



ENRICHING THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN AT THE NURTURING PLACE

About Us

A program of the York Street Project, The Nurturing Place provides homeless and economically-disadvantaged youth ages four months to 6 years an educational and supportive environment while their mothers are at work or school striving for economic independence for their family. Through our licensed child development center, we can identify and arrest developmental delays caused by lives of poverty, homelessness and abuse. Unchecked, these delays can continue the cycle, forever limiting children to lives of emotional, social and educational difficulty.

Our staff embraces our children in a loving family environment, where we work year-round to win back a childhood stolen by circumstance. The children participate in age- and developmentally-appropriate activities designed to enrich their social, cognitive, physical, and emotional development. Whether out for a walk by the Hudson River, running on our playground or cleaning up after snack time, we make sure our children are always learning. Carefully planned activities harness their natural curiosity and inspire them to learn: about themselves, about interacting with others and about the world around them.

We are grateful to have the support of the community to assist in their learning about the world around them and welcome individuals or groups to get involved in myriad ways.

Logistics/Policies

Onsite, we have volunteer opportunities from Monday through Friday between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm for one hour, two hours, or the entire day, depending upon our ratios and your availability. Volunteers in the classrooms provide an additional hand to hold, lap to sit on, or ear to listen, assisting the teachers with the planned activities for the period. As you will be working with young children, it is suggested that you wear loose, comfortable clothing that you don't mind getting washable paint or ketchup on!

We can effectively utilize up to 2 volunteers in each room at the same time. There are five classroom settings in which volunteers can participate and you choose to work with whichever age group you are most comfortable: Infants/Toddlers (4 to 18 months); Transitional Toddler (18-24 months); Toddler B (2 year olds); Pre-School (3 year olds); Pre-K (4 year olds); Kindergarten (5-6 year olds).

A few of our policies for volunteers that may alleviate some fears of working with children include: no volunteer is left unattended with children; volunteers are not to accompany children to the bathroom or diaper infants; volunteers should bring any discipline concerns to the attention of the teacher.

Volunteers should go to the 81 York Street building, which is the St. Joseph's Home building in the center of the block. The Nurturing Place entrance is on the side and can be reached by walking up the ramp alongside the parking lot. The office is located just inside the entrance, where volunteers can sign-in.

A Day At TNP

There are many opportunities for volunteers to spend time with the children at The Nurturing Place. Volunteers will engage with the children at all times in order for both the volunteer and the child to benefit from the time spent together. Various activities in which you can look forward to participating include:

Infant/Toddler Classroom (4 months to 18 months):

Holding, rocking, playing with babies/toddlers, helping with lunch set up and feedings, going out for a neighborhood walk, calming the children for nap time and helping to put children to sleep, any directed activity as set forth by the teachers i.e. painting, reading, music time, water table, etc.

Transitional Toddler and Toddler B Classrooms (18 months to 36 months):

Playing with children, engaging in directed activities, talking, reading, painting, dress-up, blocks, puzzles, any directions given by the teachers, going out for a neighborhood walk or to the park, helping with lunch time, set-up and clean up for nap time, helping to settle the children for nap time, any extra help that the teacher might need in order to engage all of the children.

Pre-School, Pre-K, and Kindergarten Classrooms (3, 4, and 5 year olds):

Time spent in this classroom is a bit more structured as children are developmentally better- prepared to take on more directed activities. Activities would include: center time – rotating through various planned spaces and learning areas within the classroom such as art, reading time, math games, science, imaginative play, music time, etc. Volunteers would accompany children for outdoor play/walks, lunch, etc.

Below is a rough schedule of activities for the day, but know that the curriculum varies per age group and per time of year:

8:30 am	–	9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	–	10:00 am	Circle Time (group activities such as singing, games, art, etc.)
10:00 am	–	11:00 am	Center Time (developmentally-appropriate lessons/activities)
11:00 am	–	1:00 pm	Lunch (always need help serving, cleaning up)
12:00 pm	–	2:00 pm	Naps (need help settling kids down, rubbing backs, etc.)
2:00 pm	–	3:00 pm	Snack/Center Time
3:00 pm	–	4:00 pm	After School Program

We open at 7:30 am, but a majority of the children arrive at 8:30 am, so there is little for the volunteers to do during this time. The Center is open until 5:30, but at 3 pm the high school mothers leave so the enrollment decreases at that time. However, if that's the only time you can help, we can work on a one-on-one basis to find a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Other Ways to Help

There are many other opportunities to help our children from sponsoring an off-site trip to wish list drives, to themed activity days/weeks. Many of these ideas have come directly from the community. Please contact us to share any additional ways in which you would like to become involved/help/volunteer.

Thank you for however you are able to enrich the lives of our children.

For more information about the York Street Project and its network of programs to help homeless women and children break the cycle of poverty, please visit yorkstreetproject.org. Or, if you have questions, contact Jennifer Mehr, Director of Development, via phone (201.451.8225) or email (jmehr@yorkstreetproject.org).