

# CARE for Children

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CARE f o r children

Improving the lives of children of all abilities

*Providing Services to Children of All Abilities since 1924*

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*"You will find as you look back upon your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others." -- Author Unknown*

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# WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in volunteering your time for CARE for Children. We appreciate the support of a caring community and many of our programs benefit from the outstanding resources, expertise, and compassion that volunteers contribute. Volunteers are

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CARE for Children is certified under the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) *Standards for Excellence* Program with the Seal of Excellence. This seal recognizes



CARE for Children's exemplary management, governance, and accountability within the nonprofit sector. We proudly display this logo to demonstrate our continued commitment to upholding

the highest standards of ethics and accountability.

CARE for Children is the lead agency for Safe Kids McKean. Safe Kids promotes and advocates for child safety and injury prevention programs and initiatives targeted to local needs.



CARE is proud to receive the support of the United Way of the Bradford Area, Smethport United Way, the Port United Fund and Kane United Fund.

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# MISSION & PHILOSPHY

**CARE for Children is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children of all abilities.**

CARE is more than a “mission-driven” organization, we like to think that we have cultivated a culture of caring that extends not only to our clients, families and staff but to our donors, supporters, community partners and volunteers.

CARE’s goals include providing the best possible treatment and education for children. Since the well-being of the children to whom we provide service is our primary concern, it is necessary for all employees and volunteers to work together to maintain a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.

Services and Programs include:

- \* School Based Physical Therapy
- \* School Based Occupational Therapy
- \* Early Intervention Services
- \* Rainbow Corner Inclusion Preschool
- \* Shriners Hospital Orthopedic Clinics
- \* Family Support
- \* Therapeutic Recreation
- \* Brace & Wheelchair Clinics
- \* Pediatric Equipment Loan
- \* Resource & Adaptive Toy Library
- \* Disability Awareness
- \* Child Safety and Injury Prevention

All children ages birth to twenty-one (21), who meet program criteria, regardless of age, sex, race, creed, color, or financial status, are entitled to services.

## HISTORY

CARE for Children began with a simple premise—the welfare of disabled children should not be left to chance. It was established that an area as large as McKean County should have a formally organized body whose sole purpose was to better the circumstances of “crippled children”.

In 1924 an orthopedic physician from Erie and local nurse began visiting children with polio and other related conditions. On July 26, 1929, a group met in Bradford to consider forming such an organization. Significantly, these first people to concern themselves with the needs of children with disabilities represented three groups in the county: government, the public schools and the Rotary Clubs. The name of the organization was “The McKean County Society for Crippled Children”.

In 1963, McKean County Society for Crippled Children applied for and received funding through the Bradford Area United Way. This year also marked the beginning of an affiliation with Pennsylvania Easter Seal Society. With this came the organization’s name change to McKean County Easter Seal Society.

In May, 1994, The McKean County Easter Seal Society faced a merger into a large regional organization with the Pennsylvania Easter Seal Society. Regionalization would have compromised local management and control of services, funds, and direction. The Board of Directors voted unanimously to terminate our agreement with the State and National Easter Seal Societies.

At that time, the organization returned to its original name, “McKean County Society for Crippled Children,” until 1995 when a new name was selected to reflect the comprehensive nature of services “McKean County C.A.R.E. for Children.” In 2002, however, for simplicity, the name of the organization

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# VOLUNTEER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

## **A. Definition of a Volunteer**

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation or the expectation of compensation, performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organization.

## **B. Rights & Responsibilities**

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to CARE for Children, its staff, and the children served. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated fairly, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the agency.

## **C. Volunteer/ Staff Relations**

Volunteers are critical to the success of CARE's mission of improving the lives of children of all abilities. Volunteers and paid staff are considered partners in implementing the mission and programs of the organization, each with complementary roles to play. Designated staff can be expected to provide orientation, training, supervision, and feedback to volunteers.

## **D. Equal Opportunity Policy**

CARE for Children maintains a strong policy of equal volunteer opportunity. We recruit, accept, train, promote and dismiss volunteers on the basis of personal competence and performance, without regard to race creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status or disability.

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM PROCEDURES

## **A. Application/Screening**

Prospective volunteers are required to complete an application form for consideration as a volunteer. Prior to being assigned or appointed to a position, all volunteers will be screened to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, a volunteer placement. The screening will offer the opportunity to learn more about the prospective volunteer, and give the prospective volunteer the opportunity to learn more about the organization. Volunteers will also be given the opportunity to answer any questions they may have about the position.

## **B. Child Abuse Clearance and Background Check**

A child abuse clearance may be required prior to working directly with children. If upon completion of this check, any convictions of specified crimes are found—due consideration will be given and termination of the volunteer relationship may be a consequence. Pennsylvania law requires care workers of children to submit to a criminal background check. All volunteers of CARE for Children who have direct contact with children must complete this requirement prior to employment. An FBI check is required as well as the Pennsylvania criminal records check if the prospective volunteer resides outside of Pennsylvania. If upon completion of this check, any convictions of specified crimes are found—due consideration will be given and termination of the volunteer relationship may be a consequence.

## **C. Volunteer Development**

All volunteers will receive a general orientation to the nature and purpose of the agency, all pertinent policies and procedures, and to the work to which the volunteer has been assigned. Volunteers will receive specific training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. All volunteers will have a position description for the work they perform on behalf of CARE.

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Every volunteer will have a clearly identified supervisor who will be responsible for support and direction. The supervisor will be responsible for the management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluations to review their work and progress. Evaluations will include an examination of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions the volunteer may have concerning the position or volunteer program.

Volunteer service is very valuable to CARE for Children, and we will recognize volunteers on both an informal and formal level. Exemplary volunteers will be made aware of other volunteer opportunities available for which they may be interested in participating, and will be given opportunity for advancement for other volunteer positions.

#### **D. Volunteer Records**

A system of records will be maintained on volunteers with the organization. The records will include volunteer applications, emergency information, evaluations, volunteer service hours and which programs and events volunteers participated.

## **VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

#### **A. Standards of Conduct**

The lasting impression that volunteers make on those they serve and work with reflects directly on all staff, volunteers and board members of CARE for Children. All words and deeds should help build our agency and its reputation for quality. Volunteers should do their best to be present and on time for each event or activity for which they are scheduled. When volunteers know that they will be late or absent, they are requested to contact the person in charge of the event as soon as possible so that alternate plans can be made.

#### **B. Confidentiality**

Volunteers involved with the activities of the agency may have access to confidential information. All, but not limited to, patient, donor, financial, student, and employee information is considered confidential and CARE's comprehensive confidentiality agreement should be adhered to at all times. *You must read and sign the Confidentiality Agreement before you can begin active service. (Addendum B)*

#### **C. Dress Code**

Volunteers are expected to wear appropriate attire at all times. Appropriate attire is at the discretion of the program supervisor. Volunteers may be required to wear an agency identification badge.

#### **D. Agency Representation**

Volunteers should be careful not to represent themselves as spokespersons or representatives for the organization under any circumstances without prior approval. Only the board president and executive director serve as spokespeople for CARE for Children. Any direct or indirect fundraising and/or solicitation on behalf of the agency requires prior authorization from the Executive Director and/or Board of Directors.

#### **E. Grievance Procedure**

Volunteers and staff are expected to act professionally and in accordance with their position descriptions. When volunteers have a grievance concerning their work environment, they should report it promptly to their agency supervisor or the Executive Director. Every effort will be made to achieve speedy and effective resolution, and all complaints will be treated confidentially when not prohibited by established policy and/or in accordance with federal, state or local law. (Addendum C)

#### **F. Alcohol/Drugs**

Volunteers are prohibited from purchasing, transferring, using or possessing illicit drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs in any way that is illegal, when participating in activities.

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A drug and alcohol free work place is necessary to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all volunteers and employees. If caught or suspected of breaking this policy, the volunteer relationship with the agency will be terminated.

### **G. Harassment Policy**

Harassment is not only illegal, but it also creates uncomfortable conditions for everyone involved. Any volunteer who feels harassed should speak to his/her program supervisor or the Executive Director. Any volunteer who engages in harassment in the CARE workplace will be subject to termination.

### **H. Discontinuation of Volunteer Service**

If a volunteer wishes to leave volunteer service for any reason, it is requested that they contact the appropriate program manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Volunteers have the right to terminate their volunteer service for any reason. CARE for Children reserves the same right.

## **SAFETY AND LIABILITY**

### **A. Safety**

CARE does its best to provide safe conditions for volunteers. Volunteers should always use their own judgment and discretion in safeguarding their personal safety. Volunteers should adhere to safety instructions and the proper use of equipment. Volunteers are required to report any safety concern or any injury, however minor, to their immediate supervisor or the Executive Director.

### **B. Incident Reporting**

An incident is an occurrence that is not consistent with the routine operation of CARE or any of its programs. The volunteer is required to report any incident to their immediate supervisor and complete an incident reporting form. CARE has a comprehensive whistleblower policy that protects employees or volunteers that report suspected improprieties by agency personnel. Please report any concerns to the executive director. (*Addendum D*).

### **C. Child Abuse Reporting**

CARE for Children volunteers and staff are mandated reporters of child abuse. If you suspect abuse or neglect please inform the program supervisor and/or executive director, who will assist you in the reporting process.

### **D. Infection Control**

To help minimize the threat of germs and infection, volunteers are required to practice proper hygiene and infection control at all times.

### **E. Legal Liability**

CARE for Children volunteers are covered under CARE's commercial general liability insurance, while they serve as agents of CARE for Children. Volunteers must be working under the supervision and control of CARE for Children to be covered under this policy.

CARE for Children's Board of Directors are covered by Director's and Officers' Liability Insurance.

## ADDENDUM A

# People First Language

*Excerpted from People First Language by Kathie Snow*

*People with disabilities constitute our nation's largest minority group, which is simultaneously the most inclusive and the most diverse! Everyone's represented: people of both genders and of all ages, as well as individuals from all religions, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic levels. Yet the only thing people with disabilities truly have in common with one another is dealing with societal misunderstanding, prejudice, and discrimination.*

*The "disability community" is the only minority group which anyone can join, at any time. Some join at birth. Others join in the split second of an accident, through illness, or by the aging process. If and when it happens to you, will you have more in common with others who have disabilities or with family, friends, and co-workers? And how will you want to be described? How will you want to be treated? Disability issues affect all Americans.*

*The only places where the use of disability labels is appropriate or relevant are in the service system and in medical or legal settings. Children with disabilities are children, first. The only labels they need are their names! Labels have no place—and they should be irrelevant—within our families, among friends, and within the community.*

*Words are powerful. Old, inaccurate, and inappropriate descriptors perpetuate negative stereotypes and attitudinal barriers. Language is a powerful tool that should be used to create understanding, tolerance and opportunity. Children and adults with disabilities are unique individuals with unlimited potential to achieve their dreams, just like all Americans.*

— Copyright 2004 Kathie Snow, used with permission. [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com)

## Examples of People First Language

### Say:

People with disabilities.  
He has a cognitive disability.  
She has autism.  
He has Down syndrome.  
She has a learning disability.  
He has a physical disability.  
He has an emotional/mental health disability.  
She uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.  
He receives special education services.  
Typical kids or kids without disabilities.  
Congenital disability.  
Brain injury.  
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.  
She needs. . . or she uses. . .

### Instead of:

The handicapped or disabled.  
He's mentally retarded.  
She's autistic.  
He's Down's.  
She's learning disabled.  
He's a quadriplegic/crippled.  
He's emotionally disturbed.  
She's wheelchair bound/confined  
He's in special ed.  
Normal or healthy kids.  
Birth defect.  
Brain damaged.  
Handicapped parking, hotel room  
She has a problem with. . .



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ADDENDUM B

CARE for Children  
*Staff/Volunteer/Intern*  
**Confidentiality Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received confidentiality & privacy training and I understand that during my employment or other affiliation with CARE for Children, I may have access to client, employee, or financial information. I also understand that I may have incidental contact with confidential information that I have not been authorized to receive. Any client, employee, or financial information to which I have access through my work at CARE for Children is strictly confidential and is to be used only in performance of my duties and responsibilities.

I am aware that I am not to discuss any information concerning client, employee or financial data or protected health information (PHI) except with other appropriate professionals. When client information must be discussed with other professionals for purposes of treatment, billing or operations, I will use discretion to assure privacy and will share the minimum information necessary to complete the task.

I understand and acknowledge that violation of these rules set forth in the CARE for Children privacy policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of my employment or affiliation with CARE for Children. In addition, I understand that I may be subject to prosecution for willful disclosure of a person's protected health information (PHI) under Federal Law. I further understand and acknowledge that any such violation may be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services and/or any licensing board.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Staff/Volunteer/Intern

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## ADDENDUM C

### CARE for Children Grievance Policy

**Policy:** It is the policy of CARE for Children to provide a process for the prompt resolution of grievances and complaints. A grievance occurs when a family wishes to appeal against any action or decision by CARE for Children which has consequences for themselves or their child. A grievance is directed to the attention of the executive director and/or designated member of the board of directors. A complaint is a family issue that can be resolved promptly by staff present. The concept of a family grievance suggests that all members of each family have "rights" within a service.

**Purpose:**

- To encourage staff to be responsive to the needs and concerns of families and their children.
- To ensure each family parent feels empowered to raise concerns about all aspects of the operation of CARE for Children and the services it delivers.
- To ensure each family feels empowered to raise contentious issues, and provide critical feedback without any concern that their comments will lead to negative consequences for themselves or their child.
- To allow management to monitor the quality of service provided and identify any deficiencies.
- To advance a culture that recognizes complaints as an opportunity for making necessary improvements to our services.
- To focus on the needs of children and their families with the intent of resolving the grievance to their satisfaction wherever possible while safeguarding the rights of staff.

**Procedure:**

Roles & Responsibilities

**The Executive Director will:**

- Encourage staff to identify family concerns and ensure such concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- Guarantee families they will not be treated unfairly nor that services will be withheld if they raise a concern, grievance or complaint.
- Deal with all grievances promptly and keep the complainant well informed of progress toward the resolution of the grievance.
- Protect the rights of staff members relating to any grievance, and ensure all outcomes will be based on the principles of natural justice. Ensure all processes and procedures adopted are clear, transparent and fully explained to all concerned.
- Assure families and staff that privacy and confidentiality will be maintained to the maximum extent possible.
- Give families written information concerning the *Grievance Procedure* annually and post it on the agency website.
- Keep files of all grievances received, detailing action taken to address the matter, who was involved and the outcome.
- Keep the board of directors or the appropriate designee of the board apprised of all grievances and actions taken to resolve grievances.

**All staff/volunteers will:**

- Encourage families to feel comfortable about raising concerns, by being open and positive in responding to families.
- Ensure any such concerns raised with you are addressed at the earliest opportunity, whether they concern you personally or not.
- Respond in a positive manner when a family has chosen to approach you with a concern about another staff member. Treat the matter with the utmost confidentiality, and apprise the executive director immediately. If the grievance is with the executive director, the staff member/volunteer may raise the matter with the president of the board of directors or the chair of the policy and personnel committee.
- Where a complaint raised by a family has been resolved, inform the executive director of the success of that process.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality for families, children and other staff/volunteers to the maximum extent possible.

**Families will be encouraged by all staff to follow the following procedure:**

Grievance

The family may choose to directly address the grievance to the executive director. If another staff member is approached they will immediately refer the family to the executive director. The executive director will research the grievance/situation and work towards reaching a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved. Again grievances at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the family or by clarification by the executive director of CARE procedures or policies. Resolution may also involve the development of new policy if it is a situation that has not been addressed. The executive director will follow up all grievances with a written letter to the grievant and document all pertinent information.

Complaint

If appropriate and family members feels comfortable doing so, the family may approach the staff member involved and if needed set a time where the matter can be discussed appropriately. Complaints at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the family or by clarification by the staff member of CARE's procedures or policies. The complaint and its outcome will be documented.

Appeal

Families are entitled to appeal any decision made by the executive director. Such appeals will be made to the board of directors. The board will conduct further review, final disposition, and a written follow-up letter to the grievant.