



A day in the life of a volunteer

Three words to describe a day in the life of a volunteer: fun, energetic & rewarding. The volunteer's role at the centre is to give the children a childhood that every child deserves, full of love and affection, kisses and cuddles, regardless of their health or background.

We generally arrive at the Centre by 8:30am and volunteers are either on the ground floor with the babies or on the second floor with the toddlers. Volunteers are very involved, playing with the children, helping the careers, with feeding, teeth brushing as well as folding and changing the odd nappy! We generally take the children for a walk around 10am, stopping for a drink at one of Saigon's infamous cafes or the centres playground. You would be amazed by how excited these children are during the walk and also the drink. The children seem to have endless energy, always ready for action. The 3 hour lunch break, when the children are napping, is great for recharging the energy that's needed for round two with the children in the afternoon.

Volunteers are in charge of running daily activities aimed at improving fine/gross motor skills, coordination including: construction games and role play, arts and crafts, puzzles etc. This is also an opportunity for the children to grasp basic playground etiquette, such as taking turns and sharing toys!! The remainder of the time volunteers can be found running wild with the children; one minute playing chasing, while the next buried under a mound of laughing toddlers, its all part of the fun!! Bringing happiness to children is also a great joy to us volunteers.

It's a different story on the ground floor where peek-a-boo and cuddles are the favorite with the babies, with a more chilled out and mellow vibe. By giving lots of hugs and care, we can enhance children's sense of security and encourage them to explore more. The role of the volunteer is just as important with the babies as on the second floor. As these children are younger thus being less energetic and mobile, we tend to focus more on the one-to-one interaction rather than group activities.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, the older children attend the special education class. This class teaches the children numeric, geometrical and lingual skills including colors, shapes, numbers etc. This is a great opportunity for volunteers to observe the children's progress and eagerness to learn, and also to get more understanding of discipline-training through the teacher's way of dealing with children. Each has his/her own personality and role in the class, from the loud know-it all to the teacher's pet. The smiles on the children's faces make the early starts worthwhile. Excursions are planned for every Thursday afternoon which include; the local playground or park, waterpark and an indoor adventure centre. The children are fascinated by the world outside the centre and really love these mini adventures as it gives them a chance to explore new things.

The center has a strong loving and friendly atmosphere in which the volunteers can't help but become immersed. As a result of such a warm and loving environment in the centre, the children, the careers and all the staff in CNCF, we start work in the centre with full spirits each morning and regard everyday as a meaningful new day with the belief that we can help each child to realize a happy childhood.