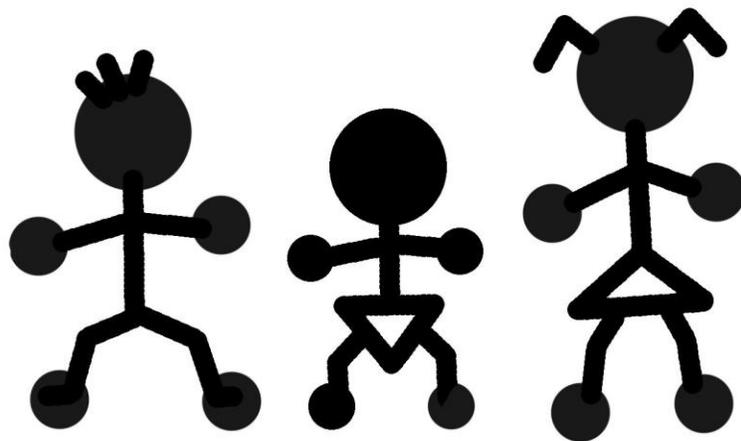


Renfrew Community Association Tiny Tots Cooperative Playgroup Handbook



August 2013

Renfrew Community Association
Tiny Tots Cooperative Playgroup
Handbook

Table of Contents

1. Tiny Tots	4
2. Tiny Tots Membership	4
3. Registration Night	6
4. Tiny Tots Committee	7
5. Volunteer requirements	7
6. Code of Conduct	8
7. Fundraising	10
8. Emergency Procedures	10
9. Health Policy	11

Appendix A – Volunteer Position Descriptions

**Renfrew Community Association's
Tiny Tots Co-operative Playgroup
Mission Statement**

The Renfrew Community Association's Tiny Tots Co-operative Playgroup (Tiny Tots) is open to children from newborns to pre-school children and provides a safe and fun environment by hosting open, non-structured playtime promoting the development of social skills and imaginative play.

This program is structured to enhance community building by providing opportunities for neighborhood families to meet.

1. About Tiny Tots

Housed in our own trailer adjacent to Renfrew Community Centre, Tiny Tots is open to families with newborns to preschool children in Renfrew and surrounding communities. Free to join, it is organized on a co-operative basis with parents/caregivers sharing in the responsibility for activities, maintenance and fund-raising by choosing from a number of volunteer positions that allow for a variety of schedules and talents. Our fund-raising provides us with a large selection of quality toys, books, and activities for the children. The involvement of parents/caregivers also encourages new ideas and innovations so that the play-based learning nature of Tiny Tots is preserved.

Tiny Tots is dedicated to offering open play time to the participating children. Rather than structured activities, the focus is on providing a variety of interactive and creative toys and games and allowing the children to seek out and explore these items with each other, under the supervision of their parents/caregivers. There is also a library, as well as a designated space for under 1's.

Tiny Tots is open from 9.30 to 11.00 Monday to Friday from the beginning of September to the end of June, with all breaks and closures for statutory holidays etc. posted on the Tiny Tots website, www.renfrewtinytots.com. Additionally, Tiny Tots may open during the summer months subject to demand and availability of volunteers.

The Tiny Tots trailer has a maximum capacity of 39 people at any time, and operated on a first come first served basis.

2. Membership

Registration for new and returning families is in early September each year and priority is given to families living in the community of Renfrew. Registration of families living outside of Renfrew is dependent upon available space. Please see our website for current registration night date.

Late registration may be permitted throughout the year subject to numbers. Please contact the Registrar for more information. Guest space may be available for a one-time, drop-in trial. Please email rca-tinytots@hotmail.com to make arrangements prior to attending.

Operating under the Renfrew Community Association (RCA), each family is required to have a valid RCA membership for the current year which provides liability insurance to Tiny Tots members as well many other community benefits. RCA membership can be purchased at Registration Night. Alternatively, RCA membership forms are available on the RCA website (<http://www.renfrewcommunity.ca/>) or in their newsletter, Renfrew Reflections.

Tiny Tots wouldn't exist without volunteers and we therefore require all parents/caregivers fulfill a volunteer role as part of their membership. A post-dated Volunteer Commitment Cheque is required from each family at Registration Night and these are retained by the Tiny Tots Treasurer until the end of the playgroup year at which time all volunteer commitments are reviewed. If the Tiny Tots Committee finds that the volunteer commitment has been not been fulfilled, the Volunteer Commitment Cheque will be cashed. All other cheques will be destroyed. Whilst we would prefer that all parents/caregivers undertake a volunteer role, we understand that this may not always be possible. In the event that you are unable to do so, you may check the box on the registration form and pay a non-returnable cheque on Registration Night which will be cashed shortly after.

Since Tiny Tots is a cooperative program, we all share in the responsibilities of making the program a success. The Committee is focused on the logistics of running the program but it's the parents/caregivers participation that allows the daily sessions and special events to happen. Volunteer opportunities are set up to ensure that parents whose children are registered in Tiny Tots contribute to the program. There are commitments at various times of the week and day to ensure that there is something for everyone.

Older children (those attending school) may accompany registered

parents/caregivers to a Tiny Tots session provided that they behave appropriately towards the younger children and that there is space available.

Due to space constraints and insurance restrictions, day home providers are not eligible to attend Tiny Tots.

If you decide to leave Tiny Tots during the year, please contact the Registrar. We ask that you still perform your volunteer commitment otherwise we will cash your Volunteer Commitment Deposit. Exceptions may be granted in extenuating circumstances.

3. Registration Night

In order to register for Tiny Tots, each family should bring the following to Registration Night:

- Completed Registration form
- Cheque for \$15 made payable to *Renfrew Community Association* for RCA membership. Parents/caregivers bringing children other than their own must ensure that the children's family also holds valid RCA membership.
- \$75 Volunteer Commitment Deposit made payable to *Renfrew Tiny Tots* and dated June 30th of the Tiny Tots year or, if you are unable to volunteer for whatever reason, the cheque should be dated on Registration Night and the relevant box ticked on the registration form.

In addition, each family chooses a volunteer role from those available (roles are available on a first come, first served basis). Wherever possible, dates for special events will be given at Registration. For more details of roles, please see "Tiny Tots' Volunteer Structure" and full descriptions are given in Appendix A.

In the event that your or another adult in your family are unable to fulfill your assigned volunteer duty, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator not less than 48 hours in advance of the event.

4. Committee

Overall responsibility for Tiny Tots operation falls to the Tiny Tots Committee under the RCA. Assignment of Committee positions is dependent upon the number of Tiny Tots members volunteering for them in any year. Please contact the Chair or Registrar if you would be interested in serving on the Committee to see if there are any vacancies. In the event that more than one member volunteers for any position, a simple ballot system of all current Tiny Tot members will be used.

Committee positions require attendance at committee meetings as necessary throughout the year and members are also required to have regular access to email in case there are issues/events etc. to discuss. Committee members must be eligible and registered for Tiny Tots in the year(s) that they serve.

Current Committee Positions are:

- Chairperson
- Communications Coordinator
- Events Coordinator
- Registrar
- Toy Steward
- Treasurer
- Volunteer Coordinator

5. Volunteer requirements

As Tiny Tots is a cooperative playgroup, we all share in the responsibilities of making the program a success. Whilst the Committee is focused on the logistics of running Tiny Tots it is the parents/caregivers participation that allows the daily sessions and special events to happen. Volunteer opportunities are set up to ensure that parents/caregivers whose children are registered in Tiny Tots contribute to the program. There are commitments at various times of the week and day to ensure that there is something for everyone.

The following is a list of volunteer positions for the current year. Detailed descriptions of each position can be found in Appendix A.

- Day Leaders (2 per day)
- Party Assistants
- Toy Cleaning Assistants
- Sale Planning Committee (various roles)
- Sales Assistants
- Craft Coordinator
- Librarian

Where possible we will provide the dates for the volunteer events such as parties on Registration Night. Where this is not possible, you will be emailed the dates as far in advance of the event as possible. Please make a note of the dates as once you have signed up for a volunteer role we will send **one** reminder prior to the event. Please note that it is no longer the policy of Tiny Tots Committee to chase up volunteers beyond this reminder and the responsibility for fulfilling the role lies with the volunteer.

6. Code of Conduct

Parents/Caregivers are responsible for their children and their behaviour at all times!

Tiny Tots has a Code of Conduct which parents/caregivers agree to as part of registration. If there is a breach to the Code of Conduct, it will be dealt with individually by the Day Leaders or by the Committee.

The Code of Conduct is as follows:

1. Children must be supervised by their parent/caregiver at all times.
2. Parents/caregivers should ensure that their children are taught to use Tiny Tots toys and equipment properly, thereby avoiding unnecessary breakage, accidents and potential injury.
3. For safety reasons, children are not allowed to open the toy boxes

- by themselves.
4. Please take the time to assist other children near you.
 5. Hitting, biting, pushing and other physically violent behavior is not acceptable and must be dealt with immediately by the parent/caregiver.
 6. Foul language is not tolerated at Tiny Tots.
 7. If a child persistently shows unacceptable behavior, the parent / caregiver will be asked to remove the child from further participation in Tiny Tots.
 8. Please remove all outdoor shoes upon entry.
 9. If you make a mess, please clean it up.
 10. Books are for reading. All books should be returned to the library shelves to ensure they are not left lying around.
 11. Toys with wheels (especially riding toys) should remain at the end of the trailer away from the under 1's zone.
 12. Toys should remain with their intended play items (i.e.: trains on the train table). Please return all toys to the correct play area. This will assist with clean-up as every toy has its assigned storage bin or location.
 13. Any toys that are chewed or put in mouths should be cleaned by the parent/caregiver as soon as possible and certainly before the end of the session using the wet wipes provided.
 14. Children are welcome to bring snacks to eat whilst seated at the picnic tables. Parents/caregivers are responsible for supervising their own children during snack time (including ensuring that all food remains at the snack table and any crumbs or spills are cleaned up promptly).
 15. Please ensure that all snacks are nut-free.
 16. Change table and training seat are provided in the washrooms. Please clean up after your child and ensure that all dirty diapers/nappies are disposed of in the washroom garbage bins provided.
 17. All Adults present at session end should help to put toys away and clean up before leaving. If you need to leave before the end of the session, please speak to the Day Leader. . The following are ways to assist:
 - Put away toys in their designated spaces. If you are unsure where toys are stored, please ask the Day Leader.

- Wipe down tables
- Sweep the floor.
- Empty all garbage bins into the skip in the RCA car park and replace the garbage bags.

7. Fundraising

Tiny Tots functions as a no-charge program for the community. As such, all financing of Tiny Tots expenses and events is provided through fundraising efforts. The Tiny Tots Sale in April each year is our main fundraiser and provides the bulk of our funds. Other fundraising money has come from the sale of Tiny Tots 'Playgroupie' t-shirts as well as prince and princess capes and crowns.

Tiny Tots has also received donations from local companies through initiatives such as building communities programs in which people volunteered with the RCA to be eligible to receive a grant for the community association program of their choice.

If you have a suggestion for a fundraising event, please contact a Committee member.

An outline of the major fundraising event can be found in Appendix B.

8. Emergency Procedures

Members should familiarize themselves with the location of the fire exits, extinguishers and the muster point located in the playground to the south of the trailer. Do not stop to collect your belongings.

In the event of a fire, collect your OWN children and exit by the nearest available exit. If it is necessary to take someone else's child, be SURE to inform that parent that you have done so, thus avoiding the risk of the parent remaining in the building when the child is already safely outside. Parents/caregivers must remain at the muster point until told that they can leave by the Day Leader to ensure that everyone is accounted for.

9. Health Policy

It is for the benefit of all that Tiny Tots members that children remain healthy. However, if your child is unwell, please stay home, especially if a fever is present. In the event that your child contracts a infectious childhood illness such as chickenpox, measles, DVT etc. please contact the Registrar as soon as possible so that all parents/caregivers can be informed.

Please teach your children proper washroom hygiene such as washing hands before eating and after using the toilet.

As some children suffer from severe allergies, we do not recommend sharing snacks unless approved by the child's parent/caregiver. Please note that Tiny Tots cannot guarantee a peanut-free environment and parents/caregivers with children suffering from peanut or other allergies should satisfy themselves of the appropriateness or otherwise of Tiny Tots for their child.

APPENDIX A

Volunteer Position Descriptions

1. COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Common Duties for ALL Committee Members:

- Attend TT Committee meetings.
- Attend TT Registration Night.
- Maintain timely communication with the rest of the committee by checking and responding to emails regularly for important Tiny Tots issues, event planning etc.
- Inform rest of the committee if they will be out of contact for a period of time.
- Inform all attendees of the Code of Conduct.
- Determine and assess all fundraising efforts.
- Share ideas/concerns/suggestions for improvement and work together towards a strategy/solution.
- Be proactive in your role.
- Greet guests and new members and provide them with info on how Tiny Tots works.
- At the end of the year, review who has fulfilled their volunteer commitment and determine which, if any Volunteer Commitment Deposit cheques need to be cashed.

Chairperson

The Chairperson is:

- Committed to the work of the RCA and Tiny Tots.
- Willing to organize, lead and attend committee meetings and oversee decisions.
- Supportive of special events and fundraising activities related to Tiny Tots.
- A member in good standing within the RCA.

The Chairperson is responsible for the overall operation of the Tiny Tots. This includes:

- Leading the Tiny Tots Committee, maintaining records or minutes for the RCA Secretary and providing information as needed to the RCA Board of Directors regarding Tiny Tot Committee business.
- Creating and managing sub-committees and sub-chairs as required.
- Facilitating a safe and appropriate environment for Tiny Tots and communicating any problems or issues regarding the trailer to the RCA Committee.
- Attending RCA meetings and serving as liaison with the RCA Board of Directors and ensuring appropriate and ongoing communication between the Board and Tiny Tots parents/caregivers.
- Communicating any unresolved issues to the RCA Executive so that a resolution may be facilitated.
- Providing annual financial reports as prepared by the Tiny Tots Treasurer to the RCA Treasurer at the March 31st year end for inclusion in the financial statements of the RCA.
- Attending the RCA Annual General Meetings.
- Working with each committee member to ensure his/her area of responsibility is managed.
- Managing changes in operations and key processes to ensure a smooth transition.
- Responding to questions and concerns raised by Tiny Tots members.
- Coordinating key communication both internally within Tiny Tots, and externally.
- Serving as email contact for members and new inquiries via the Tiny Tots email address and website.
- Fostering and maintaining relationships with other organizations/groups.
- Assisting the Tiny Tots Treasurer in approving member's expenses.
- Reviewing Tiny Tots handbook and any other relevant documents to ensure accuracy and compliance and auctioning any changes as required.

Communications Coordinator

The Communications Coordinator keeps Tiny Tots parents/caregivers informed of important dates and events for the duration of the Tiny Tots year. The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Providing graphics (posters, etc.) for events and everyday signage as required
- Posting of posters and signage as required in various locations around the community.
- Preparing emails as required for sending to parents/caregivers.
- If a registrant requests that an email be sent to the group on their behalf, it can be printed and posted on one of the Tiny Tots bulletin boards after approval of the Communications Coordinator, if it is believed to be of general interest to the Tiny Tots member. These postings should be informative and of general interest, but not solicitous in nature.
- Managing, maintaining and updating information to be placed on the Tiny Tots website.
- Relaying information regarding upcoming Tiny Tots events to the parents/caregivers.
- Preparing submissions to the Renfrew Reflections community newsletter.

Events Coordinator

The Events Coordinator ensures that the tasks for all Tiny Tots parties and other special events have been delegated successfully and provides committee oversight and consistency for parties.

Tiny Tots events typically are: (These may be subject to change)

- Halloween – Craft Days & Party
- Christmas – Craft Days & Party
- RCA Family Skate Day
- Valentine’s Day – Cookies & Crafts Days
- Easter- Craft Days & Party
- Year End Party
- RCA Stampede Party

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Selecting event dates and coordinating with Communications and Volunteer Coordinators.
- Booking venues for events, typically in the RCA community centre.
- Determine how many volunteers are needed for each event and ensure there are sufficient volunteers available.
- Organizing and chairing pre-event volunteer meetings 3 weeks prior to each event.
- Assign event roles to all volunteers and ensure that volunteers fully understand their roles.
- Confirming budgets with the Tiny Tots Treasurer.
- Estimating the number of people for each event based on past year's and the present year's enrollment.
- Purchasing and providing prizes, materials and other items necessary for events.
- Ensuring all receipts are passed on to the Treasurer.
- Coordinate event and venue set up and close out.
- Attend events to gauge success and to help with last minute problems.
- Discuss fulfillment of volunteer duties with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Treasurer

The Treasurer handles all of the financial aspects of Tiny Tots. The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Collecting Volunteer Commitment Deposit cheques on Registration Night and hold them securely during the Tiny Tots year.
- Cashing Volunteer Commitment Deposit cheques in the event that the parents/caregivers do not fulfill their volunteer commitment. Shredding all other Volunteer Commitment Deposit cheques.
- Depositing income to the bank as necessary.

- Approving, with Committee Chairperson, member's expenses and arranging reimbursement.
- Maintaining appropriate receipts as backup in the event of a financial audit.
- Reconciling accounts on a monthly basis and providing a monthly financial statement to the RCA Board of Directors at each month end RCA meeting.
- Preparing annual budgets as required.
- Preparing year-end financial reports and submit to the RCA.

Registrar

The Registrar oversees all aspects of registration and membership information.

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Informing existing and potential Tiny Tots parents/caregivers of upcoming Registration Night
- Coordinate Registration Night
- Providing access to registration forms to potential parents/caregivers through
 - Email forms
 - Online forms via Tiny Tots website
- Collecting all registration forms.
- Maintain Master Spreadsheet of members contact details, volunteer commitments, as well as sign in sheets. Inform the Volunteer Coordinator if any members leave or apply to join
- Maintain emergency contact folder
- Ensuring that the registration requirements are followed.
- Working with the Communications Coordinator to advertise
- Registration Night including but not limited to the following means:
 - Distributing emails to all current Tiny Tots parents/caregivers,
 - Arrange for the RCA Communications Director to notify all RCA members via the RCA database

- prepare and submit information to Renfrew Reflections community newsletter in time for publication in the June/July and August/September issues
- Arrange for the Communications Coordinator to update the Tiny Tots website.
- Confirming parents/caregivers RCA memberships with the RCA Director of Volunteers and Memberships.
- Coordinating with Committee Chairperson, Volunteer Coordinator and Treasurer to ensure a smooth integration for new parents/caregivers.
- Keeping attendance records and reporting on attendance numbers to the RCA Board of Directors.

Toy Steward

The Toy Steward oversees the maintenance and hygiene of the Tiny Tots toy collection. The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Arranging cleaning sessions for toys. There should be a minimum of 5 cleaning sessions a year with additional sessions arranged at the Toy Stewards discretion.
- The sessions should be timed as follows:
 - one in September, between Registration Night and start-up
 - one midway between start-up and Christmas
 - one early in the New Year
 - one midway between New Year and Easter
 - one between Easter and Year End
 - Dates should be determined prior to registration and volunteers informed of dates on Registration Night.
- Check for broken toys and determine whether they can be fixed. If not they should be disposed of and liaise with the Committee to arrange replacements if necessary.
- Buying new toys (as deemed appropriate by the Committee) and passing receipts onto the Treasurer.

Volunteer Coordinator

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Ensuring that all Tiny Tot parents/caregivers commit to a volunteer position and maintain a record of whether these commitments have been fulfilled.
- Works with the Registrar to maintain a current list of volunteers throughout the year.
- Send email reminders to volunteers 3 weeks prior to each event
- Updating volunteer list following each event in discussion with the Events Coordinator.
- Reporting to Tiny Tots Committee on status of Volunteers, changes to positions, and any concerns.
- Ensuring that as many of the positions as possible are filled, asking for further volunteers as required.
- Answering questions about the volunteer position requirements, or guiding the person to someone who has previously held the position.
- Working with Event Coordinator to determine the number of volunteers positions required for events throughout the year.
- Advising the Committee of any changes or improvements required to volunteer descriptions and working with the Communications Coordinator to update the Handbook.

2. NON COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Day Leaders

Each Tiny Tots session has two Day Leaders who share the role and are in charge of Tiny Tots operations for their specified day each week. The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Organize schedule to ensure that a Day Leader or designate is available to open up each day
- Arriving prior to 9:25am.
- Opening and unlocking the doors.
- Ensure trailer is set up at a comfortable temperature and that the that previous Day Leader duties have been fulfilled (i.e toys are stored in their proper locations, rooms have been left in a clean state, garbage has been emptied if required)
- Setting out sign-in sheets and other information as needed. Ensure everyone signs in to comply with Fire Regulations and so that we maintain an accurate record of attendees.
- Greet new members or guests and explain how Tiny Tots works
- Know location of Tiny Tots Emergency Contact details in the event of an emergency
- If there is a craft day scheduled put cars away and set up tables in middle of trailer with craft supplies arranged ready for use
- At end of each day, ensure toys are put away properly, wipe down tables, clean/brush floor and dispose of full or smelly garbage bags into the skip in the RCA car park.
- In the event that neither Day Leaders can attend on a particular day, it is their responsibility to arrange for a replacement in a timely manner and not later than 24 hours in advance from the list of alternate Day Leaders and reserves. In emergency situations only, please contact the Chairperson who will endeavor to make arrangements for someone to cover for you.

Toy Cleaning Assistant

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Attend toy cleaning evenings which take place a minimum of 5 times throughout the year. Dates should be provided on Registration Night.
- A minimum commitment of 2 hours is required for each cleaning session.

Librarian

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Overseeing the use of the library.
- Check on the condition of books on a regular basis (at least once per month) and repair or discard any damaged books as required.
- Sending email reminders to those who have books signed out for an extended period (greater than a month).
- Sourcing new books from sales etc. and preparing new books for use by affixing Tiny Tots stickers

Sales Committee

Our major fundraiser of the year, the Tiny Tots Sale of gently used children's items including clothes, books, toys and games and takes place in early April in the upstairs hall of the RCA Community Center.

Individuals sign up as a vendor to sell gently used children's items. A percentage of the profit goes to the vendor and a small percentage goes to Tiny Tots. All vendors are required to volunteer a minimum of 2 hours on the day of the sale.

The Sale requires organization and planning that starts in January and ends with the sale in early April. Sale Committee members volunteer at Registration Night and positions within the Sale committee are determined at the start-up meeting in January. Positions typically include Chairperson, Treasurer, Online Advertising Coordinator, Hard Copy Advertising Coordinator, Vendor/Volunteer

Coordinator, Set Up Coordinator, and Data Entry.

The amount of work varies depending upon the role but the aim of the Sale Committee is to ensure that the sale is planned, has sufficient vendors, is advertised and well attended, and runs smoothly on the day.

A start-up meeting is held after which the majority of the contact is via email until the day before the sale.

Regular updates should be made by Sale Committee members to the Sale Committee Chairperson so that they can ensure that all planning and deadlines, particularly for the online advertising, are being met. The Tiny Tots Committee is always on hand to provide assistance where required

The Sale Committee is responsible for planning and organizing this sale and typically includes:

- Advertising for vendors and preparing sale advertising including:
 - *Renfrew Reflections* community newsletter
 - Posters in local coffee shops and business bulletin boards etc.
 - Email Tiny Tots contact list and RCA membership.
 - Sandwich boards around neighbourhood to direct people to the hall
- Set up sale in the hall
- Attend sale and ensure its smooth running

Sale Assistant

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Joining the Sale Committee if required in the event of absence or insufficient volunteers
- Setting up the evening before the sale, typically 18.00-21.00 hours.

- Providing assistance on sale day. This may include set-up for sale, decorating, manning a sale table for Tiny Tots, cashier, sale clean-up, etc.
- This position requires all day attendance at the sale, typically from 08.30 to 15.00 hours.

Craft Coordinator

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Maintain Tiny Tot craft supplies.
- Ensure that there are sufficient supplies in advance of craft weeks.
- Work with the Treasurer to determine budget and procure new craft materials as required
- Bring in new craft ideas for Tiny Tots; any and all ideas are welcome.

Party Assistants

Party Assistants volunteer for any **two of the following parties:**

- Halloween
- Christmas
- RCA Family Skate Day
- Easter
- End of Year
- RCA Stampede Breakfast

The primary responsibilities of this role include:

- Attend start-up meeting for each party. Typically volunteers will receive a reminder about the party together with an invite to the meeting 3 weeks prior to the event. The meeting will amongst other things involve assigning party roles and ensuring that everyone knows what their role entails.
- Where possible 2 volunteers will help with each game to allow parents/caregivers to spend time with their families at the parties
- Set up party room, this is generally done the afternoon or evening before the party.

- On the day of the party arrive at the predetermined time prior to start time to set up the game that you have been assigned.
- Ensure that there is always someone at the game you are assigned and assist children with playing the game.
- Distribute prizes to children as required.
- Ensure at end of the party that all games and game pieces are returned to their proper location.
- Assist with clean up after party