

Join the fun – how to volunteer in your toddler group

Is this something you've been thinking about, but haven't gathered enough courage to mention to anyone else? Or perhaps you have been mulling it over for a while but it's never been quite the right timing. Are you feeling apprehensive about making a commitment? Maybe anxiety or nerves are holding you back. Know this ...

YOUR TODDLER GROUP NEEDS YOU!

If this article has caught your attention, it may have sparked something inside you that has been bubbling away for a while, so please keep reading to the end. Perhaps you are asking yourself a few questions, such as:

Am I good enough?

Believe in yourself and the talents and gifts you have, and know that whatever help you can contribute, big or small, will be so appreciated. Observing and learning from others is one of the best ways to gain confidence and learn new skills, and if you are unsure of anything, don't hesitate to communicate with the toddler group leader, as they may be able to provide support and guidance to help you feel more confident and



comfortable. Most people start small by taking on a general helping role, and over time they try out more specific areas until they find what fits best. There is much joy and happiness to be found in helping out with a toddler group, and you'll get to invest in the lives of the children, their parents and families. Rather than ask the question 'Am I good enough?' why not change it to 'What have I got to give?'.

Do I have to commit to every week?

Be bold and have a chat with the group leader or a team member, but be open, honest and realistic about the help you can give. Whatever amount of time you can commit to volunteering, your offer is bound to bring a smile to their face.

What if I don't want an up front role?

You may feel you want to be less visible, and that's fine. There are many roles and responsibilities, both up front and behind the scenes, which are vital in helping to run a group.

Look around your group and see what it offers. Are you available to help set up or clear things away? This is a role which is often overlooked, and an extra pair of hands could be invaluable to the team. Maybe you could hand out leaflets about the toddler group to families in your community or prepare the crafts each week. If you don't have children attending the group with you, perhaps you could serve in the kitchen. The best of friendships can develop over tea/coffee making! Whatever it is you could see yourself doing or not doing, why not have a conversation. You won't be committing yourself to anything, just expressing an interest.



I don't know very many people. Would this be a problem?

One of the best ways to get to know people is to volunteer. There are so many benefits to being on a team. It can make us feel part of a community and boost our emotional wellbeing. It can also provide opportunities for us to develop new skills, make new friends, build confidence and gain a sense of purpose. If your children have been through the toddler group and are now at school, perhaps you have some extra hours on your hands and you can now give something back.

Hopefully this article will have answered some of your questions, but it may have created some new ones too. The best way to explore whether volunteering is for you and what you could do to help is to speak with the toddler group leader. Find out more about the needs of the group and what's involved, and once you have it all sorted in your mind, step out and give it a go. You won't regret it!



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