



## Tips for a Successful Volunteer Experience

### Classroom Environments

- Every school will be different. Every teacher has his or her own style.
- Even though there will be school and classroom differences, all students should be encouraged and challenged to be inquisitive and seek answers.

### **Suggestions for getting more information about the classroom you will teach**

- Please discuss with the teacher beforehand, the details of his/her request to help ensure you understand the request and can adequately prepare for the topic.
- Many classrooms today have a LCD projector which typically remains in the classroom. However, if you can bring your own projector ready to go it will often help alleviate setup problems. If you do not plan to bring your own (and you need one), please discuss your needs with the teacher beforehand. Making assumptions about what will be available to you has proven to be problematic.
- Ask if there are any special needs that need to be addressed. Ask what is allowed to be brought in to give to the students.

### General Expectations for Volunteers

- You are there to promote financial literacy education and represent FEPPP. During your introduction to the class you may, note the organization you work for. However, your presentation time is not to be used to promote a specific product or business. Reference to your organization, its mission and products should be kept to a few brief sentences at most.
- Dress Code – dress comfortably, but remember that you are a **role model for the students**.
- Please make sure you know the location of the school beforehand. If you need additional time to setup for your presentation, please coordinate with the teacher. **If you cannot be available, provide advance notice.**
- Arrive to the school at least 10 minutes before the start of class. Sign-in at the office and get a visitor/volunteer badge. Sign out at the office when you leave the building.
- Make sure the teacher is always present when you are working with students.
- Be prepared for what you are working on.
- When working with students, give thorough explanations using age-appropriate language. Know the classroom rules. This includes rules for using the restroom, getting drinks, getting out of seat to sharpen pencils, and so on.
- Accept students in terms of their backgrounds, values, manners and vocabulary as theirs may be different from yours. By giving of yourself, by sharing time and by caring, you are making a difference.



- Be yourself! Be flexible! Have fun! This should be an enjoyable experience for all involved.

### **General Guidelines for Working with Students**

- What should the students call you? Volunteers are referred to as Ms., Mrs. or Mr. when in the classroom.
- When possible call the students by their first name. This shows you care, and you will be able to communicate with them more easily.
- Communicate your objectives clearly. Tell students what they will learn by the end of your visit.
- Communicate your expectations for the task at hand. Outline what is and is not acceptable for each task.
- Show excitement about the work you are doing with the students. It will be contagious.
- Do not “lecture”. Encourage students to ask questions and make discoveries. Support student inquiry.
- While having students share their own experiences and ideas is often helpful, refrain from requesting specific personal information from students.
- Ask questions to determine what students know and think. Provide positive reinforcement for jobs done well and effectively.
- Smile and be friendly.
- Provide time for student movement. They cannot sit for long periods of time. Build movement into transition from one activity to another.
- Remember that when students are excited they will tend to talk louder than normal. Remind the teacher that this is okay.

### **General Guidelines for Difficult Situations**

- It is not your job to discipline the students. It is OK to ask students to stop unsafe or unkind behavior, but the next step is to let the teacher know and resolve the problem.
- Create opportunities to include the students in helping in general or with a specific job. This could include helping to set up for the activity, modeling for others, or helping with clean up.
- Remember, it is okay to walk away to disengage. Sometimes people just need time and space to work through a situation