



Volunteer Handbook

2023-2024

FROM THE DIRECTOR

My journey as a special needs mom started 17 years ago when my husband and I found ourselves as caregivers of a special kiddo who dealt with medical issues and a childhood that looked different. Through those years, we saw our other 3 boys struggle with mental health issues likely related to the secondary trauma of having a brother who required out of state medical providers, long hospital stays and too many surgeries and procedures to count. Along the journey, our youngest son was identified with needs requiring daily intervention. Our life is full of joy. And it can also be hard.

After accepting the role of Pause Program Coordinator in 2015, I was able to see Pause through two lenses - one of a parent and one of a program leader and innovator. I realized then our story was the story of so many just like us. Our journey may have looked slightly different, but our family found a tribe and my kids found acceptance. My passion to find ways to support families found new life and my greatest hope is you have seen that translate into everything the Pause team has developed over the past 7 years.

Thanks to purposeful planning by our exploratory team and the hundreds of conversations we were privileged to have with you - our community partners, volunteers, families and funders who believe in the mission and vision of Pause - we are proud to say in 2021 Pause for Parents, Play for Kids, Inc. launched as an independent non-profit. Because of this exciting new journey, we are able to expand what rest, support, connection and fun look like for families and open additional doors for funding, community support and brand expansion.

I am proud of my team who says yes everyday with passion, excellence and a heart to serve and humbled by each of you exploring this update of the work we have done over the past year.

To our amazing volunteers, THANK YOU. Because you have said yes, families will be stronger and more resilient.


LISA MCCOON

Executive Director



WHY YOU MATTER

Our parents are often exhausted, isolated and at the end of their ropes. When you serve at Pause, you are helping open our space to families in need of respite. With you, we can open rooms for numerous kiddos who need a safe and fun space to foster confidence and connection all while giving their caregivers a breather.

You are building resilience and increasing hope for entire families that will last days and even weeks past the event. Respite care strengthens families, protects family health and wellbeing, decreases feelings of isolation and improves the family's ability to cope with daily responsibilities.



OUR TEAM



Lisa McCoon
Executive Director



Jaclin Gomez
Director of Operations



Amy Rednour
Systems Administrator



Dan McSwain
Director of Development



Emily Denlinger
Volunteer Coordinator



Amanda Nolasco
Event Coordinator



Melody Schurgast
Director of Family Strategy



Sam Story
Resilience Coordinator



Jillian Zuzolo
Resilience Coordinator



Kaylann Yankee
Content Coordinator



Taylor Giltner
Director of Unlimited



Jessica Rudie
Unlimited Volunteer
Coordinator



Mackenzie Smith
Unlimited Assistant

RESILIENCE SUPPORT TEAM (RST)

What is RST?

A team of staff, interns, and volunteers that are here to help kiddos navigate BIG feelings. This team is led by the Pause Resilience Coordinator. At every event there will be a Resilience Coordinator(s) who help support the RST.

When do you request RST support?

When a child is experiencing BIG feelings and/or making unsafe choices.

This may look like:

- Crying, becoming emotional, refusing to leave or share
- Yelling, arguing, name calling or making threats
- Ignoring safety rules and important instructions
- Throwing things, hitting others, or refusing to go with group

Pause Kits

Pause Kits are located in each room at the RST station and have supports to help kids! Each kit contains items that use the 5 senses to help kids ground and regulate their bodies through a variety of mindfulness activities. At the beginning of each event, RST volunteers will lead a 5 minute group activity to help kids know how to use the "item of the month."

Why is resilience so important?

Life is hard and we all have tough experiences. While we can't stop all hard moments, we can grow our ability to navigate through those dark times. The ability to bounce back after a difficult life experience is called resilience. Helping kids and families grow their resilience muscles is what Resilience Coordinators do with support of the RST!

Become a RST Volunteer!

Help our kids regulate and feel safe when they are experiencing big emotions, alongside our RST. You will float around as needed during the event. Must have relevant training or volunteer experience. Desired skills: adaptable, open to training, patient, able to move around and creative problem solving.

The Terms:

Regulation: a state of calm where thinking is accessible and choice is possible

Dysregulation: a state of unrest where thinking is difficult or impossible and choices are restricted because responses are automatic reactions

Co-regulation: a regulation effect that results in another person regulating themselves

Self-regulation: the ability to maintain a regulated state of mind/body through various sensory and emotional experiences



Learn more about RST tools
on our Volunteer Hub!



BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

- **Meet a major need in our community!** Make an immediate difference with Pause by helping us fill the vast gap in our human services field by providing care, respite and hope to our families.
- **Personal and professional development!** Volunteering can help develop leadership skills, improve communication, and enhance problem-solving capabilities through hands-on experiences. All while allowing you to gain knowledge and valuable experience in areas that are of interest to you!
- **Community building!** Volunteering with us creates stronger relationships, better outcomes and more inclusive communities.
- **Networking opportunities and chances to build relationships!** Volunteering with Pause allows you to connect with like minded individuals or people you may not meet otherwise.
- **Increased empathy and compassion!** When you serve with us you are saying “yes” to being curious and allowing yourself to be stretched and challenged. You are promoting an appreciation for diversity and inclusion.
- **Health and well-being!** Research shows that volunteering releases dopamine, AKA the “feel good” chemical, and reduces the feeling of stress and isolation.



VOLUNTEER FAQs

What happens when I have to unexpectedly cancel?

We're counting on YOU to show up for our kiddos and fulfill your commitment. We understand that illness or emergencies happen. In that case:

- You will contact the Volunteer Coordinator (on page 3) at least 48 hours in advance, when possible.
- If you do not cancel prior or "no-show" to the event you registered for, you will not be permitted to volunteer at the next 2 events.
- Please understand that 2 "no-shows" or cancellations within less than 48 hours notice will result in termination from the program. Thanks for helping us plan the best way we can for our kiddos!

What does it mean to be fully present at events?

- Keeping my cell phone on silent or vibrate and using my phone only in case of emergency.
- Keeping my kiddos as my number one focus and center of my attention during the event.
- Keeping sidebar conversations with other friends/family who may be volunteers at a minimum so as to not compromise the safety of the kiddos I am responsible for.
- Staying with my kiddos for the entire event, never leaving them unless they are under the care of another volunteer for personal reasons such as using the restroom, taking a break or needing to make/receive an emergency phone call.

Who do I go to when I have a question?

- Please share any questions or concerns about the kiddos you are working with or the event in general with the Pause Leadership Team.

Am I allowed to take a break during the event?

- Absolutely! Notify our Pause Leadership Team if you anticipate needing a break throughout the event. It is appropriate and encouraged to ask for a break when you need one!

Do I have to come early or stay after an event?

- Yes please! Come to the volunteer huddle prior to the event (arrival time will be in the reminder email from the Volunteer Coordinator). We ask volunteers to stay for the duration of events and assisting with clean up as necessary. When everyone pitches in, clean-up is quick and easy!

TRAINING & COMMITMENT

Training & Support:

- Blended training
 - In-person training at events
 - *Coming soon* Pause will also provide volunteers with online training, a virtual facility tour, and various RST resources on our volunteer HUB from our staff to help equip and build into you.
- Pause will provide you with a volunteer handbook with all the relevant information needed to be a confident volunteer.
- Buddies will receive individual support from our RST team to provide you with necessary information along with tips and tricks on how to help your buddy best.

Commitment:

- Consistency is hugely important. The more you get to know the kids, the more of an impact you can make in their lives. Consistency creates a sense of community, safety, momentum and long term impact!
- As a Pause volunteer, we ask that you commit to helping us every other month at one of our many events. We are asking for roughly 4 hours every other month. This will ensure all our volunteers also receive respite, while also staffing our events well. If you want more Pause in your life, feel free to come to as many events as you like!



SAFETY REMINDERS

Bathrooms:

- Do not leave children unattended to go to the bathroom.
- Volunteers can take a group of kids to the bathroom.
- Volunteers wait outside of the bathroom until children are done in the bathroom.
- If assisting a child in diapers or other toileting needs, ask a staff member and 2 people will assist.

General Safety:

- Understand confidentiality in regards to children's medical conditions and challenges.
- Use children's name tags and rosters to help you identify kids with a food allergy and children who cannot have their photo taken.
- Take note of specific children in your care with allergy and/or emergency medical plans and get familiar with what your role is in an emergency.
- DO NOT TAKE PHOTOS OF CHILDREN - Once we post to social media you may share!
- No one alone with a child AND no child left alone - for your safety and the child's!
- Get to know Backyard safety rules (page 10).
- Our CIS staff will be onsite to assist with big emotions, be sure to ask them for additional assistance with a child if necessary.

Arrival & Dismissal of Children:

- Each child is walked to the front Welcome Center by Pause volunteers or staff to greet their caregiver and will be called utilizing a security system/process.
- No children left unattended. Please do not let children meet caregivers alone.

FIRE & TORNADO SAFETY

- **Review the escape routes** posted in each room for the nearest exit.
- **Bring the roster** for your group.
- **Keep all children together** in a grassy area away from the street, in a distance far enough away from the fire as determined by the fire department instructions.
- **Take attendance immediately** once evacuating outside or to the tornado shelter area.
- If caregivers or others come to assist, **keep the group of children together** in the same location. Children need to remain in supervision of Pause staff and should not be dismissed to caregiver until our process is complete.
- **Keep sounds to a minimum** in order to hear directions from emergency personnel.
 - If appropriate, distract children by singing softly, story telling, hand games, etc.
 - Use positive language, affirmations and de-escalation techniques.
 - Avoid divulging too many details to children to decrease anxiety.



BACKYARD (GROSS MOTOR) SAFETY

Reminders:

- This room is to help get energy out, not to hype the children up so that they become dysregulated.
- If you need any help, please radio a staff member or RST.
- At the end of each session, please have the children help clean up and reset the room.

Guidelines:

- **Shoes/Socks:** Kiddos are allowed to take them off. If they do, put in the white cubby.
- **Bathroom:** If a kiddo needs to use the bathroom, escort them to the bathroom. Do not leave the Backyard unattended. If needed, radio staff or RST.
- **Trampoline:** 1-2 people at one time. No shoes!
- **Zipline:** Adult supervision required. One adult at the top and one at the bottom (no spinning or hard pushes).
- **Flat Swing:** Push slow and steady.
- **Teeter Totter:** Assist children on and off safely.
- **Rock Wall:** Supervise children going up and down.
- **Cones:** These are in place so children do not walk in front of the zip line. Please redirect children from playing with the cones so they remain in place for safety around the zip line.
- **Engage** children in activities (discourage tag, running and chasing).

Ideas to Redirect:

- Use a parachute! Parachute is available in the silver ball rack.
- Build an obstacle course together in the smaller section of the Backyard.
- Swing a child to help them settle down and regulate.
- Use miscellaneous activities in the white cubbies for a calmer activity to do together.

Unlimited by Pause

Volunteer Roles



unlimited
by Pause 

Unlimited by Pause is a Sunday morning learning experience to help children with extra needs find and follow Jesus.

Just like schools have a variety of learning accommodations, environments, and methods; Unlimited by Pause was designed to meet the faith development needs for a variety of children on Sunday mornings.

We facilitate small groups of children with dedicated volunteers inside Center Pointe Christian Church in Liberty Township, Ohio.



Scan to read the full descriptions of training, commitment and responsibilities for Unlimited Volunteers!



Volunteer Roles Include:

- **1:1 Buddy:** Partner with a child that has more complex needs.
- **Small Group Leader:** Lead the same small group of kids through a 1 hour program schedule.
- **Small Group Helper:** Assist the Small Group Leader - help children complete crafts, games and activities.
- **Coach:** Lead, support and connect with other volunteers.
- **Resilience Support Team (RST):** Support children navigating big feelings.
- **Gross Motor Rally Room:** Oversee fun activities for our kids staying two hours.
- **Check-In Host:** Greet and check-in/out families. Escort kids to their small group environment.
- **Registration Team Leader:** Greet and check-in/out families and lead a small group of check-in hosts.
- **Unlimited Event Prep:** Help prep curriculum and activities.

Pause Events

Volunteer Roles



|| pause

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Small Group Leader

- **Role & Responsibilities**
 - Lead a small group of kids in a similar age range through various pre-planned activities and crafts.
 - Ensure your group is staying on schedule for the event.
 - Ensure group safety with the help of your small group helpers.
 - Oversee the other small group helpers to make sure they are engaged and staying on task.
- **Desired Skills**
 - Experience working with kids (ex: consistent Pause volunteer, teacher, parent, SLP, therapist, nurse, etc.)
 - Ability to lead and take ownership
 - Organized
 - Reliable
 - Flexible
 - Engaging
 - Able to redirect

Small Group Helper

- **Role & Responsibilities**
 - Assist a small group of kids in a similar age range through various activities and crafts.
 - Support the room's group leader in ensuring group safety and punctuality throughout the event.
- **Desired Skills**
 - Fun and engaging
 - Enjoy kids
 - Team player
 - Great role for someone with minimal to no experience with kids

VOLUNTEER ROLES

1:1 Buddy

- **Role & Responsibilities**

- Partner with a child that has more complex needs and work one on one with them.
- Engage and have fun with your buddy throughout a variety of pre-planned activities.
- Visit the quiet Reflections room or take sensory breaks as needed with the child.
- Utilize support and assistance from our Resilience Support Team and staff.

- **Desired Skills**

- Experience with kids, specifically kids with special needs
- Open to learning
- Flexible
- Leadership skills
- Engaging
- Patient
- Ability to keep up with an active child

Activity Station Leader

- **Role & Responsibilities**

- Help different groups of kids through your room's pre-planned activity.
- Stay in the room while the groups of kids rotate through.
- Be a pro at walking the kids and their leaders through the craft or activity that is in your room.

- **Desired Skills**

- Energetic
- Engaging
- Clear communicator
- Good at following written instructions
- Detail oriented

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Zone Leader

- **Role & Responsibilities**

- **Oversee 2-3 different rooms during the event.**
- **Check in with the leaders while they are in your zone, making sure they are engaged and supported.**
- **Help keep the leaders in your zone stay on schedule and answer any questions they may have.**
- **Check kids in and out of your zone at the end of the event.**
- **Offer additional short term support to a room if the need arises.**
- **This role is great for returning volunteers or those who may not want to work directly with the kids.**

- **Desired Skills**

- **Natural leader**
- **Enjoys responsibility**
- **Keeps people on schedule and on task**
- **Enjoys taking ownership**
- **Experience with Pause and our events. This role is great for returning volunteers or those who may not want to work directly with the kids.**

Food Team

- **Role & Responsibilities**

- **Prep and serve food to the kids during the event.**
- **Deliver snacks to the rooms as the event winds down.**
- **Serve as a “runner” before and after the event. This is where you take the child to their appropriate room at the start. At the end of the event, you notify the small group leader when the caretaker has arrived for pickup.**
- **This role is great for someone wanting to try out Pause for the first time or not fully comfortable working with kids yet!**

- **Desired Skills**

- **Ability to follow directions (verbal & written)**
- **Work well in a fast paced environment**
- **Attention to detail and cleanliness**
- **Work well with others**

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Admin Support

- **Role & Responsibilities**

- Help clean the Pause space during the weekdays.
- Help with event prep during the weekdays (material prep, bin prep, appreciation gift prep, setting up the Pause space, etc).
- Help with any administrative tasks (thank you cards, birthday cards, cutting, laminating, etc).
- Great opportunity for those looking for flexibility or who only have weekday availability.

- **Desired Skills**

- Ability to work independently
- Ability to follow written or verbal instructions
- Organized

Virtual Buddy

- **Role & Responsibilities**

- Once paired with a child, coordinate with the family to set up a meeting time.
- Meet 1:1 with a kid via Zoom for roughly an hour.
- Engage with the child over a craft or activity of your choice, paid for by Pause!
- Must have reliable internet access.
- Great for volunteers who lack transportation or are no longer local to the area.

- **Desired Skills**

- Good at making connections with others
- Creative
- Engaging
- Reliable
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision

THE WEBSITE

Did you know...

You can sign up for events in the **Event Hub** right from the website?

You can start the Pause volunteer enrollment process from the **I'm New Here** tab? Share it with your friends!

You can **Get to Know** your Pause team and share Pause with others!

Scan to explore!
pauseforparents.org



The CAN DO Directory serves as the primary vehicle in which Pause communicates the needs of our families. Any community member, organization or business can participate by joining the CAN DO Directory.



STAY CONNECTED



@pauseforparents



Pause for Parents, Play for Kids

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