Welcome to the TOPS orientation. We are pleased you have chosen to serve with TOPS this semester. TOPS provide an excellent opportunity for you to become involved in the Provo community while interacting with students in the public schools. We hope that this training session will help to prepare you for this service.

TOPS Volunteer Responsibilities

- Check with the site coordinator frequently to see how things are going. Address concerns as they occur.
- The schools are depending on you. Show that you are responsible by calling the site coordinator if you are going to be absent or late.
- For attendance purposes, make sure you sign in at the school.
- Learn and support the school rules (no hats).

Other Points to Remember

- A student is impressed and influenced far more by your example than by your words.
- Empathize with the students. Put yourself in their shoes. Focus on the concerns of the students, not your own.
- Focus on the person who is talking and establish eye contact. Do this with both verbal and non-verbal behaviors.
- Trust in the student’s capacity to handle his/her feelings, to work through them, and to find solutions to his/her problems.
- Acknowledge the student’s achievements, no matter how small. Don’t underestimate the power of positive comments!!
- Students make mistakes and need to know this is part of the learning process. Do not be afraid to admit your mistakes or to say, “I don’t know.”
**Do’s of Serving in Public Schools**

- Take advantage of this training and any other training offered to you at the school site. This volunteer opportunity may provide you with valuable skills and experience.

- Take initiative. Be proactive and use your best judgment instead of waiting for the teacher or site coordinator to direct you in everything.

- Be aware of your own limitations. You cannot change the student’s home situation.

- Seek help from a leader if a situation becomes uncomfortable.

- Be on time.

- Be patient, respectful, and honest in working with students. Honor your commitment to **confidentiality** (never mention names outside of class or in reports).

- Encourage students by giving them positive feedback and recognizing their efforts.

**Don’ts of Serving in Public Schools**

- Don’t use time for personal use (talking on cell phones or with other volunteers).

- Don’t administer first aid, except in extreme cases of emergency.

- Never transport students in your car.

- Don’t let the students jump, hang, or pull on you. Please do not pick students up or carry them.

- Never let children sit on your lap or give you frontal hugs; Side by side is more respectful of personal boundaries.

- Be sensitive about what you say to a student: Even if you think your comments are innocent, you may be misinterpreted.

- Don’t share personal information with students, such as phone numbers. Especially in high school settings, the age difference is very close and flirting can occur between tutors and students who are hungry for attention.