Group Program Volunteer

About DGCKids

DGCKids helps children who are blind or have a visual impairment build the skills, confidence, and connections to thrive alongside their families and community. We're one of only three organizations in Missouri focused solely on this work, and the only nonprofit in St. Louis supporting them and their families from birth through high school graduation.

As a DGCKids volunteer, you'll support children at every age. Helping our youngest with early connection and sensory play, guiding older kids through structured social skills, and preparing teens for real-world independence and life skills as they near high school graduation.

Find Your Fit

Program	Ages / Grades	Meeting Schedule	Your Role
Buddy Builders	Infants and toddlers (0-2)	1st, 2nd, 3rd Tue mornings, 9:30–11am	Family connections and sensory play
Explorers	Preschool age (3 -5)	1st and 3rd Fri mornings, 9:30–11 am, **or** 2nd Sat, 10:30 am–noon	Early skills and first friendships
Navigators	K–2nd Grade	3rd Sat, 10am–12:30pm	Structure and growing independence
Voyagers, Challengers, Pathfinders	3rd Grade–HS Graduation	1st Sat, 10am–2pm	Real-world skills and lasting friendships

Volunteer Requirements (All Programs)

- All volunteers must register with the Missouri Family Care Safety Registry (takes a few minutes online, $15 fee, and DGCKids happily reimburses) and review DGCKids volunteer training.
- Consistency is particularly important for children with visual impairments, and we encourage volunteers to commit to attending regularly to build meaningful connections with participants.
- **A positive attitude and willingness to learn matter more than prior experience. Experience working with children with disabilities is a plus, but it's not required for any program.**

Infant and Toddler Group Volunteer (Buddy Builders)

Introducing children to their first experiences of guided play, sensory exploration, and social connection alongside their parents, laying the groundwork for the independence they'll build in later groups.

While parents are at the Center, they also have time set aside to connect with one another, and volunteers are needed in the room to support children during that time.

Meets the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Tuesday mornings of the month, 9:30–11 am.

What You'll Be Doing

- Supporting parent-child play through songs, movement, sensory play, and story time. A child's first experiences of structured group activity.
- Offering one-on-one attention and gentle support to any child who needs extra help engaging in activities.
- Helping with set-up and clean-up, including prepping materials like soft toys, musical instruments, or sensory bins and sanitizing surfaces before and after the session.
- Celebrating each child's progress and working with staff to ensure every child is supported, included, and safe.
- Playing with siblings (typically up to age 6) who may attend with their brother or sister.

Preschool Age Group Volunteer (Explorers)

Building on Buddy Builders, Explorers introduces more structured play and peer interaction. Helping children take their first steps toward independence and confidence away from their parents' side.

There are two preschool age groups to choose from: 1st and 3rd Friday mornings, 9:30–11 am, or the 2nd Saturday of the month, 10:30 am–Noon.

What You'll Be Doing

- Engaging with children ages 3–5 through hands-on play, music, and movement activities designed to build early learning and first friendships outside the family.
- Offering extra support to children who need it to fully take part.
- Helping with set-up and clean-up, including prepping play stations, craft supplies, or instruments for music time, and sanitizing toys and surfaces before and after use.
- Encouraging participation and celebrating each child's growing confidence as they learn to play alongside peers.

K–2nd Grade Group Volunteer (Navigators)

Navigators raise the bar with more activities that push children to problem-solve and engage more independently. The next step up from the guided play of Explorers.

Meets the 3rd Saturday of the month, 10 am–12:30 pm. Sessions open with music, then move into staff-led activities tied to building independence and social skills.

What You'll Be Doing

- Engaging with children in kindergarten–2nd grade through activities like art projects, games, and imaginative play that ask children to problem-solve and deepen friendships.
- Offering extra support to any child who needs it to fully take part in activities.
- Helping with set-up and clean-up, including setting up stations, prepping supplies, getting instruments ready for music time, and sanitizing toys before and after use.
- Cheering children on as they build the confidence to try new things alongside their growing circle of friends.

3rd Grade–High School Graduation Group Volunteer (Voyagers, Challengers, Pathfinders)

The oldest groups focus on real-world skill-building (orientation and mobility, self-advocacy, and independence) through community outings, Challenge Trips, and hands-on experiences that prepare children and youth for life beyond DGCKids.

Voyagers, Challengers, and Pathfinders meet, typically the 1st Saturday of the month, 10 am–2 pm.

Children and youth are divided by grade level for most activities and sometimes come together for shared ones. Some meetings are at DGCKids, others are out in the community.

What You'll Be Doing

- Engaging with children and youth 3rd grade through High School graduation as they practice real-world skills while enjoying time with the friends they've built over years in the program. Events include cooking lessons, community outings, Challenge Trips, science, and sports.
- Offering support to participants who need extra help fully taking part in activities.
- Helping with set-up and clean-up for each session.
- Celebrating each participant's growth in independence and self-advocacy as they prepare for life beyond DGCKids.

To sign up, visit www.dgckids.org/support-us/volunteer/ or scan
Questions? Email Anne at volunteer@dgckids.org