

# Buddy Training 101

## Why We Are Here

### The Mission of Nathaniel's Hope:

Sharing "the hope" with kids with special needs and their families.

### Understanding Disability

#### *ADA's Definition:*

A person with a disability is a person having a physical or mental impairment that significantly limits at least one major life activity.

#### *Our Definition:*

Kids with special needs are our VIPs including any child with a physical, cognitive, medical or hidden disability, those with chronic or life-threatening illnesses, or those who are medically fragile.

**Buddies** are friends of VIP kids!

### The Nuts and Bolts of Buddy Break

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# Sample Schedule

**Buddies**, it is imperative that you arrive on time. “**Buddy Huddle**” is a critical time to go over the plan for the day, receive your assignment and have time to review your **VIP’s** folder. When you are comfortable with your **VIP’s** information form, please return your folder to the file box so the nurse can have access to it. If in the event of an emergency you are not able to fulfill your commitment to be a **Buddy**, please notify your Coordinator immediately. Also, remember to tell your Coordinator if you will be able to serve at the following **Buddy Break!**

9:00 a.m.	<b>Buddies</b> arrive for set up
9:15 a.m.	<b>Buddy Huddle</b>
9:45 a.m.	Ready for <b>VIP</b> arrival
10:00-11:00 a.m.	Greet <b>VIPs</b> and group playtime in group meeting area
10:45-11:45 a.m.	Activity hour Craft room Video room Game room Quiet room Changing room Snack room Story room (optional) Music room (optional)
11:00 a.m.	New <b>VIP</b> orientation begins
11:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Story time
12:00-12:30 p.m.	Snack time
12:30-1:00 p.m.	Group games in group meeting area
1:00 p.m.	Good-bye to <b>VIPs</b> , fill out <b>VIP</b> report

# Meeting Your VIP & Caregiver

One of the most meaningful times of the day is when you have the opportunity to interact with your VIP's caregiver. When your VIP child and caregiver arrive, be sure to welcome them and let them know how happy you are that they are there. None of us knows the effort it takes for a caregiver to get their child to **Buddy Break**, or the circumstances that are surrounding them. A warm welcome may be exactly what they need!

As you approach your child to meet them, be careful not to overwhelm them with your presence. Some children are very sensitive to touch, light, and sound and may find your well-meaning hug to be disturbing. Do not take it personally. It is best to approach them slowly and give them a chance to warm up to you.

As you receive their toiletry/snack bag, be sure that you familiarize yourself with the contents and the desires of the caregivers. Make sure you safely secure these items in the appropriate room.

Caregivers are truly your best coaches! Take a moment to ask about your VIP. If you have any concerns from their family information form, now is the time to make clarifications. You may also want to inquire about:

1. What type of morning has your child been having?
2. What does he/she enjoy doing?

Most families are open to talking about their child's medical condition as long as the questions are not too personal. Just as you would like someone to respect your privacy, respect the family's privacy as well. Be sensitive to discussing a child's special need in front of them. Children are very perceptive. Assume they can understand everything you say. Direct your questions to the parent or caregiver while the child is not present.

At the conclusion of **Buddy Break**, be sure to share with your caregiver a special moment you experienced with their VIP that day. It will be of great encouragement to them!

Take a moment and ask your family if there is anything you can pray with them about. If you are not comfortable with this, invite another **Buddy** to join you! If you are made aware of any extenuating circumstances, please let your Coordinator know as they may help provide assistance to the situation. Remember, your outreach to the family does not have to end at **Buddy Break**!

**You will be blessed beyond measure as you get to know your VIP friends and their family!**

# Risk Management Policy

# Notes

Undertaking the many different types of ministries in today's churches can be risky. All kinds of church activities, including youth retreats, child care in the nursery, gymnasium and playground recreation, church schools, and mission trips, all involve some degree of risk. In many of your programs, harm could be caused by an array of actions made by a volunteer and/or paid staff.

To ensure proper risk management for **Buddy Break**, we have developed policies to help you implement a safe and effective program. Your church undoubtedly includes some of these policies as part of your existing program risk management. As we work together, **Nathaniel's Hope** requires the following risk management procedures be put into action:

1. **Buddy Break** strives to maintain a one-to-one ratio of volunteers to children.
2. Perimeters are set by the hosting church to ensure that children will be maintained in a safe environment.
3. Families are informed that the program is run by volunteers and that **Buddy Break** is not providing professional services. This is a respite program where their children will be cared for and played with in a loving, nurturing, spiritual, and safe environment.
4. It is mandatory for every family to attend a complete VIP orientation before they may participate in the program. Parents/caregivers are required to fill out an extensive information form giving detailed information about their child, including behavioral habits, communication abilities, emergency medical information, and other pertinent information.
5. Emergency numbers are obtained from participating families. Families are given every opportunity to evaluate the program and decline participation should they be concerned about the level of care provided.
6. Waiver of Liability is notarized by all families participating in **Buddy Break** along with notarized permission for medical intervention.

# Buddy Covenant

## Qualifications

The primary requirements to be a **Buddy** are a heart to love **VIP kids** and a willingness to serve. **Buddy** volunteers work together with the **Buddy Break** leadership team at their partnering church to make each **Buddy Break** a success.

## Responsibilities

**Buddy** volunteers will be asked to carry out the following responsibilities:

1. Confirm with the **Buddy Break** Coordinator your attendance status in a timely manner. If you are unable to attend, please inform your **Buddy Break** Coordinator immediately.
2. Be on time and stay to the end. (The **Buddy Break** Coordinator for your location will specify your time of arrival.)
3. Dress comfortably and appropriately. **Buddy Break** shirts are available to purchase. If you would like one, please let the **Buddy Break** Coordinator know.
4. Provide direct childcare to **VIP kids** and their siblings.
5. Participate in individual and group play activities.
6. Follow all policies and procedures as outlined in training.
7. Notify your **Buddy Break** Coordinator immediately in the event of any injury or sudden illness of a **VIP** child.
8. Help make sure the childcare areas are clean and maintained and notify the **Buddy Break** Coordinator of any supply needs.
9. **Never** leave a child unattended for any reason.
10. Change diapers and/or assist in dressing or undressing children and help clean up, if necessary.
11. At the conclusion of each **Buddy Break**, make notes about the day's experience in the child's information folder.
12. Perform related tasks as assigned.
13. Maintain the character of Christ at all times.
14. Celebrate and love **VIPs** and their families!
15. Invite a friend to be a **Buddy**.
16. Complete the **Buddy Break Training 101** and fill out all necessary forms.
17. Understand that a National Background check (includes local, county, and state) will be run on all **Buddies** prior to training and before volunteering.
7. Participants must call in and make a reservation the week before the scheduled **Buddy Break**, and they will receive a call to confirm reservation or be placed on a waiting list if adequate staff is not available to maintain a one-to-one ratio.
8. It is the church's discretion to decline attendance of a **VIP** family in the event a child's needs cannot be adequately taken care of by volunteers.
9. Volunteers complete **Buddy Break** training which includes understanding of basic safety procedures.
10. National background checks (including state and county checks) must be completed on all volunteers.
11. **Buddies** are not allowed to be alone when toileting children and are strongly encouraged to always be in close proximity of others.
12. **Buddies** are asked to report any inappropriate behavior seen demonstrated by any **Buddy** with a **VIP** child. If you see anything, please talk to the **Buddy Break** Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, or **Buddy Break** staff at **Nathaniel's Hope**.
13. Volunteers sign a Confidentiality Agreement.
14. Volunteer nurse is on site.
15. Incident Reports are to be completed in writing to document any incident or accident that occurs at **Buddy Break**.
16. At the conclusion of each **Buddy Break**, every volunteer is required to write a brief summary of the day's events and their child's interaction.

**I have read and fully understand the role of a Buddy and commit to fulfill this role with Nathaniel's Hope Buddy Break.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Accident/Incident Report Form



## ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Confidentiality** - This form will be held securely by your Buddy Break location for the purpose of monitoring health and safety and will only be disclosed to persons or organizations able to demonstrate a legal right to the data herein.

### PERSON COMPLETING REPORT

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### PERSON INJURED

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

VIP Kid  Volunteer  Church Staff  Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

### DETAILS OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT

When did it happen? Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did it happen? Location: \_\_\_\_\_

What happened? Give cause (how and why) if known: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nature of injury: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Treatment given: \_\_\_\_\_ by: \_\_\_\_\_

Was 911 called?  No  Yes

Was the person taken to a medical facility?  No  Yes, which one and how transported? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Family contacts notified: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Managing Difficult Behavior

Manage difficult behavior by responding appropriately

## Redirecting behavior

1. Respond calmly when a child begins engaging in inappropriate behavior like coloring on the desk or taking a toy away from another child. Give the VIP specific directions to do what you'd like to see them do. This is called redirecting a behavior. Some examples include saying, "Color the large horse," "Pick out another crayon," or "It's his turn to play with the train." As you are saying this, gently assist the child's hand back towards choosing a craft to color or other toys to play with in the area.
2. React with care. When you react emotionally and focus on the negative behavior, a child is likely to repeat that unwanted action due to your response. If your VIP's tone of voice is becoming too loud, suggest "let's play the quiet game and whoever is quietest the longest wins." Remember to emphasize, "you won" or "I won, let's play again" in a friendly tone of voice.

## When a child has a meltdown

1. Have a plan in the event a child experiences a meltdown. First and foremost, it is critical to prevent him/her from injuring themselves. For example if your VIP is throwing themselves against a wall or the floor, move the child to the quiet room or an area that has a floor mat or bean bag chair as quickly as possible while signaling another Buddy to get you some assistance. Remember to stay calm. If a child attempts to bite, pinch, or kick you, be brief and say "no" without personally getting angry. It may be necessary to firmly hold a child's hands or legs to keep them from harming anyone else. Remember this is not the time to lecture your VIP. Only present an activity or book after the negative behavior has stopped. If you do so prematurely it will reinforce the negative behavior.

*Have fun getting to know your VIP friend as you play together! Enjoy the opportunity to creatively maximize your child's potential as you discover their unique abilities in activity!*

### Be flexible in your communication techniques

1. Respond to the child's movements, gestures, or sounds as if they make sense to you or have meaning. As you observe the child's interactions, acknowledge their attempt to communicate with you (e.g. if a child looks at an object, you can respond by saying, "What do you see? I see the ball too." Look at the ball and point to it.)
2. Try getting a child's attention by pointing, showing an object, or touching the child's face, when appropriate.
3. Use *simple* statements and stress what you want to emphasize. Use gestures and/or objects to add meaning to what you are saying.
4. Exaggerate your facial expressions and gestures.
5. Ask questions that require yes or no (e.g. "do you want to play with the toys?")
6. Comment if the child smiles or reacts in other ways.

### Help create good behavior

1. Prepare the child for changes in activity. Some children have trouble with sudden changes because they become "locked in" and very absorbed in what they are currently doing and may resist or even have a tantrum when interrupted. The key is not to surprise the child. Always try to give him/her a few minutes warning before changing activities so that he/she can be ready to make the transition.
2. Learn to recognize the signs that a child is getting "revved up" and then intervene before behavior escalates to wildness or a tantrum. Some of the signs include restlessness or disorganized or impulsive behavior. This acting out may be due to the fact that some children need consistent morning and evening routines. It doesn't matter what the routine consists of – it's the sameness that counts. If your VIP shows these signs, find a quieter and less distracting place to be. Take them for a walk down the hallway or to the quiet room to calm down.

ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT Page 2

DIAGRAM OF ACCIDENT/INCIDENT OR FURTHER COMMENTS:

Parent/Caregiver's Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Safety & Wellness Policies

## Never leave your VIP child unattended

Even turning your attention away for a moment can result in harm. If you need a short break, please ask another volunteer or Buddy Break Coordinator to assist you. You are required to stay within the protected areas outlined by your Buddy Break Coordinator. If you have any questions or concerns during your Buddy Break, please notify your Coordinator immediately.

## Bathroom and Diapering Procedures

No one is ever to be alone with a child when changing their diaper or escorting them to the restroom. You must always find another volunteer to assist you or take another volunteer with some other children who may also need to go to the restroom.

When changing your VIP's diaper:

1. Wash your hands
2. Put on a pair of non-latex gloves
3. Lay child on mat and remove bottoms and diaper
4. Carefully clean child with wipes
5. Secure new diaper and re-dress child
6. Carefully close and dispose of "biohazardous" material
7. Spray down mat with disinfectant spray, wipe, and dispose of paper
8. Remove and dispose of gloves
9. Wash your hands and your VIP's hands

## Handling Bodily Fluid (e.g. blood, vomit, urine, diarrhea)

1. Use ONLY non-latex gloves when handling bodily fluid.
2. Use a new pair of gloves for each child and each instance.
3. Gloves are required when handling blood and any bodily fluid.
4. Gloves are required each time you are changing a diaper.
5. Dispose of gloves after each use and never re-use them.

## Washing Hands

Proper hand washing is the best defense against exposure to diseases. Thoroughly wash hands in the following instances:

1. After accompanying a child to the bathroom
2. After assisting a child in wiping his/her nose
3. After using the bathroom
4. After contact with your own nasal secretions
5. Before preparing or handling food

# Interacting with VIP Kids

When playing with a VIP child, interact with them as if they do not have a disability!

## **Maximize your VIP child's abilities as you find creative ways to play:**

1. Try to include your VIP in whatever activity is available. Many times making small, planned adaptations or even quick improvising allows for VIPs to get involved.
2. Be creative in your play. If the child has limited motor skills, engage them in the activity by utilizing the "hand over hand" technique.
3. Use a child's senses to heighten play. Kids with *visual* impairments might enjoy activities with more audio stimulation, while those with *hearing* impairments might enjoy activities that are more visual or tactile in nature.
4. Present your VIP with two or three choices when you offer objects, toys, or activities. Incorporate viable options that you know the VIP will want to do, not what your preference is (within reason). The VIP's Info Form is a great resource for you to learn about what they like to do and what their capabilities are.
5. Try to find toys, objects, or games that are appropriate for the child's age.
6. Keep in mind that some children may be sensitive or adverse to touch, light, sound, or items with various textures.

## **Be sensitive to the ways that a VIP child may initiate interaction**

1. Recognize that the most common ways in which non-verbal children initiate interaction are:
  - Smiling, vocalizing, or fussing
  - Looking at a person or an object
  - Reaching for an object
  - Holding up an object
  - Pulling on you or handing you an object
  - Requesting an object or an action by using gestures
2. Remember that a child can express their feelings through his/her behaviors.



9. Use uplifting terms and avoid such phrases as wheelchair bound, afflicted by, disfigured, crippled, deaf/mute, retard, etc.
10. If an individual is in a wheelchair, do not lean on it. It is not furniture; it is considered to be part of their body. Also, when talking to someone in a wheelchair, either sit, squat, or go to one knee.
11. Remember that some disabilities are not physically observable.
12. Remember that people with disabilities want your acceptance, not your pity.
13. Treat your VIP with dignity, respect, and common courtesy.
14. Always wear your garment of love.

*Remember...we are more alike than different!*

### **Clean Toys**

1. Attempt to keep toys from being shared; particularly those put in someone's mouth.
2. If you see a child putting a toy in their mouth, wash the toy with disinfectant before the toy is returned to general toy containers, or remove it from the common toy area.

### **Medical Concerns**

If you have any medical concerns about your VIP child, contact the doctor or nurse on premises immediately. Either take your VIP child with you or ask someone to notify them of your need. To avoid injuries, never grab a child by any joint, do not spin a VIP by his/her limbs, and never toss a VIP in the air.

### **Health and Wellness of Volunteer**

Due to the fragile medical condition and compromised immune systems of some of our VIP kids, we ask that any volunteer with a temporary, contagious illness refrain from serving until they are well. This can have a serious effect on a child. We also ask that you refrain from smoking on the premises of **Buddy Break** for health reasons of the VIP kids. If you are using alcohol, prescription or non-prescription drugs that may alter or impair your performance and judgment, please refrain from being a **Buddy**.

### **Abuse**

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. In light of that:

1. Adult volunteers should immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to the **Buddy Break** Coordinator.
2. Never promise a child or parent that you won't "tell."
3. Every volunteer is required to go through a Background Check.

### **Food and/or Beverage**

Due to food allergies, our VIPs may only eat or drink what has been provided by their parents. Be aware that during snack time, your VIP may attempt to take someone else's snack. Snacks are never to be shared with other children or adults.

# Basic Disability Etiquette

In meeting someone with a disability, it is important to remember that we are all made in God's image first and foremost, and our abilities are secondary to who we are as people. Let your words and actions emphasize the person's worth and abilities, not the disabling condition. The medical conditions these children have are disabilities, not diseases. You have an opportunity to get to know someone from the inside and not the outside before you form an opinion of them. Try to look beyond the disability and into the child's heart.

Here are some things to remember:

1. Remember not to label a child as part of a disability group. Instead, always put the person before the disability, i.e. child with special needs, not special needs child; or teen with autism, not autistic.
2. Always emphasize a person's abilities, not their limitations.
3. Acknowledge the presence of an individual with a disability just as you would anyone else. If they are unable to shake your hand, just touching or clasping their hand is fine. If they don't respond, don't worry. A warm smile and friendly greeting is appreciated by everyone.
4. Just because a person cannot talk does not necessarily mean they do not understand what you are saying. Always speak directly to the individual who has a disability at eye level, even if a companion or family member is needed for interpretation. If you feel they may not be able to reply in full, ask questions that allow for "yes/no" answers. If you are not able to understand what they say, it is okay to ask if they would repeat their statement to you.
5. Always ask before reaching out to provide assistance. Don't assume someone needs help and take action.
6. Use the same tone of voice, choice of words, and non-verbal language as you normally would. Changing the way you interact with a person having a disability can come across as demeaning (i.e., no baby talk). Do not give excessive praise or attention to a person with a disability; it can be patronizing.
7. Do not hesitate to use words such as "see," "walk," and "hear." More than likely, the person with the disability also uses these words and terms.
8. When you use the word "with" instead of "for" it lets your VIP know that you are joining him or her in their activity.

## When Things Don't Go As Planned

### Accidents and Incidents

1. An accident or incident is an unplanned event that results in an injury, could have resulted in an injury, or results in damage to equipment or property.
2. Immediately report all accidents and/or incidents, minor or major, and treatment applied, to **Buddy Break** nurse/staff.
3. Never leave your child unattended. Ask someone to get the **Buddy Break** Coordinator or nurse if it is not safe to move your VIP.
4. Complete an Accident/Incident Report form to record what happened and what action was taken. Give the completed form to the **Buddy Break** Coordinator.
5. In the event of an accident, clean up immediately. Use disinfectant for wiping up all spills or soiling by blood, urine, or feces.
6. Report any spills on rugs or any other surface that cannot be cleaned up easily.

### Fire Safety/Emergency Plans

Your **Buddy Break** Coordinator will review the Fire Safety and Emergency plans for your building.

### "Misplaced Kids"

1. In the unlikely event that a child escapes, remain calm but act quickly.
2. Notify the **Buddy Break** Coordinator/staff immediately so that the search plan can go into action.
3. The **Buddy Break** Coordinator will review search plan for their location.