

DSCBA Volunteer Guidelines and Expectations

The Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area (DSCBA) relies on volunteers, and your participation is meaningful and essential to the success of our programs and events. When you commit to volunteering, a specific role is designated for you, and we are counting on your presence. If you are unable to attend your scheduled commitment, **please notify the DSCBA Volunteer Manager and/or Program Manager as soon as possible.**

We want your volunteer experience to be positive and rewarding—please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you.

Volunteer Expectations

- Arrive 15 minutes early to prepare and receive any necessary information.
- Photos may only be taken with prior consent from DSCBA staff, and all photos are for DSCBA use only.
- Dress appropriately: casual, comfortable clothing is best.
- Acceptable: jeans, comfortable pants or shorts, polo shirts, T-shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts.
- Not allowed: short-shorts, revealing or tight-fitting clothing, tank tops, low-cut shirts, or clothing with offensive language or images.
- Please do not wear perfumes or colognes.
- Phones must be on silent and put away during the entire class/event.
- Engage and participate. You are a role model—join activities and support participants.
- Report any safety concerns, behavioral issues, or injuries **to DSCBA staff immediately.**
 - **Only DSCBA staff communicate concerns, feedback, or behavioral information with parents/guardians. Volunteers should not discuss individual participant behavior or performance with families.**
- Use a buddy system (2 volunteers : 1 participant) when escorting participants.
- Do not enter restrooms with participants. DSCBA staff will assist with toileting needs.
- Volunteers under 18 may not share personal contact information (phone, email, social media) with participants.
- Visitors (friends or family) require prior approval from the Volunteer Manager or Program Manager.

Helpful Tips for New Volunteers

- Use person-first language: “person with Down syndrome,” not “Down syndrome person.”
- Be patient. Allow time for participants to process and respond (wait ~10 seconds after asking a question).
- Encourage independence. Allow participants to answer for themselves.
- Give clear, simple directions.
- Avoid side conversations, which can be distracting.
- Treat participants as you would your peers. If someone makes you uncomfortable, calmly communicate appropriate boundaries—you are modeling social skills.
- If you have questions or concerns, speak with the facilitator or staff after the class/event. These conversations help build confidence and understanding.