



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Updated: August 2025



Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to Pretend City Children’s Museum (“Pretend City”). As a nonprofit organization, Pretend City is dedicated to producing a fun, creative, and educational environment for young children in our community.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Pretend City and play a vital role in helping to deliver our mission of healthy development and school readiness. When you volunteer for Pretend City, you become part of a special community that values a love for life-long learning. Whether you are helping a child learn a life skill through exhibit exploration, supporting staff with a birthday party, or assisting with administrative tasks in our office-**you** are making a valuable contribution to helping us ensure every child in Orange County is ready for and successful in school.

To ensure your experience is meaningful and positive, this handbook has been prepared to keep you informed with a helpful, ready reference about the volunteer program. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read the handbook. If you have any questions, just ask!

We welcome you as a Pretend City Citizen and thank you for choosing Pretend City to volunteer and share your time.

Warm Regards,

Volunteer Program Coordinator
949-428-3900, ext. 213



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Section 1 – Pretend City Children’s Museum

1-1 Mission and Vision Statement

Mission: Pretend City Builds Better Brains!

Vision: To ensure that each child is ready for school success by providing real-world learning experiences that children need to develop essential foundational learning skills.

Please visit our website at www.pretendcity.org for more information on our history and for a virtual tour of our exhibits.

1-2 Quick Facts

Who We Serve:

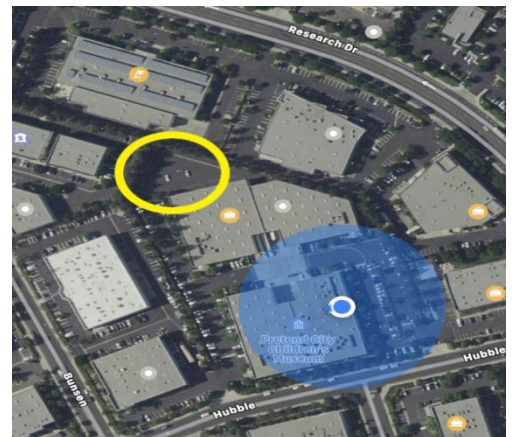
Pretend City Children’s Museum has the mission of supporting our surrounding community, its children, and their grown-ups. The museum is recommended for children ages 0-8.

What We Do at Pretend City:

- Museum Exploration
- Early childhood development education and screening
- Birthday parties and facility rentals
- Field Trips
- Special Events
 - Members Events
 - Fundraisers
 - Neurodivergent Families Night
 - Baby Steps
 - When I Grow Up Day
 - School Readiness Fair
 - Good To Go

Parking:

Volunteer parking is located behind the building behind Pretend City. Main parking located in the front of the Pretend City building is designated for our guests. In the photo below, volunteer parking is in the yellow circle.



Section 2 – Volunteer Experience

2-1 Becoming a Volunteer

1. All new volunteers must fill out the Pretend City Volunteer Application through Better Impact. This application can be accessed on the Pretend City website at <https://www.pretendcity.org/volunteer-or-intern/>.
2. Once this application is completed, volunteers must complete the online orientation and quiz on their Better Impact profile.
3. After this is completed, volunteers interested in being an exhibit support volunteer can register for a training through Better Impact. Volunteers who are only interested in admin support do not need to attend training and can begin signing up for volunteer shifts.
4. To complete the online application, volunteers must turn in the required online forms: the Pretend City Volunteer Waiver, the Confidentiality Form, and the Volunteer Acknowledgement.

2-2 Volunteer Benefits

Volunteers are granted active status when they donate at least three (3) or more hours of their time to Pretend City per month. Once a volunteer has completed three (3) hours of their time for two months, the volunteer will be able to obtain Pretend City Volunteer benefits. All **active status volunteers** will receive the following benefits:

- 10% off Membership Packages
- 4 free tickets a year
 - You may use all four tickets at once, or use them split up between different visits
 - The tickets will renew 365 days after they are used, and will not stack or carry over from year to year (Example: if you use two free tickets on November 1st, 2030 and one free ticket on May 20th, 2031, you will have one free ticket left available until November 1st, 2031. On that day, your benefits will renew and you will have four free tickets available again)

Volunteers must let the volunteer coordinator know at least 2 days before they would like to use their benefits, and must wait for confirmation from the volunteer coordinator. If no express confirmation from the volunteer coordinator is sent, the front desk team is instructed to deny any request for volunteer benefits, as the volunteer coordinator will personally notify the front desk team of all confirmed benefits requests.

2-3 Volunteer Scheduling

Volunteer Hours

Volunteers are required to volunteer a minimum of 3 hours per month and make a minimum commitment of 15 hours before signing up to become a volunteer. **Before the volunteer coordinator will sign off on any hours for outside organizations, volunteers must reach their 15-hour commitment.**

Volunteer Newsletter

The Volunteer Newsletter is emailed **the first Tuesday of every month** and lists special volunteer opportunities for the month, volunteer news, and volunteer recognition.



Pretend City
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Volunteer Newsletter

Exhibit Support

Open Shifts:
For the week of 6/13 - 6/19
Requests due Thursday 6/13
at 4:00pm

Shifts can also be shorter than the times listed

Monday - 10:00 - 1:00 PM
Baby Steps 2:00 - 4:00 PM
Tuesday - 10:00 - 5:30 PM
Wednesday - 10:00 - 5:30 PM
Thursday - 10:00 - 5:30 PM
Friday - 10:00 - 3:30 PM
Saturday - No Availability

Special Events Shifts



SUPER HERO SUMMER

EXHIBITS - SATURDAY EXHIBIT SUPPORT
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Better Impact – Scheduling your Volunteer Shifts

Better Impact is the volunteer management software that offers Pretend City's volunteer application and orientation. It also offers an efficient way of tracking volunteer hours, posting available volunteer shifts, and reporting hours. You will sign up for your volunteer shifts through this program.

Through this software, each active volunteer will be given a personal profile page where they can search and sign-up for available shifts and print out volunteer schedules. Since this is a web-based system, you may access your profile and Volunteer Impact from any device with Internet capabilities (i.e., laptops, desktops, and phone). All active volunteers create an account with a custom login, which they may use to sign-in on the computers located in the staff workroom. They may also clock in from their phones using the Better Impact website. **Volunteers must clock in and out before and after every shift to accurately track volunteer hours.**



Pretend City CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

HOME OPPORTUNITIES SCHEDULE HOURS REPORTS CONTACT MY PROFILE

Home - Pretend City Children's Museum [? Help](#) [Log Out](#)

Welcome **Mary Grace Sanchez**
[Edit](#)

Upcoming Shifts
Exhibits - Saturday Exhibit Support
Saturday, October 01, 2016 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

VOLUNTEER HOURS

This Week	This Month	This Year
0.0	3.1	11.6

Snapshot of Better Impact

2-4 Volunteer Conduct and Expectation

What You Can Expect from Pretend City:

- Work in a position that is worthwhile and challenging, with freedom to use and develop skills
- Have the position defined through a volunteer job description
- Receive enough, ongoing training with clear and specific directions from your supervisor
- Receive periodic feedback
- Be involved or represented in decisions that affect you
- Receive support and representation from your Volunteer Coordinator
- Have opportunities to explore a variety of volunteer positions
- Have opportunities for social enrichment
- Meet and work with a variety of people
- Work in a friendly, open, trusting, and creative environment

What Pretend City Expects from You:

- Complete a Volunteer Orientation and, depending on your role, complete an in-person training
- Donate at least 3 hours per month to Pretend City Children's Museum
- Volunteer a minimum of 15 hours during your time with Pretend City
- Conduct your work as in a professional environment
- Always represent Pretend City in an appropriate and responsible manner by showing courtesy and respect
- Be aware of and abide by Pretend City Children's Museum policies
- Perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities
- Provide at least 24 hours' notice to the appropriate staff member if unable to fulfill your responsibilities due to travel plans or a change in personal schedule
- Communicate questions or concerns with the Volunteer Coordinator

2-5 Volunteer Roles

Exhibit Support

An Exhibit Volunteer at Pretend City Children's Museum is responsible for facilitating the role-playing experience for children 0-8 years of age. They will assist in a variety of exhibits by facilitating learning through play within the exhibit space and taking on and "acting" the role of their chosen community helper. This person will interact with guests, staff, and volunteers to provide a fun and creative environment for all visitors.

Admin Support

Administrative Volunteers aid various administrative departments within the museum and are responsible for helping with daily clerical and office duties. An Administrative Volunteer will need to be comfortable using a computer and the Internet. Administrative Volunteers may also assist in preparing supplies for Pretend City's educational programming. The type of job assigned to an Administrative Volunteer will be based on their skills.

Greeters

A Greeter Volunteer is responsible for welcoming guests to the museum and making sure all children leave the museum with an adult. Greeter Volunteers will also be responsible for handing out Pretend City brochures and any other materials necessary. Greeter Volunteers will need to be comfortable taking direction and working with the public.

2-6 Attendance

We depend on you to complete your scheduled shifts because as with any group effort, effective and efficient operating takes cooperation and commitment from everyone. Therefore, attendance is very important. In the event of an unscheduled absence (i.e., illness or emergency), please contact the Volunteer Coordinator via email at volunteer@pretendcity.org or phone call, as soon as possible, but preferably 24 hours before your scheduled shift begins. On weekends, please also email the Brain Builders; brainbuilders@pretendcity.org.

If you have accumulated two (2) unexcused absences and/or your absenteeism becomes excessive, we will reevaluate your volunteer relationship with Pretend City.

To remain an active volunteer at Pretend City, you must donate 3 hours of your time a month to Pretend City. If you fail to meet this requirement, your Better Impact account may be archived, and you will be unable to schedule any shifts. If you need to take a break from volunteering, inform the volunteer coordinator to ensure that your account isn't archived.

2-7 Holiday Schedule

Holidays observed by Pretend City include:

- New Year's Day, Museum closed
- Mother's Day, closed
- Father's Day, closed
- Independence Day, Museum closed
- Thanksgiving Day, Museum closed
- Christmas Eve, Closed
- Christmas Day, Museum closed



Pretend City remains open on all other holidays.

2-8 Safety and Emergency

The safety and health of our volunteers is important to us. Please adhere to the safety guidelines and procedures detailed in the Pretend City Children's Museum Safety Handbook. A copy of the Safety and Emergency Manual is located at the Volunteer Station.

If in your work you should encounter an unsafe situation and/or observe others working in an unsafe manner, please inform a Brain Builder (Stage Supervisor) and the Volunteer Coordinator with details of the incident. We encourage your ideas and suggestions about how we can create a safer workplace. Suggestions can be submitted to volunteer@pretendcity.org.

2-9 Guest Services

Everything we do at Pretend City is intended to meet one goal, which is to provide a safe environment where all our guests can have a fun unique learning experience. Professional, friendly, courteous, and helpful guest service and guest safety are our top priorities. Guest services is everyone's job at Pretend City no matter your role. Delivering superior guest service is aligned with Pretend City's mission and core values.

If you receive a guest question that you do not know the answer to, please let them know that you are a volunteer and direct them to the nearest staff member.



Guest Services: Best Practices

There are several things that you can do as a volunteer to leave our guests with a good impression and improve the public perception of the professionalism of the Pretend City team. The following are some of the most important points when communicating with museum guests:

- a. **First Impressions:** Building rapport begins with the first impression. Therefore, a calm relaxed smile creates a great first impression when our guest enters the City. That kind of smile says that you enjoy meeting people and helps put everyone at ease.
- b. **"It's the little Things":** Great guest service is knowing and doing the "little things" right. The following are some basic things that can make a big difference to our guests:
 - Welcome our guests with a smile – "Hi, welcome to Pretend City!"
 - Acknowledge your guests
 - Articulate your voice when talking to guests– sometimes it's not what you say, but how you say it
 - Respect the Museum's environment by ensuring it's clean and organized for our guests
 - Say "Thank You for coming and we hope to see you again."
 - Do not be afraid to say, "I'm new here" and assure guests you will do your best to find the answer
 - Listen to our guests (let them do 75% talking and you do 25%)
- c. **Body Language:** It is against Pretend City policy for volunteers to lean, sit, or slouch while volunteering in the exhibits. However, you may sit while engaged in play with a child. While standing, try to stand straight and avoid crossing arms or putting your hands in your pockets.



2-10 Dress Code

It is essential that you exhibit a professional appearance which communicates respect, competence, personal pride, and efficiency. In addition to helping guests easily identify Pretend City staff and volunteers, dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image Pretend City Children's Museum presents to the community.

1. Clothing

- a. Wear clean and appropriate fitting clothing (no torn, excessively worn, or stained clothes; no clothes that are too tight or too baggy)
- b. Put on and wear the provided Pretend City volunteer apron once you arrive for your shift
- c. Long sleeve shirts may be worn under your clothes for warmth
- d. Wear **black or dark** pants, jeans, or shorts. Shorts length should be at or just above the knee (i.e., no shorter than 2 inches above the knee)
- e. No provocative or revealing clothing
- f. No sweats, sweatpants, leggings, yoga pants, short shorts, dresses, skirts, or light blue jeans
- g. No low-rise pants
- h. No clothing allowed with inappropriate writing and/or graphics
- i. Undergarments should not be visible, especially when you bend down or over
- j. No metal or chain-like belts. Buckles shall be reasonable in size and shall not bear messages, artwork, or images
- k. No hats, scarves, or gloves except as part of an approved stage costume

2. Footwear

- a. Shoes shall be clean, dark and in good repair
- b. No slippers, flip flops, Ugg boots and similar shoes (**closed toed shoes only**)

3. Facial and Body Appearance

- a. Hairstyles should be neat and business like. Hair shall not be unkempt in appearance
- b. Nails should be kept at a reasonable length and shall not interfere with performance of duties. Nail polish shall be professional in appearance and in good repair
- c. Body piercings, tattoos, or body art shall not be displayed while on duty or while representing Pretend City
- d. Heavy makeup or strong odors should be avoided
- e. Facial hair shall be neatly and evenly trimmed

4. Jewelry

- a. Jewelry shall be reasonable and shall not distract from a professional appearance or pose a threat to children in the museum
- b. Nose rings and/or other facial piercings are not permitted

If you need a reasonable accommodation because of medical and/or religious beliefs, observances, or practices, please contact the volunteer coordinator and the Human Resources Department at volunteer@pretendcity.org to discuss the need for the accommodation.

2-11 Lost Grown-Up Procedure

If you are approached by the caregiver of a missing child, escort the caregiver to the nearest staff member on the stage with a radio. This might be a floor staff member, front desk, manager, or director.

1. The staff member with the radio will ask the caregiver for a description of the child (name, age, sex, hair color, eye color, approximate height and weight, shoe color and style, clothing, other distinguishing features) and then report the missing child and description to the rest of the team.
2. All staff will clear their exhibits until the child and caregiver are reunited.

2-12 If You Find a Lost Child Alone

1. If you see a child who is looking for their parents, introduce yourself as a person who volunteers for the museum and ask the child if he/she has lost his/her grownup.
2. Find the nearest staff and inform them that the child is looking for their caregiver. At this point, the staff member will take over until the child is reunited with their caregiver.

2-13 Cell Phones and Other Personal Items:

The safety of our guests and outstanding guest service are our top priorities. Engaging with guests, giving the children play prompts, paying attention to re-stocking needs, and being aware of what's going on around you are actions that make a visit meaningful for our guests and you as a volunteer. **Therefore, you may not use your cell phone and other personal electronic devices while volunteering. Please leave your cell phone and/or other personal belongings in the volunteer lockers provided.** If special circumstances arise that require you to have access to your cell phone during your volunteer hours, please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator or a Brain Builder. Smart watches may be worn but not used for functions other than checking the time.

Section 3 – Policies and Procedures

3-1 Confidentiality

During your volunteer service, you may become aware of confidential information about Pretend City Children's Museum's business, including but not limited to information regarding Company finances, pricing, products and new product development, software and computer programs, marketing strategies, suppliers and customers and potential customers. You also may become aware of similar confidential information belonging to the Company's guests. It is extremely important that all such information remain confidential, and particularly not be disclosed to our competitors. If you improperly copy, remove (whether physically or electronically), use, or disclose confidential information to anyone outside of the Company may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. You may be required to sign an agreement reiterating these obligations.

3-2 Policy Against Harassment

Pretend City is committed to a workplace free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. It is Pretend City's policy that harassment, including but not limited to sexual harassment and offensive behavior of volunteers or any individual on the basis of race, religious creed, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, marital status, medical condition as defined by state law (cancer or genetic characteristics), disability, military and veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local laws and ordinances is prohibited. Offensive behavior prohibited by this policy also includes objectionable physical closeness or contact, unwelcome suggestions, discrimination, retaliation, or requests to engage in illegal or unethical conduct.

If you feel that you're being subjected to offensive behavior or that you witness offensive behavior, immediately ask that the person engaging in the offensive behavior to stop at once. You should report such offensive behavior to the Volunteer Coordinator.

3-3 Conflict of Interest

It is Pretend City Children's Museum's policy that all volunteers avoid any conflict between their personal interests and those of the Company. The fundamental principle guiding this policy is that no volunteer should have, or appear to have, personal interests or relationships that actually or potentially conflict with the best interests of the Company. Any potential conflict of interest should be disclosed. It will not preclude volunteer service if it is declared appropriately.

3-4 Smoke Free Environment

Pretend City intends to provide a safe and healthy work environment. Smoking in the workplace is prohibited except in outside locations specifically designated as smoking areas. For information regarding the location of smoking areas, consult with the Volunteer Coordinator.

3-5 Drug-Free Environment

Pretend City provides a drug-free, healthy, and safe environment. While on Pretend City premises and while conducting Pretend City-related activities off Pretend City's premises, a volunteer may not use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted during volunteer service only if it does not impair a volunteer's ability to perform the essential functions of the volunteer position effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace. You must advise the Volunteer Coordinator if you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter drug which could adversely affect safety or performance.

3-6 Non-Fraternization

Pretend City is committed to fostering a positive learning and working environment for all staff and volunteers. While Pretend City encourages amicable relationships between staff and volunteers; the Company desires to avoid misunderstandings, actual or potential conflicts of interest, complaints of favoritism, possible claims of sexual harassment, and employee and volunteer morale and dissension problems that can result from romantic or personal relationships among employees and volunteers. Accordingly, you are discouraged from fraternizing or becoming romantically involved with other employees, when their personal relationships may create a conflict of interest, cause disruption, create a negative or unprofessional work environment, or present concerns regarding supervision, safety, security, or morale. You are required to keep relationships with employees professional and not let personal affairs affect their service at Pretend City.

3-7 Social Media:

Pretend City Children's Museum respects the right of any volunteers to maintain a blog or web page or to participate in social media platforms (SMP) such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, personal blogs and/or similar sites. However, when participating in any activities on SMP; we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- Avoid taking picture with visitor(s) and posting it on any SMP
- Be responsible and do not violate Pretend City's code of conduct
- Do not disclose Pretend City's confidential and proprietary business information



3-8 Separation of Volunteer Service

When separating your service at Pretend City you are required to submit a written notification to the Volunteer Coordinator ideally two weeks prior to your departure. We will ask you to complete an exit survey upon your departure. Upon the volunteer's resignation, the Volunteer Coordinator will confirm the service hours and close the volunteer's file.

*A heartfelt
thank
you!
to our
volunteers!*