible persons age 55 or over have the maturity and experience to establish personal relationships with children having either exceptional or special needs.

The primary goals of the Foster Grandparent Program are to:

- Enable income-eligible persons age 55 and over to remain physically and mentally active and to enhance their self-esteem through continued participation in community service.
- Enable children with exceptional and/or special needs to achieve improved physical, mental, emotional and social development thereby helping them to reach social, behavioral, developmental and educational goals. This goal is achieved through the mentoring relationship with a *Foster Grandparent*.
- Provide a stipend and other benefits, which enable eligible persons to participate as *Foster Grandparents* without cost to them.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency, is responsible for the oversight of the Foster Grandparent Programs. Nationally, there are over 350 Foster Grandparent Programs with more than 35,000 *Foster Grandparent* volunteers.

The Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast, Inc. was selected as one of 25 applicants from around the country to implement a Foster Grandparent Program in Palm Beach County in 1997. The original goal was to recruit and train 35 income-eligible senior volunteers to serve as tutors, mentors and reading coaches to children with special and/or exceptional needs. By October of 1998, 41 *Foster Grandparents* were volunteering in 20 schools and/or Head Start programs.

Currently the Foster Grandparent Program of Your Aging Resource Center has over 150 *Foster Grandparent* volunteers who serve more than 475 children with special needs in 59 volunteer sites.

Current funding sources include the Corporation for National and Community Service, Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County, Children's Services Council of Okeechobee County and United Way of Okeechobee County. Other support comes from local partnerships, contributions, and from the sites where *Foster Grandparents* serve.

## **Section 200      Becoming a Foster Grandparent ~ Eligibility and Process**

### **201   Equal Opportunity Compliance**

Your Aging Resource Center does not discriminate in opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age (with the exception of the lower age limit of 55), disability, marital or family status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Your Aging Resource Center is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities.

Your Aging Resource Center is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

Please be aware that Your Aging Resource Center reserves the right to decline your application to join the program based on the results of your background screening and/or other factors deemed pertinent to the selection process. If you are not selected, you will receive a letter indicating why the determination was made.

### **202   Eligibility Requirements**

To be eligible to be a *Foster Grandparent*, an applicant must:

- Be age 55 or older
- Be determined by a medical examination to be capable of serving without detriment to self or others
- Meet income requirements
- Complete and pass the background screening requirements
- Have never been accused, arrested, charged or convicted of child abuse or molestation
- Not be a convicted felon
- Be willing to adhere to all Foster Grandparent Program policies and procedures
- Agree to a one-year minimum commitment to the program
- Commit to 15-20 hours a week with mentees for allotted time frame identified by the teacher
- No longer be employed in the workforce
- Be willing to accept supervision and change assignments as required
- Reside in the State of Florida in any of the counties that the Agency serves
- Attend Foster Grandparent orientation, trainings as required and monthly in-service meetings
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the assigned Volunteer Coordinator and to submit bi-weekly timesheets and/or other required information in a timely manner
- Have access to reliable transportation
- Have a current driver's license or State identification and proof of auto insurance if driving
- Not use alcohol or controlled substances in an excessive or inappropriate manner
- Not have falsified information during the course of the screening process
- Genuinely respect children

## 203 Income Eligibility

Income reviews must be completed annually for each *Foster Grandparent* in order to determine if the annual income falls within the guidelines set by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

- If you are married and living with your spouse, or other employed persons, all of your income and your spouse's income must be counted and recorded on the Income Review Form.
- Income from all sources must be counted. This includes:
  - All money, wages and salaries
  - Regular payments for public assistance, Social Security, unemployment, child support, alimony and pension
  - Income from interest

For eligibility purposes, income **does not** refer to the following:

- Any assets such as bank accounts, sale of a house or car, or one-time insurance payments
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Note: Monthly out-of-pocket medical expenses (health insurance, physical examinations, prescription medication and over the counter medications) that are not paid by Medicare or Medicaid can be subtracted from the monthly income if they are recorded on the Income Review Form. However, the amount deducted cannot exceed 50% of the income guideline.

Once a *Foster Grandparent* has been enrolled in the Program, his/her income may increase by 20% over the initial standard without affecting eligibility.

### *Non Stipend Volunteers:*

Volunteers whose income is above the guidelines may serve as non-stipend *Foster Grandparents* and will receive all the other benefits of the Foster Grandparent Program (training, meals, transportation reimbursement and insurance), but cannot be paid a stipend.

## 204 Interview

New applicants are interviewed by the Foster Grandparent staff. *Foster Grandparent* responsibilities, policies and benefits are discussed and an applicant's suitability is confirmed. Personal stability, mental alertness, adequate energy, ability to interact positively with children and willingness to accept supervision are among the factors considered in deciding if an applicant is suitable to be a *Foster Grandparent*. The ability to relate comfortably with children of all races and cultures is a necessity. If the applicant is determined suitable and eligible for the Program and if there is an opening at a volunteer site, the applicant will be enrolled in the next orientation class.

## 205 Orientation

It is mandatory that all new *Foster Grandparents* become familiar with the various operations of the program. Each new Foster Grandparent will be provided a copy of the Foster Grandparent Volunteer Handbook. Each *Foster Grandparent* volunteer shall acknowledge receipt of this Handbook on the prescribed form. The signed certification shall become a part of the *Foster Grandparent's* volunteer record.

The Foster Grandparent Program Project Director shall also provide a full explanation of the terms and conditions of participating as a *Foster Grandparent* including the general duties to be performed, rates of stipends, standards of performance review, benefit plans and all other matters concerning enrollment in the Foster Grandparent Program.

*Foster Grandparent* volunteers are responsible for completing 10 hours of orientation before they become permanent *Foster Grandparent* volunteers.

All selected applicants will attend an orientation that includes: a detailed explanation of the Foster Grandparent policies and benefits, information regarding child development, recognition and reporting of child abuse, completion of paperwork and getting acquainted with staff.

Each *Foster Grandparent* is required to have the following on file:

- Affidavit of Good Moral Character
- Annual Income Review
- Application
- Background & Predator Checks; Fingerprinting
- Direct Deposit Form (if applicable)
- Doctor's Authorization
- Emergency Medical Form
- Enrollment Form
- Foster Grandparent Performance Evaluation
- Interview Notes
- Media Release Form
- Mileage Verification
- Orientation Evaluation Form
- Orientation & Training Timesheets
- Proof of Identity
- Proof of Auto Insurance (if applicable)
- References
- School Placement Form
- Social Security Card (copy)
- Volunteer Code of Ethics
- Volunteer Confidentiality
- Volunteer Requirements for Reporting Child Abuse

*Foster Grandparents* who are eligible, receive a stipend and transportation reimbursement for successfully completing orientation. **Any *Foster Grandparent* who has been inactive for one (1) year or longer must attend orientation again in order to be placed in a classroom.**

## 206 Placement

A *Foster Grandparent* must be willing to accept an assignment at any volunteer site. The site is chosen by the Foster Grandparent staff, taking into account the following factors:

- Which volunteer sites have openings and children requiring mentoring
- Where the *Foster Grandparent* lives and what kind of transportation is available
- What the *Foster Grandparent's* abilities, skills and personal preferences are

After the placement has been arranged, a visit to the volunteer site will be scheduled by Foster Grandparent Program staff. The purpose of the placement visit is to introduce the *Foster Grandparent* to the site liaison, complete the placement agreement and familiarize the *Foster Grandparent* with the volunteer site.

## 207 Probationary Period

The first three months of service will be a probationary period. This is a period established to benefit both the volunteer and the Foster Grandparent Program. It is a period of adjustment and adaptation, both personally and in terms of learning the position's responsibilities. If, during this period, the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer is unable to adapt successfully to the requirements of the position, the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer may be subject to termination from the program. The Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator or classroom teacher may offer advice and counseling when a problem becomes apparent, but is not required to do so. The *Foster Grandparent* may be given advance notice, but it is not required.

The original three month probationary period may be extended up to an additional 90 days if the Foster Grandparent Program Project Director determines an extended probationary period is necessary to further evaluate the volunteer's performance. Probationary *Foster Grandparent* volunteers do not have the right of grievance.

Probation is a period during which both the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer and the volunteer's supervisor should pay particular attention to the volunteer's performance and progress. After the *Foster Grandparent* has successfully completed a probationary period, the *Foster Grandparent* will be subject to the normal rules of performance appraisal and discipline discussed in Section 313 of the Handbook. A *Foster Grandparent* whose performance is not satisfactory during the probationary period can be dismissed, with no right of appeal.

## 208 Retirement

Serving as a *Foster Grandparent* is a demanding responsibility and it requires a significant amount of energy and time. A *Foster Grandparent* may reach a point in his/her life when the demands of service are too great. It is our goal to help *Foster Grandparents* through this transition to retirement. If you are considering retirement, please contact the Foster Grandparent Program office.

## Section 300 Being a Foster Grandparent

### 301 Hours of Service and Schedules

The normal volunteer week for a *Foster Grandparent* volunteer is twenty (20) hours. The volunteer station establishes the duty hours. The volunteer schedule of individual *Foster Grandparent* volunteers will be established by the Foster Grandparent Program Project Director taking into account the individual preferences of the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer and the best interest of the participating site.

*Foster Grandparents'* hours are arranged according to the needs of the volunteer site and the children being mentored. Any changes **MUST** be approved in advance by Foster Grandparent Program staff.

**Please Note:** *Foster Grandparents* are expected to arrive at their volunteer site at the scheduled time; however, if there is any variation, the timesheet should reflect it --**sign in at the actual time that you arrive, not the time when you should have arrived.** The same applies to leaving your assignment -**sign out at the actual time that you leave, not the time when you should leave.**

### 302 Travel Time and Travel Reimbursement

The time spent traveling to and from a volunteer site is not counted as service time unless the *Foster Grandparent* is riding on a volunteer site vehicle with children during this time.

Any changes in transportation (for example, a *Foster Grandparent* who normally drives but takes the bus one day) should be noted on the time sheet. Permanent transportation changes must be approved by Foster Grandparent Program staff.

### 303 Lunch Period

*Foster Grandparents'* meals should be eaten with the children whenever possible, in order to assist with their meal and to be a good role model. If lunch is eaten with the children, the time spent will be counted as part of the *Foster Grandparent's* service hours. If not, the time will be deducted from the hours served. Meals are available at most volunteer sites at no cost to the volunteer. If a *Foster Grandparent* has special dietary needs, the Agency provides meal reimbursements. The special dietary need must be established with the assigned Volunteer Coordinator before reimbursement can be processed. The meal reimbursement of a "brown bag" meal provided by a *Foster Grandparent* is based on fair market value which is determined by the Agency on an annual basis. The meal reimbursement is subject to funding limitations and may be discontinued at the discretion of the Agency. On the *Foster Grandparent's* time sheet, the site staff are required to sign a statement certifying that the reimbursable meals were taken in conjunction with volunteer service.

### 304 Outdoor Activities and Field Trips

*Foster Grandparents* are expected to participate in outdoor activities with the children as much as possible. Participation in field trips is also encouraged. If a field trip exceeds normal scheduled hours, this should be recorded on the *Foster Grandparent's* timesheet with "field trip" written in as an explanation. If a *Foster Grandparent* is not able to go on a scheduled field trip due to physical limitations, the *Foster Grandparent* should call their Volunteer Coordinator and request permission to adjust their schedule within that school week if possible.

## 305 Absences

*Foster Grandparents* should contact their volunteer site as early as possible to notify them of absences, so the site staff can plan around the absence and not be worried about the *Foster Grandparent*. This should be done each day, unless the site has been told about a long-term absence. The Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator should be notified if the absence is more than three (3) consecutive days.

If a *Foster Grandparent* has been hospitalized or has had a long-term absence (more than one week) due to an illness, he/she must get a statement from the attending doctor stating that they are clear to return to their duties before returning to their site.

If a *Foster Grandparent* is absent for 30 consecutive days or more, s/he will be put on inactive status and will be accepted back into the program based on availability. There are no guarantees that the previous placement will be available.

## 306 What to Do

When a *Foster Grandparent* volunteer is assigned to a child, s/he should be made aware of the goals set for that child and what activities are involved to help achieve these goals. An individual Assignment Plan that identifies a child's needs must be completed prior to a volunteer being placed at a school. *Foster Grandparents* are expected to provide the individual attention, unhurried help or personal care required by the particular special needs of the assigned mentee. *Foster Grandparents* serve in a variety of settings. However, all *Foster Grandparents* have the following responsibilities:

- To spend one-on-one time with assigned children
- To be dependable and call the volunteer site if they are going to be late or absent
- To keep promises and be good listeners

### **Find ways to help and interact with children. Examples are:**

- Assist children in the development of:
  - Motor skills (walking, running, climbing)
  - Self-help skills (how to tie shoes, button and zip, wash hands, brush teeth)
  - Learning skills (numbers and colors, reading, working puzzles)
- Read or tell stories to children
- Help with language development by talking and listening
- Ask open-ended questions, to encourage children to communicate
- Be positive, encouraging them and praising their efforts
- Be accepting and non-judgmental regarding differences in appearances, behaviors and backgrounds
- Act as role models and encourage appropriate behavior
- Support and assist in learning situations and therapy with assigned child per the Assignment Plan
- Assist each child to reach his/her maximum potential
- Arrange for positive social interaction with other children
- Assist with adjustment of new children to the school

***Foster Grandparents*** in mixed classrooms (with their assigned children and others) should focus their attention toward the children assigned to them. However, there will be some social interaction on the ***Foster Grandparent's*** part with the other children. It would be impossible, inappropriate and possibly harmful to ignore the other children.

***Foster Grandparents*** are responsible for keeping anything of personal value, and anything that could be dangerous to children, in a safe place away from the children.

***Foster Grandparents*** are expected to be clean and neat. Comfortable shoes and washable clothing that's appropriate for working with active and sometimes messy children are recommended.

Each volunteer station has its own policies about food handling, health practices, discipline, safety issues, etc. It is the responsibility of each ***Foster Grandparent*** to learn and follow these rules.

Any child abuse observed by ***Foster Grandparents*** must be reported to the volunteer site staff and the Foster Grandparent Program. ***Foster Grandparents*** should also report any evidence of possible abuse that they notice --for example, habitual bruising or burns.

***Foster Grandparents*** are encouraged to attend appropriate training at their volunteer site. This will be considered paid time if the training and hours have been approved by Foster Grandparent Program staff. Training in CPR and first aid is not required for ***Foster Grandparents***, as site staff members are responsible for administering these -- **not** the ***Foster Grandparents***.

The Foster Grandparent Program needs to show its funding agencies how effective the Program is, both for the ***Foster Grandparents*** and for the children. Periodically, surveys will be conducted to ask ***Foster Grandparents*** how the Program has impacted them in the areas of financial stability, life satisfaction, and staying healthy and independent. Volunteer site supervisors will also be surveyed.

It is important to:

- Have a positive attitude
- Be flexible
- Communicate about problems
- Take a stress break when you need to
- Not let the children's problems become your problems

## 307 What Not to Do

- ❖ **Foster Grandparents must NOT be alone with a child at any time.**
- ❖ ***Foster Grandparents must not discipline*** children in any way. If a *Foster Grandparent* feels that a child needs to be disciplined, the person in charge of the classroom should be told. If a serious problem arises, they should ask for help from their volunteer site supervisor. *Foster Grandparents* should **never** take it upon themselves to discipline a child – verbally, emotionally or physically.
- ❖ **Do Not Hit, Push, or Pull a Child In Any Way**  
This is **never** acceptable and will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the Program.
- ❖ **Do Not Supervise Other *Foster Grandparents***  
*Foster Grandparents* are not to supervise other *Foster Grandparents*. Instead of telling other *Foster Grandparents* what to do, they should concentrate on their own work.
- ❖ **Do Not Replace Staff Members**  
*Foster Grandparents* may not take the place of staff members. At sites where a group of children must have a required number of staff present, *Foster Grandparents* may not be counted in this ratio.
- ❖ **Do Not Argue Or Disagree With Other Adults In Front Of Children**  
If issues need to be discussed, they should be discussed privately.
- ❖ **Do Not Cook, Clean, or Do Clerical Work**  
*Foster Grandparents* are to use their time interacting with children, not doing work such as preparing meals, emptying trash or answering phones. However, *Foster Grandparents* may do incidental tasks such as setting a table for snacks, as long as the task is part of the children's activities, and the *Foster Grandparent* is physically capable.
- ❖ **Do Not Transport Children**  
*Foster Grandparents* may not take children in their vehicles.
- ❖ **Do Not Engage In Political Activities**  
*Foster Grandparents* may not engage in any political activity during service hours. If a *Foster Grandparent* works at the voting polls on Election Day, he/she may not be paid benefit time by the Foster Grandparent Program for that day.
- ❖ **Do Not Engage In Religious Activities**  
*Foster Grandparents* may not give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in religious activities during service hours. They should provide guidance to the children by being an example of honesty, kindness and other good values – rather than by citing a particular religion.

### ***FOSTER GRANDPARENTS MUST NOT***

- Call children negative names or openly reject them
- Criticize children (instead, reinforce good behavior when it occurs)
- Yell at children for any reason
- Stay behind when children move to another area
- Treat children differently because of their sex or race
- Favor one child over others

### 308 Non-Disclosure of Confidential/Proprietary Information

It is the policy of Your Aging Resource Center to abide by federal, state and local laws governing confidentiality of mentee/client/and/or volunteer records or information. Because of the services Your Aging Resource Center provides, client/mentee/volunteer confidentiality is an extremely important issue. Employees and volunteers of Your Aging Resource Center must always be aware of their responsibility to protect mentee/client/family information when engaged in the collection, handling, or dissemination of any client/family information, including, but not limited to: identity, address, social security number, physical/psychological condition, emotional status and/or financial situation.

Because Your Aging Resource Center volunteers interact very closely with children and school personnel, volunteers shall at all times maintain the highest standards in terms of protecting the integrity of persons and the confidentiality of privileged communication/information obtained in the line of duty. Any disclosure of confidential or privileged communication/information without authorization is grounds for dismissal.

Any information that a *Foster Grandparent* learns about a child should not be shared with other *Foster Grandparents*, family, friends, etc. This information should not be discussed outside of the volunteer site in order to maintain the privacy of the families. *Foster Grandparents* should also be careful not to discuss a child's problems with other *Foster Grandparents* or staff members when that child, or any other child, can hear the discussion.

### 309 Professional Development

The Foster Grandparent Program is vitally interested in the professional development of its *Foster Grandparent* volunteers. Each *Foster Grandparent* volunteer is required to attend twenty (20) hours of orientation (**2-day Orientation -10 hours**) and four (4) hours per month of in-service training thereafter. Attendance at In-Service Trainings is **MANDATORY**. *Foster Grandparents* will receive a stipend to attend In-Service Trainings.

**If you cannot attend an In-Service Training for any reason**, you are required to notify the Agency in advance. Failure to notify the office will result in your absence being unexcused. After 3 (three) unexcused absences, you will receive a warning letter. If any more absences are unexcused, you may be terminated from the Program.

*Foster Grandparents* who receive a stipend will be paid 4 hours for their attendance at a monthly In-Service Training over and above their 20 hours per week of regular school time.

**Please note:** If you go to school instead of coming to the Monthly In-Service Training, you will not be paid your stipend or mileage, unless you have prior approval from the Foster Grandparent Project Director. **If you leave the training early, you will be required to sign out and will only receive stipend for the time spent at the Training**

*Foster Grandparents* who are on leave but able to attend an In-Service Training or recognition event are encouraged to do so. However, if you are on inactive status, you will not be paid a stipend for attending In-Service Training.

## 310 Recognition

The Foster Grandparent Program sponsors a yearly recognition activity which honors the *Foster Grandparents* for their service to the community. The activity takes the place of that month's In-Service Training, and is considered paid time. Each *Foster Grandparent* receives special recognition. Volunteer site staff are encouraged to attend.

The Agency may also sponsor other events for *Foster Grandparents* throughout the year. *Foster Grandparents* will also be advised of community opportunities that are available. If it is a Foster Grandparent Program sponsored event, *Foster Grandparents* will be paid a stipend to attend the event.

## 311 Standard of Conduct

The successful business operation and reputation of Your Aging Resource Center is based on the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our volunteers. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observances of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of Your Aging Resource Center is dependent on our stakeholders' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees and volunteers owe a duty to Your Aging Resource Center and its stakeholders to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

Your Aging Resource Center will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its directors, officers, employees and volunteers to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

The use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with your Volunteer Coordinator and, if necessary, with the Foster Grandparent Project Director, for advice and resolution.

**Publicity concerning Your Aging Resource Center must be cleared through the Foster Grandparent Project Director** prior to issuance, whenever such publicity associates the individual in any way with the Agency. This includes radio and TV interviews, speeches, articles to appear in newspapers, etc.

Your Aging Resource Center recognizes the need for all volunteers to exhibit a neat and well-groomed appearance as representatives of the Agency. Your Aging Resource Center maintains a **scents free** environment. Volunteers are asked to refrain from wearing perfume, cologne or other scented products while engaged in Foster Grandparent Program activities.

Compliance with this policy of business ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every employee and volunteer.

- **Volunteers must never be alone with a child.**
- Volunteers are expected to be at the work station during their regularly scheduled hours and to observe time limitations of the break and meal periods.
- Volunteers who are going to be unavoidably detained during normal scheduled hours are expected to call and alert their supervisor. Attendance is a critical part of performance.
- Every volunteer has the responsibility to protect and safeguard property, materials or equipment of the volunteer site. Theft of any material or equipment from the work site will result in termination and possible legal recourse.
- Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which will, in no way, discredit Your Aging Resource Center, public officials, the volunteer site, fellow volunteers or themselves.
- Threatening or intimidating behavior aimed at or involving other volunteers or others at any time during regular volunteer hours is counterproductive and will not be tolerated.
- In order for the Program to realize its objectives, it is necessary that all volunteers perform their volunteer duties within the scope of their assigned responsibilities. Refusal or neglect to perform assignments will normally result in the volunteer being discharged for insubordination.
- Reporting to the volunteer station under the influence of alcoholic beverages or drugs is prohibited. A violation of this standard will result in dismissal.
- Political and religious activities of volunteers are not permitted at the volunteer site.
- Volunteers are expected to regularly perform their duties and assignments in a professional manner.
- Your Aging Resource Center recognizes that volunteers must sometimes place or receive personal calls. However, the site's telephone system is intended primarily to serve the needs of the volunteer site and it is essential to keep personal use from interfering with that purpose.
- Cell phone use is prohibited and cell phones should be silenced during work hours. Volunteers needing to make personal calls should try to do so during non-work periods. Ask callers to minimize the number of personal calls you receive. Volunteers needing to make long distance calls must use their own personal cell phones, charge to their home telephone number, or call collect.

## **312 Harassment Statement of Policy**

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Florida Human Rights Act of 1977, Your Aging Resource Center is committed to providing a volunteer environment that is free of discrimination and sexual harassment. Any volunteer who engages in conduct of a sexually offensive, intimidating or hostile nature shall be subject to dismissal.

Sexual harassment is a form of unlawful sex discrimination defined as unwelcome, deliberative, or repeated sexually explicit verbal or physical conduct which embarrasses, humiliates or otherwise adversely affects the recipient(s). Protection of the law extends to both men and women and to harassment of someone of the same or opposite sex. Sexual harassment may include the following:

- Verbal harassment or abuse or use of profanity
- Subtle pressure or requests for sexual activity
- Unnecessary touching, such as patting, pinching, hugging or brushing against another's body
- Unwelcome requests for dates
- Display or distribution of obscene or sexually oriented photographs, drawings, jokes, pictures or cartoons
- Persistent comments on another's sexual preference
- Questions about another's sex life.

Your Aging Resource Center has an affirmative duty to maintain a workplace free from sexual harassment. This duty includes assuring that this policy is discussed with all volunteers and emphasizing to them that they are not required to endure insulting, degrading or exploitative sexual harassment.

Any volunteer who believes he/she has been harassed by anyone while on assignment should promptly report the facts of the incident or incidents to the Foster Grandparent Project Director who shall cause the complaint to be investigated and take appropriate corrective action. If the complaint involves the Agency Program staff, the Chief Executive Officer of Your Aging Resource Center should be contacted.

No adverse action will be taken against any volunteer in retaliation for making a good faith complaint of sexual harassment.

## 313 Performance Management

### Evaluation

The classroom teacher and the Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator shall be responsible for reviewing the performance of each *Foster Grandparent* volunteer on an annual basis. Areas of evaluation will include quality and quantity of volunteer duties, the faithfulness of the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer to the assigned duties, and such other characteristics as identified in the Performance Evaluation Form.

New *Foster Grandparents* will be evaluated by the classroom teacher and the Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator near the end of the three (3) month probationary period to assess progress.

Once a probationary period is completed successfully, performance reviews will be completed annually at the end of each school year. Performance evaluations at more frequent intervals may be conducted at the discretion of the Foster Grandparent Project Director.

Each volunteer shall be notified by the Foster Grandparent Program staff of each performance rating at the time of the rating in order that he/she may be afforded an opportunity for correcting weaknesses in performance. All performance ratings will be kept in the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer's file.

*Foster Grandparents* will be evaluated in the areas listed on the evaluation form:

- Understands and enjoys serving the children
- Recognizes that each child is a sensitive, thinking individual and treats accordingly
- Relates to children in a positive, pleasant way
- Knows and understands the duties as assigned in the Assignment Plan
- Follows policies of the site, including confidentiality
- Uses time to interact with assigned children
- Is dependable; Arrives on time
- Shows enthusiasm towards the work
- Demonstrates good health and energy levels adequate for the assignment
- Displays a good attitude and a good sense of humor
- Displays good physical appearance

The evaluation is not limited to this written report. It is an ongoing process of observation and communication that happens between the *Foster Grandparent* site supervisor and Foster Grandparent Program staff throughout the year.

## **Disciplinary Action**

### **Probation**

Your Aging Resource Center's Foster Grandparent Program has established operational goals which include the maintenance of optimum volunteer conditions and the consistent application of certain reasonable performance standards. Performance standards are established for the benefit of the programs, clients we serve and the volunteers. The Agency and work sites expect orderly and proper conduct from volunteers.

A probationary period can be used as a disciplinary measure at any time during the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer's service. In this event, specific goals for the *Foster Grandparent* will be developed with a specific time period for accomplishment. Foster Grandparent Program staff will follow up on goal accomplishment and complete an evaluation prior to the end of the probationary period. If the goals have not been accomplished in the allotted time, the probationary period may be extended. If no progress has been made, the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer may be released from duties as a *Foster Grandparent* and will not be allowed to participate in the Program.

### **Disciplinary Action Outside of the Probationary Period**

Your Aging Resource Center expects volunteers to perform their assigned duties at or above satisfactory levels, to follow accepted standards or workplace behavior, and to comply strictly with all laws, rules and regulations. The purpose of disciplinary action is to correct problem situations, provide an atmosphere in which the volunteer can learn from past mistakes and minimize the loss of dignity and self-esteem. The Agency does not take disciplinary action with the intent to punish.

Misconduct not specifically described in these guidelines will be handled as warranted by the circumstances of the case involved.

The sequence of disciplinary action is outlined below. The duration of each step will depend on the seriousness of the situation. Violation of the standards of conduct or any action considered counter-productive to the efficient and effective operation of the Foster Grandparent Program may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Informal Counseling
- Written Warning
- Suspension/Improvement Performance Plan
- Termination

### **Informal Counseling**

The Volunteer Coordinator and/or Project Director will counsel the volunteer privately on an informal basis. The seriousness of the problem and the possible consequences if the volunteer does not correct the problem will be explained. The specific policies or procedures, which apply to the situation, will be reviewed.

## **Written Warning**

For repeated or serious problems, either performance or conduct, the Project Director will formally counsel the volunteer and issue a written warning explaining the nature of the problem(s) and what the volunteer must do to improve.

## **Suspension/Improvement Performance Plan**

If the volunteer does not respond to the first two steps in the progressive discipline policy, the Project Director may suspend the volunteer for a specified number of days depending on the seriousness of the situation. The suspension notice will include a final warning indicating that termination will be the next step in the process.

In certain cases, the volunteer may be given an Improvement Performance Plan instead of being suspended. The Plan is a final resolution attempt to correct a performance or conduct problem. Failure to achieve the specified results within the specified time frame will result in termination.

## **Disciplinary Probation**

A probationary period can be used as a disciplinary measure at any time during the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer's service. In this event, specific goals for the *Foster Grandparent* will be developed with a specific time period for accomplishment. Foster Grandparent Program staff will follow up on goal accomplishment and complete an evaluation prior to the end of the probationary period. If the goals have not been accomplished in the allotted time, the probationary period may be extended. If no progress has been made, the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer may be released from duties as a *Foster Grandparent* and will not be allowed to participate in the Program.

## **Termination**

Volunteers who fail to respond to the progressive disciplinary process will be terminated. Volunteers who are involuntarily terminated shall be given written notice of their termination by the Project Director or Chief Executive Officer. Such written notice shall include the employee's right to file a grievance, unless the volunteer is in a probationary period. Probationary volunteers do not have the right of grievance. In the event a volunteer is involuntarily terminated and elects to file a grievance, the Project Director is authorized to suspend such volunteer without pay pending the outcome of the grievance procedure.

## **Immediate Termination**

Flagrant disregard for policies and practices such as gross insubordination, physical violence, dishonesty, drug or alcohol abuse or other actions that threaten the welfare and safety of other individuals or falsifying records may warrant immediate termination.

## 314 Appeal/Grievance Procedure

A volunteer grievance process is available as a fair and effective means of resolving duty related complaints and problems. Volunteers can use the procedure when they feel a duty related decision is discriminatory or unfair with established policies and practices.

Volunteers cannot use the grievance procedure to appeal decisions related to the Agency's responsibility to determine corporate direction, strategy or operating decisions, such as the number and assignment of volunteers, establishment of rules of conduct, determination of the hours and days of work, stipends and/or benefits.

### Grievance Steps

1. The first line of resolution is at the supervisory level. The volunteer is to discuss the complaint with his/her immediate Volunteer Coordinator. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the Volunteer Coordinator's response, he/she must proceed to the next supervisory level. The volunteer has seven (7) working days from the date of the first level supervisory meeting to provide, in writing, to the Project Director the exact nature and facts of the unresolved complaint.
2. The second line of resolution will rest with the Project Director who must receive the grievance in writing from the volunteer. The Project Director will convene a meeting with the volunteer within seven (7) working days after the receipt of the written complaint. The Project Director will provide a written response to the volunteer within seven (7) days of that meeting. If the volunteer is still not satisfied with the written response, then he/she may proceed to step three of the grievance procedure.
3. The volunteer shall submit the written complaint to Your Aging Resource Center Chief Executive Officer with a copy to the Project Director within seven (7) days of receipt of the Project Director's written response. The CEO will, within seven (7) days of receiving the written complaint, convene a meeting with the volunteer and the Project Director. Both the volunteer and the Project Director will have the opportunity to discuss the issue(s) in dispute. The CEO has seven (7) working days from the date of the meeting to provide a written response. The decision of Your Aging Resource Center CEO is the final step in the grievance procedure.

Once a volunteer files a grievance, he/she agrees not to discuss the substance of the grievance with other volunteers. To do so, the volunteer waives his/her right to continue the grievance process.

All written records pertaining to the grievance will be maintained in a confidential file separate from the official volunteer file.

## 315 Resignation/Volunteer Reduction

*Foster Grandparent* volunteers shall be expected to submit, in writing, a minimum of three weeks advance notice of resignation. If three (3) weeks' notice is not given, the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer may not be paid for any remaining balance in their Personal Time Off bank. If it is in the best interest of the program, the Foster Grandparent Project Director may at his/her discretion release the *Foster Grandparent* immediately.

Reductions in the number of *Foster Grandparent* volunteers may occur for such reasons as: lack of funds, changes in organizational structure and changes in volunteer sites. A *Foster Grandparent* volunteer affected by a reduction shall receive at least a two-week written notice of termination. Such termination shall be without prejudice or adverse effect on eligibility for future volunteer opportunities with the Foster Grandparent Program.

## Section 400 Benefits

### 401 Stipend Payments

*Foster Grandparents* are officially considered volunteers. If eligible, they may receive a stipend that enables them to serve by offsetting any volunteering expenses. The stipend amount is set by the Corporation for National Service and is currently \$2.65 per hour. A *Foster Grandparent* serving twenty hours per week for the entire year (1,044 hours) will receive \$2,767, approximately \$230 per month.

The stipend is not considered earned income and is not taxable, and it is *not* counted in determining eligibility for Medicaid, SSI, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), subsidized housing, or any other federal program. If a *Foster Grandparent* lives in subsidized housing, their rent will not go up because of their *Foster Grandparent* stipend payments. Any *Foster Grandparent* who encounters difficulty in proving that their stipend should not be counted as income for other programs should contact the Foster Grandparent Program office for assistance.

### Timesheets

The Foster Grandparent Program requires that volunteers submit time sheets to the Agency at set periods in a timely manner. A record shall be kept of the hours volunteered each pay period by the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer. The volunteer site supervisor shall be responsible for certifying the actual hours volunteered by each *Foster Grandparent*. The *Foster Grandparent* volunteer must ensure that complete and accurate time sheets are submitted in accordance with the established reporting requirements.

### Pay Periods

Stipend checks are issued every other Friday on a bi-weekly basis. There are 26 pay periods in the year. A yearly schedule of pay periods and reporting days is provided to each volunteer at the beginning of the calendar year and at the Back-To-School In-Service Training.

### Stipend Pay Owed to a Deceased Foster Grandparent

If a *Foster Grandparent* dies, any earned but unpaid stipend will be paid to the beneficiary listed on their information sheet. To change the beneficiary, contact the Foster Grandparent Program.

## 402 Holidays

The following holidays will be observed:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day\*
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- December 24<sup>th</sup> or December 26<sup>th</sup> (CEO decides)
- December 25<sup>th</sup>

\*Independence Day is a paid holiday only for Foster Grandparents who are volunteering in a summer school program during the month of July.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed as a holiday; if a holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed as a holiday.

## 403 Time Off

Volunteers will be given 10 days per year in a "Personal Time Off" (PTO) bank. This time may be used as personal, sick or vacation time. Once the 10 days are used, there will be no more time off with pay until the beginning of the next school year. No time will be accrued for sick, vacation or personal time. Unused time will not rollover and should be used by the end of the school year. Any absences during the initial probationary period will be taken as leave without pay. Volunteers are requested to give their site supervisor a minimum of 2 weeks' notice when planning time off. If an approved holiday falls during a **Foster Grandparent** volunteer's scheduled time off, the holiday will not be deducted from the PTO Bank.

**Foster Grandparent** volunteers may use days from their Personal Time Off bank for the following purposes:

- Personal illness, injury, or exposure to a contagious disease that would endanger others.
- Appointments with a doctor, dentist or other recognized practitioner. In order to minimize absenteeism, medical appointments are to be scheduled, whenever possible, outside the normal duty hours.
- Serious illness or injury of an immediate family member (parents/step, foster parent(s)/guardian, parents-in-law, brother/sister, spouse, children/step children, grandchildren) or such individuals who in discretion of the Foster Grandparent Program Project Director may satisfy the term "immediate family" up to a maximum of six days (24 hours) during any calendar year. Leave in excess of 6 days (24 hours) may be requested as leave without pay.

## 404 Leave

If the schools in your assigned county are closed due to weather, *Foster Grandparents are to stay at home even if the assignment is not in a school.* *Foster Grandparents* will be paid for this day if their status is Active. *Example: If Palm Beach County Schools are closed due to bad weather, all Palm Beach County Foster Grandparents will stay home and will receive pay for this day.* This will not affect your personal leave time.

If the schools in your county are open and you do not feel safe in traveling, please stay at home. However, you will need to use a PTO day to receive payment. The Program does not want any *Foster Grandparent's* safety in jeopardy. If *Foster Grandparents* feel they need to stay home on a day that is not considered a natural or hazardous incident by the Foster Grandparent Program, they may use PTO hours to cover the time off.

### Accident Leave

If a *Foster Grandparent* is injured while on duty at a volunteer site (or while traveling to or from the site) and is unable to volunteer because of the injury, the Program will provide up to twenty (20) work days of stipend-paid leave. There must be written verification of the disability from the *Foster Grandparent's* doctor, with a review of this in two (2) weeks. No benefit hours will be earned during the paid leave period. If further leave time is required, any PTO benefit hours available may be used. When this time is exhausted, the Program will no longer provide stipend payments.

All injuries must be reported immediately to the site supervisor and the Foster Grandparent Program staff. The site supervisor must complete an incident report. Depending on the occurrence, *Foster Grandparents* are required to cooperate with the insurance claim process and any other associated procedures. Complete details on how to apply for the excess insurance will be provided by your Volunteer Coordinator. Failure to comply can result in suspension or termination from the program.

### Leave of Absence Without Pay

The Foster Grandparent Program Project Director may authorize leave without pay to a *Foster Grandparent* volunteer for a period of up to six (6) months for extended illness, disability or other reasons deemed to be in the best interest of the Foster Grandparent Program which do not adversely affect program operations. Reassignment is not guaranteed and will be based on available site openings.

### Jury Duty

If a *Foster Grandparent* needs to take time off to serve on a jury, he/she will **not** receive regular pay from the Foster Grandparent Program because the pay given for jury duty is higher than the stipend amount.

### Bereavement Leave

*Foster Grandparent* volunteers may be allowed stipend pay up to five (5) hours per day not to exceed three days per incident for reasonable and necessary time to attend the funeral and/or conduct the essential affairs of a member of the immediate family.

## 405 Insurance

*Foster Grandparents* are covered by insurance during the time they are serving as volunteers at their sites, attending Program activities, or traveling between their homes and their places of assignment. The insurance is **excess** insurance meaning that it covers only those expenses that are not paid by Medicare, Medicaid, private health insurance or private automobile insurance.

**Accident Medical Insurance:** This excess insurance covers *Foster Grandparents* for personal injuries that happen when they are injured traveling directly to and from or participating in volunteer activities.

**Personal Liability Insurance:** If a *Foster Grandparent's* actions cause harm to a person or to that person's property, the *Foster Grandparent* could be held liable. Coverage for this is under the Agency's general liability policy, but with some limitations.

**Excess Automobile Liability Insurance:** This provides excess automobile coverage for you as a registered volunteer driver while performing your duties. This insurance applies only after your own insurance is exhausted, or the policy's retention has been exceeded. You are protected for bodily injury or property damage claims arising out of your activities (including driving directly between your home and your volunteer site).

### Other

If a *Foster Grandparent's* medically necessary eyeglasses, dentures, or hearing aid should be accidentally damaged while he/she is on duty as a *Foster Grandparent*, the damage must be reported to the volunteer site immediately. The site should report the damage to the Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator within 24 hours.

The insurance the Agency provides is **not** a substitute for personal insurance normally carried by a *Foster Grandparent*, and only applies during the hours the *Foster Grandparent* is serving as a volunteer for the Program.

### Accidents

Any accident that occurs during a *Foster Grandparent's* service or transportation time should be reported to the Foster Grandparent Program Office with 24 hours. If medical care is required, *Foster Grandparents* are responsible for submitting their medical bills to Medicare, Medicaid, and/or their own health insurance plan. If any unpaid expenses remain after the primary applicable coverage has paid, then the unpaid expenses should be given to the Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator for submission to the Agency's insurance company.

## 406 Annual Medical Examination

*Foster Grandparents* are to have a medical examination each year. *Foster Grandparents* will be given a form to be completed by the physician stating that an examination has been conducted and the volunteer is physically able to do the required tasks.

## Section 500 Volunteer Site Responsibility

### 501 Responsibilities

A volunteer site is a public school, day care center or private non-profit organization that serves children and accepts the responsibility for assignment and for daily supervision of *Foster Grandparent* volunteers.

The volunteer site responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Signing and returning the Foster Grandparent Program Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement. This memo is a legal written document prepared and signed by the Foster Grandparent Program sponsor and the volunteer site, which identifies program working relationships, requirements and mutual responsibilities.
2. Identifying children with special needs and developing each child's Assignment Plan. Explaining to the volunteer the child's specific needs, goals and specific tasks for the *Foster Grandparent* to carry-out in working with the child to achieve the Assignment Plan goals.
3. Providing a safe working environment for the *Foster Grandparent* to include screening for potentially violent children who might cause physical harm to the volunteer.
4. Providing supervision, instruction and support to the *Foster Grandparent* volunteer.
5. Providing orientation to the site, any specific training required to begin service at the site and ongoing training as needed.
6. Assisting program staff by evaluating the performance of the volunteer at the end of the probationary period and annually thereafter.
7. Complying with the volunteer policies of the Foster Grandparent Program.
8. Validating and certifying volunteer time sheets.
9. Advising the Volunteer Coordinator within 24 hours of incidents involving a *Foster Grandparent*.
10. Completing the Expected Outcome Area of the Assignment Plan for each child at the beginning of the year, mid-year, and end of year; returning promptly to the Foster Grandparent Program Office.
11. Providing a meal, as appropriate, for the volunteer during the regular service schedule.
12. Providing recognition and encouragement for the volunteer(s) at the volunteer site, i.e. birthday cards, personal thank you cards. *Please include the Foster Grandparent volunteers in your volunteer recognition activities.*
13. Participating in program recognition events provided by the Foster Grandparent Program.
14. Preparing a Performance Evaluation on each Foster Grandparent at least annually.

***Foster Grandparents must always serve under the supervision of a site staff member at their volunteer site. Foster Grandparents must never be alone with or solely in charge of the children.***

The intention is for a *Foster Grandparent* to be the **extra person, not a classroom aide**, but the one who has time to work one-on-one as outlined in the Assignment Plans. A *Foster Grandparent* cannot be alone with a child or be asked to take children to the restroom or office. If the teacher asks the *Foster Grandparent* to do so, **the Foster Grandparent must respectfully decline.**

## **APPENDIX**

1. Accident Reporting Information
2. Accident Report
3. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Foster Grandparent Handbook – Volunteer
4. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Foster Grandparent Handbook - Site
5. Annual Income Review
6. Assignment Plans (2) – Pre-K/K and Grades 1-3
7. Background Screening – Affidavit of Good Moral Character
8. Child Abuse and Reporting Requirements
9. Code of Ethics
10. Confidentiality Form
11. Direct Deposit Application
12. Emergency Medical Information
13. Foster Grandparent Job Description
14. Media and Publicity Release
15. Medical Authorization
16. Performance Evaluation