



Helping Early Literacy with Practice Strategies

Tutor Handbook

2019-2020

HELPS Tutor Handbook

Table of Contents

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Page</u>
Message from Read Charlotte Executive Director	3
Key Contact Information	4
Tutor Roles and Responsibilities	5
Tips for Engaging Students	5
General Tutoring Ethics	6
Guidelines for Working with Students	7-8
Transportation	9
Attendance	9
Holidays and Schedule Conflicts between the College and CMS Schools	9
Appropriate Attire	10
Confidentiality of Contact Information and Use of Photography	11
Security and Training Before You Begin	12
Sample Tutor Schedule	13
Job Descriptions	14-17
Student Privacy and Volunteer Confidentiality Release Form	18
Photo Release Form	19
Handbook Sign-off Form	20

HELPS Tutor Handbook



MESSAGE FROM THE READ CHARLOTTE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear HELPS Tutors,

Welcome to the Read Charlotte/Helps Education Fund team! We appreciate your time and interest in the program and your commitment to improve reading fluency with 2nd and 3rd graders in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). As you may know, the needs are great in our community and the stakes are high. Reading is one of the greatest predictors of high school graduation and future success in life. In fact, 96% of students who read on grade level by the end of 3rd grade will graduate high school on time.

Nearly 20,000 students in the 59 lowest performing CMS elementary schools need additional reading and math support. The supply of high quality reading mentors and tutors in math and reading during the school year is less than 4,000. That's where you and your college teammates come in – to help us dramatically increase the number of 2nd and 3rd grade students we are able to reach. You will enjoy a rich opportunity to give back to your community by impacting the trajectory of children's lives, gain valuable work experience and new skills... and earn money!

After reviewing 200 studies, Read Charlotte found high-quality structured tutoring as one of the best practices for improving a student's reading skills. The Helping Early Literacy with Practice Strategies (HELPS) reading program is designed to strengthen students' reading fluency in order for them to become more successful readers. HELPS is an evidence-based intervention that can be used with students of all reading-ability levels as long as they are developmentally ready to improve their reading fluency. HELPS requires 15 minutes per day, 3 days per week for a student. Through a partnership with Read Charlotte, the Helps Education Fund will train and continuously develop tutors to improve students' reading fluency. With just a few hours each week, you will impact the future of 10-20 students!

Based on the evidence and research behind the HELPS program, both the students we serve and the tutors we engage will build literacy skills in the lives of young Charlotteans. So, we are grateful that you're going to give part of each week to help ...and we're here to support you.

Thank you for helping create a love for reading and success in our young students!

All the best,

Munro Richardson



Key Contact Information

Site Coordinators:

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Katherine Kitchen - Ashley Park, Westerly Hills
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Halo Paul - Cornelius, Marie G. Davis, Reedy Creek
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Melissa Walker - Billingsville, Cotswold
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Selleah Jackson - Tutor Manager, Helps Education Fund
selleah@helpseducationfund.org
724-717-5167

Kimberly Perkins - Program Director, Helps Education Fund
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703-338-2625

College HELPS Website: www.readcharlotte.org/collegeHELPS

Tutor Roles & Responsibilities Specific to HELPS

- Focus on students **who need reading fluency intervention** - match the HELPS criteria
- Provide one-on-one HELPS tutoring sessions with **high fidelity**
 - Use the Flow Chart, Scripted Directions
 - Record required information in the students' folders
- **Encourage students' reading growth and success by using motivating statements!**

Tips for Engaging Students

Each day when you greet your student it will bring joy to your heart! Each student is so thankful that you are there to support them and help them become a better reader.

Use your first few minutes to ask your student about their day/week before you begin the reading session. There are often fun events at the school that you can refer to (holiday events, field trips, etc.). You may also use this time to pump them up for their reading session. Students are naturally competitive and want to read quicker and better each session.

Please Remember:

- **RELAX and HAVE FUN!**
- **DO NOT WORRY that you will make a mistake!** (In fact, students love it when they catch their tutors making a mistake!)
- **BE POSITIVE and ALWAYS ENCOURAGING!**

If your student is not focusing or is having an issue with staying on task, record this information in his/her HELPS folder and communicate this to their teacher when the student returns to class. Please also inform you site coordinator.

Tutor & Student Pairings

You will receive information from your site coordinator before the first tutoring session regarding the students you will be paired with each week. Your site coordinator and the Helps Education Fund Tutor Manager will be communicating with you on a regular basis.

General Tutoring Ethics

- My role as a tutor is to **guide students and be supportive**.
- I understand my relationship to each student is **professional and not personal**.
- I will **demonstrate faith in each student's learning abilities** understanding that my primary goal is **helping them develop skills** needed to reach college and career ready educational outcomes.
- I will **respect and be sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds** and personal value systems; **valuing differences** and **respecting students' personal dignity**.
- I will **maintain accurate records** of tutoring sessions to fulfill expectations of high-quality tutoring.
- I will keep information about all students I work with **confidential**.
- I will not have answers to every question asked. Therefore, **I will seek assistance** in finding answers to the questions needed to successfully tutor each student.
- I will **share any concerns** I have with my site coordinator, Helps Education Fund Tutor Manager and the student's teacher (if issue is related to a student).
- I will be **on time** for tutoring.

Guidelines for Working with Students

- **Tutor Room Set-up**

You are expected to use the assigned classrooms you are directed to during all sessions. If there is a problem or the need to make a change arises, please work with your site coordinator to find a different available classroom.

You should never be alone with students. If you are placed in a classroom with no other adults while performing your tutor sessions, **classroom doors MUST remain propped open at all times.**

- **Physical Touch**

We encourage you to develop a strong 1:1 relationship with the students you are tutoring. Please remain mindful of your physical proximity to your students. We know that young students naturally want to be hugged and loved; however, **we ask that you substitute-in various forms of affirmation and encouragement like high-fives, fist bumps, a pat on the back or a side to side hug.** This guideline is to ensure the safety of our students and our tutors.

- **Gift Giving**

In order to ensure equity among all of our students, **we ask that you not bring individual gifts. Your time is a huge gift! No exceptions, please!**

- **Food**

Many students have various food allergies, and our schools have had to become extremely cautious about what is served in the cafeteria and distributed in class. As a result, we ask that **no food be given to students** through the HELPS tutoring program. This guideline is to ensure the safety of our students.

- **Refrain from Smoking**

Please do not smoke just before entering the classroom. Some students are allergic to smoke, which can lead to respiratory issues.

- **Talking or Texting on Cell Phone**

Please refrain from talking or texting on your cell phone during your tutoring session. **The students are excited to receive your full attention!**

If you use your cell phone as a timer during reading sessions, **please place your phone in airplane mode.**

- **Confidentiality**

Any information you receive regarding the **student's academic performance and other personal information is confidential** and must not be shared with anyone other than the elementary school Site Coordinator, Helps Education Fund Tutor Manager or their teacher.

- **Suspected Student Abuse**

Any tutor who has a reason to believe that a student has been subjected to abuse or neglect is **required by law to report it to the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services.** You are considered a "Mandatory Reporter" in North Carolina.

If you notice any abuse or neglect, please contact your site coordinator and your student's teacher and/or a school administrator immediately.

Transportation

You will be required to commute to a nearby Charlotte-Mecklenburg (CMS) elementary school by personal vehicle, car pool or public transportation. 1/2 hour of **travel time will be paid** for each day that you tutor. (15 minutes to and from the elementary school)

Attendance

Dependable tutor attendance is absolutely critical to the success of the HELPS tutor program, and most important, to the success of the students we serve.

If you are unable to attend a session, **you should immediately contact your site coordinator** to arrange a substitution. The more advance notice you give the site coordinator, the greater the chances they will be able to find a substitute to tutor your assigned student.

If your student is not in attendance, you will likely be paired with another student for that day.

Holidays and Schedule Conflicts between the College and CMS Schools

You are not expected to work during college-observed holidays and breaks. **Please communicate these dates to your site coordinator in advance**, as they may not have ready access to your college's academic calendar.

You will not work during Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) observed holidays, breaks or days when CMS schools are closed. **Your site coordinator will communicate these days to you in advance.**

During inclement weather situations, **we encourage you to monitor school closings and delayed openings** which are continuously displayed during television programming. If your school is **closed or has a delayed opening**, you do not need to report to your tutoring site.

We will also follow the CMS 2019-20 Academic Calendar shown in the link below. You may also wish to download the CMS app on your smart phone.

<https://4.files.edl.io/8d58/07/01/19/174315-b95c9b1e-a9c4-469b-a63e-d2efdeee9a44.pdf>

Appropriate Attire

While we do not have a “dress code”, we do expect you to dress appropriately for the position (i.e. avoid “dressing to distract”). **In general, if you are unsure about wearing something, don’t wear it.** Do not wear clothing that promotes sex, drugs, bad language, violence, etc, as you are a role model for the elementary school students. **Please keep in mind that you are representing your college, the Helps Education Fund and Read Charlotte.**

Student and Tutor Contact Information

- The Helps Education Fund and Read Charlotte will not release your contact information to the student or others.
- **Tutors may not give their personal contact information to students, nor should they ask for the student's information.**
- If you are interested in involvement or contact with your students outside of your role with HELPS tutoring, please contact the school administrator.

- **Photographs of Students**

Permission for **photographs of students must be obtained from the student's parents**. If you would like a photograph with a student, please ask the Helps Education Fund Tutor Manager, who will need to contact the school for permission. **If granted permission to take a photograph with or of the student, please do not use the student's name or any identifying information.**

- **Photographs of Tutors**

By signing the attached photo release form, **you acknowledge and agree that The Helps Education Fund and Read Charlotte can use your photograph and or video in our marketing materials** and in the public domain (social media) in order to further the work of the organization.

Security & Training Before You Begin

Background Checks

You must complete the CMS background check process before volunteering in the school. If you're a new volunteer in CMS, check out this website page to register and submit your background check information. <https://www.cmsvolunteers.com/volunteer.php?newflag=1>

All HELPS tutors and site coordinators will need to receive the CMS access level of **“Unsupervised Access Without Driving.”**

If you're already registered as a volunteer, you must re-activate your account each year.

HELPS Training

You must complete the 3-hour HELPS Program training offered by the Helps Education Fund. Training dates, times and campus locations will be shared with you as soon as they are scheduled.

Ongoing Coaching

You will receive ongoing support from the Helps Education Fund implementation coaches. You will receive ongoing support from Helps Education Fund implementation coaches through real-time coaching and tutor observations during regular tutoring sessions with students. **The purpose of the observations is help you become more comfortable** as you gain proficiency in implementing the HELPS Program. Observation and coaching sessions are also an **opportunity for you to ask questions** about the HELPS Program, including how to best implement each of the core components of the program and what to do if your student is not regularly meeting his/her reading goal.

SAMPLE Daily Tutor Schedule

(3 Hours Paid)

30 minutes prior to 1:1 Tutor Sessions - Travel and Preparation

Travel to elementary school

Office/Security Sign-in

Collect HELPS materials, prepare for tutor sessions, pick up first student at classroom and walk to assigned tutor location

2 hours - 1:1 Tutor Sessions

Deliver HELPS fluency program to assigned 2nd and 3rd grade students

New tutors will generally work with 2 students each hour. Tutors who gain greater proficiency (10 tutor sessions+) will generally work with 3 students each hour.

30 minutes following 1:1 Tutor Sessions - Tutor Administration and Travel

Insure accuracy and completeness of tutor session results and graphs

Return HELPS materials, Office/Security Sign-out

Travel from elementary school

HELPS Tutor Handbook

Job Descriptions

HELPS Tutor

Job Purpose: HELPS tutors transform student's lives by helping 2nd and 3rd grade students become fluent readers. Learning to read is the most important work of students in their early years in school. Reading is crucial for full participation in civic life and economic opportunity. If students can't read by the end of third grade, they lose confidence, fail in school and struggle in life.

Job Duties: Duties include tutoring 2nd and 3rd grade students in one-on-one sessions utilizing the HELPS fluency intervention to strengthen students' fluency and comprehension skills.

Qualifications: Previous tutor experience is not required. The scripted, evidence-based HELPS fluency tutoring program is especially well suited for tutoring by college students. Tutors receive 3 hours of training to deliver the HELPS intervention. The Helps Education Fund will assist with training and on-going implementation support of college student tutors in the HELPS intervention.

Additional Requirements:

- Must be college students with federal work-study in their financial aid package or a Bonner Scholar.
- Complete 3 hour training in the HELPS fluency intervention
- Pass a CMS background check
- Attend initial school orientation
- Able to work at least 5 hours per week over multiple days.
- Commit to work consistent hours for minimum of one school year
- Attend all tutoring shifts with assigned 2nd grade and 3rd grade students
- Arrive to all shifts on time and utilize guidelines provided by the Helps Education Fund Tutor Manager if tardiness or an emergency occurs
- Notify the elementary school Site Coordinator of conflicts as soon as possible
- Attend 100% of reading sessions, tutor training sessions, and Helps Education Fund related meetings/events. Students depend on consistency, there is a zero tolerance policy for skipping sessions. Communicate effectively with the Site Coordinator and staff, and school teachers and administrators

HELPS Tutor Handbook

- Communicate scheduling needs and availability accurately before the semester begins, and relay any changes to your Site Coordinator in a timely manner.
- Be a positive role model inside and outside of the classroom, be professional in workplace behavior.
- Have fun! Kids look up to you and you will learn more about our community through their eyes; this is truly a reciprocal partnership.

Evaluation Process:

HELPS tutors receiving timely, on-going performance feedback from site coordinators and implementation coaches to insure accurate and consistent application (implementation fidelity) of the HELPS intervention. Mastery of HELPS tutoring concepts enable students to enjoy meaningful job progression as head tutors, site coordinators and implementation coaches.

Transportation:

Students will be required to commute to their assigned elementary school by personal vehicle, car pool or public transportation. 1/2 hour of travel time will be paid for each day that a student tutors to cover transportation costs. (15 minutes to and from the elementary school)

HELPS Tutor Handbook

Site Coordinator

Job Purpose: Site coordinators are the “air traffic controllers” of the tutor ecosystem, ensuring high-quality logistical implementation of tutoring programs and a positive tutoring environment for all students and tutors.

Job Duties: Site Coordinators are present at their assigned elementary school during tutoring sessions and are responsible for working with school staff to establish tutor schedules and collaborate on student assignments. Tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Become an expert in the HELPS fluency intervention program
- Serve as direct point of contact for school staff
- Support and coordinate tutors at school site
- Build and maintain schedule of students and tutors in collaboration with school contacts and the Helps Education Fund Tutor Manager
- Maintain accurate data records for tutor attendance and student progress (including student dosage and absences)
- Maintain and refresh tutoring materials as needed (binders, prize boxes, copies)
- Manage general tutor communications; notify tutors of upcoming closings, activities, and testing in advance
- Report various operational information to the Helps Education Fund Program Director
- Partner with the Helps Education Fund Program Director to identify operational strengths and troubleshoot challenges, aiding the effort to establish a strong, scalable program model
- Attend improvement cycle sessions and implement necessary changes
- Provide coverage for absent tutors as needed

Qualifications: Previous experience leading teams or work groups desired.

Additional Requirements:

- Must be college students with federal work-study in their financial aid package or Bonner Scholar.
- Able to work at least 10 hours per week over multiple days. Commit to work consistent hours for entire school year.
- Arrive to all shifts on time and utilize guidelines provided by the Helps Education Fund Program Director if tardiness or an emergency occurs
- Have a passion for tutoring and believe that effective reading instruction can change the trajectory of a student’s life

HELPS Tutor Handbook

- Can work independently and collaboratively in a team environment
- Attention to detail with great organizational skills
- Believe in the importance of data collection to continuously improve implementation effectiveness and tutoring outcomes.
- Agility to adjust “on the fly”, including determining back up for tutor and/or student’s absences or conflicts.

Evaluation Process:

Site coordinators will be evaluated based on the effectiveness of their communication/collaboration with school staff; coaching and guidance of tutors at the school; agility to adjust tutor schedules “on the fly”; and accurate collection and analysis of key data to improve implementation effectiveness and student outcomes.

Transportation:

Students will be required to commute to their assigned elementary school by personal vehicle, car pool or public transportation. 1/2 hour of travel time will be paid for each day that a student tutors to cover transportation costs. (15 minutes to and from the elementary school)

HELPS Tutor Handbook

Student Privacy and Volunteer Confidentiality Release Form

Students in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools have the right to expect that information about them will be kept confidential by all volunteers. Additionally, the U.S. Congress has addressed the privacy-related concerns of educators, parents and students by enacting the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (known more commonly as “FERPA” or the “Buckley Amendment”). Among other provisions, FERPA allows the government to withdraw federal funds from any educational institution, which disseminates a student’s education records without his or her parent’s consent.

- Each student with whom you work has the right to expect that nothing be repeated to anyone concerning him or her other than authorized school department employees, as designated by the administrators at your school. When discussing a student with those who are directly involved in a student’s education, such as a teacher, principal, or guidance counselor, you may only share relevant information to the student’s educational growth, safety, or well-being.
- You may not use confidential information for any unauthorized purpose.
- You may not share information about a student even with others who are interested in the student’s welfare. You must refer all such questions about a student to the principal.
- Before you speak, always remember that violating a student confidentiality is against the law!

Agreement

I, (print name) _____, as a volunteer read and understand the above privacy and confidentiality requirements. I agree never to disclose information about a student’s records to anyone other than an authorized school department employee. I will refer all requests for such information from those not directly involved in the student’s education to the school principal. I will use confidential student information only for the purpose authorized above by the principal.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Photo Release Form

I, _____, hereby authorize Read Charlotte and the Helps Education Fund to reproduce and publish, broadcast, or copyright my photo, video, and/or audiotape for informational and/or promotional purpose. I understand these images may be used with or without identification of the subjects.

I, _____, hereby waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product or printed material. No further claim will be made and no representations have been made. I have read the above release agreement and I am fully familiar with its contents.

Signature _____ Printed Name _____

Date _____

HELPS Tutor Handbook

HELPS Tutor Handbook Sign-Off Form

I, _____, confirm that I have read this handbook and agree to the expectations outlined in the document.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

College or University _____

Partner School _____

Date _____