

**Columbia Union Conference
of Seventh-day Adventist**

Classroom Assistant



Handbook



2002

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Note: It is recommended that the local conference office of education review this handbook jointly with the teacher and assistant early in the school year (in larger schools the principal could perform this function). This would maximize communication and understanding of the responsibilities and functions of each person involved.

Teaching Loads

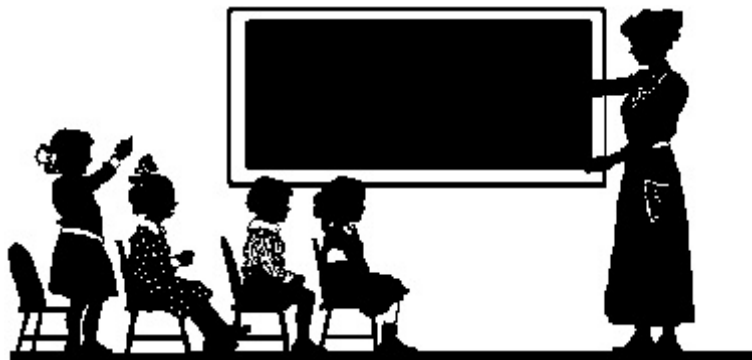
Columbia Union Conference Education Code (4.6.01 #2)

Six (6) grades is the maximum load for an elementary school teachers. It is recommended that a teacher assistant be provided if the following maximum pupil-teacher ratios are exceeded:

	No teacher assistant	With teacher assistant
1 teacher: 6 grades -with 1 st grade	12	18
1 teacher: 6 grades - no 1 st grade	15	20
1 teacher: 4 grades - grades 1-4	15	20
1 teacher: 4 grades - grades 5-8	18	25
1 teacher: 2 grades - with 1 st grade	18	24
1 teacher: 2 grades - grades 2-8	22	27
1 teacher: 1 grade - grades 1-8	25	28
1 teacher: Kindergarten	18	25

Enrollment above these maximums will require additional staff. Local school boards may need to lower these ratios when the classroom has an unusual proportion of students with varied learning abilities and style, or a large number of primary (grades 1-3) students.

Note: Local policies may vary on maximum loads



Purpose

Classroom assistants can be a very important part of the total educational program. There are occasions when the classroom benefits from the presence of a second caring adult to help perform various tasks in support of the classroom teacher's established program. It is vital that these two work together as a team for the benefit of the students.

This handbook has been designed to assist in this important team building process serving as an orientation tool between the teacher and classroom assistant in order to utilize the talents, abilities and experience of both.

Definition

A classroom assistant is one who assists the professional educator in the performance of his/her duties and functions. For purposes of clarification, the following definitions of classroom assistants are used in this document:

Non-instructional Assistant - Is one who works with and for the teacher by performing tasks of a general nature including supervision and general clerical assistance but does not directly involve student instruction.

Instructional Assistant - Is one who works with and for the teacher providing instructional support as determined by the teacher, principal and conference in addition to supervision and clerical assistance.

Role

The role of the classroom assistant is to support, but not replace, the teacher. The assistant will work under the supervision and direction of the certified teacher, who in turn will make the best use of his/her talents, abilities and experience.

Objectives

- ▶ To enhance the physical, mental, spiritual and social development of each student.
- ▶ To increase the quality and quantity of learning opportunities available to each student.
- ▶ To provide individualized assistance to the students.
- ▶ To assist the teacher in maintaining an orderly and attractive classroom.



Responsibilities of the Classroom Assistant

A classroom assistant not only helps the teacher but works directly with students. The amount and type of supervision that a teacher can provide is crucial in deciding which duties a teacher's assistant can and should perform. Determining educational needs, planning and designing of programs and procedures to meet those needs, is the professional function of the teacher. The degree to which a classroom assistant may participate in planning and implementing such programs/procedures must be determined on an individual basis, as must the amount of supervision necessary to maintain a good program.

Procedures vary from classroom to classroom. The teacher may plan cooperatively with the classroom assistant or the teacher may do all of the planning. A classroom assistant may tutor individual students or instruct groups of students, using materials and techniques selected or designed by the teacher.

The classroom assistant may perform many tasks which are difficult to define. These tasks include listening, supporting, and inspiring.

The classroom assistant does make a significant contribution in the classroom. Most of the activities identified do not require a person with a professional education certificate; however, there are special qualities that should be given priority.

Classroom Assistants:

- ▶ respect all children.
- ▶ enjoy helping students.
- ▶ listen to, support and reassure students through positive body language.
- ▶ relate positively to children's ideas, feelings, habits and skills.
- ▶ learn to know each student's individual strengths and weaknesses.
- ▶ work closely with the teacher and follow classroom routines.
- ▶ demonstrate a responsible, willing and positive attitude toward assignments and tasks.
- ▶ demonstrate loyalty to the teacher and the school.
- ▶ refrain from discussing student/classroom situations with persons other than the teacher.

Classroom Assistants Model:

- ▶ Christ-likeness
- ▶ cooperation
- ▶ courtesy
- ▶ promptness
- ▶ professional appearance
- ▶ appropriate Christian language
- ▶ acceptance
- ▶ a healthy life-style

Classroom Assistants Provide:

- ▶ extra hands and legs.
- ▶ extra ears and eyes.
- ▶ extra personal warmth.
- ▶ extra petitions in prayer.

Examples of Possible Tasks

The following are examples of general tasks which a classroom assistant (both types) may perform to assist a teacher:

1. correcting workbooks and papers.
2. filing student work.
3. arranging and handing out materials.
4. preparing materials such as bulletin boards, seatwork and drill, reading charts, picture files, visual aids, worship or devotionals, art projects, etc.
5. copying instructional materials.
6. cleaning up classroom or work areas.
7. answering the phone, greeting visitors, minimizing disruptions.
8. supervising where needed and/or requested such as learning centers, recess, lunch, computers, projects, independent seatwork, completion of back work, school programs, restroom breaks, field trips, etc.
9. assisting with library materials and organization .
10. assisting in school program rehearsals.
11. assisting students in following instructions and directions.
12. serving as a resource person.

Examples of instructional assistant duties include:

1. listening to students read and recite, individually or in groups.
2. working with individuals or groups of students to master basic skills.
3. conducting review drills (flash cards, etc.)
4. leading small discussion groups.
5. teaching finger plays, poems, songs, memory work.
6. assisting children with educational games.
7. reading stories aloud or onto tapes.
8. tutoring individuals or small groups in well-defined subject areas under the direction of the teacher.
9. reporting to the teacher study/work problems observed while working with students.
10. assisting with exceptional children.

NOTE: Assistants should always cooperate with the teacher in following classroom management procedures. Corporal punishment should never be used for disciplining students. (Columbia Union Conference Education Code 1.8.01 #4)

Tasks Usually Not Assigned to Assistants

1. Organizing the curriculum.
2. Evaluating students.
3. Conferring with parents.
4. Setting classroom policy.
5. Deciding on discipline methods.
6. Referring student for special help or assignments.

Tips on How to Be an Effective Classroom Assistant

An effective working partnership between a teacher and a classroom assistant does not just happen. Like all relationships, it requires thought and nurturing.

The classroom assistant may find the following tips helpful in becoming an effective team member:

- ▶ familiarize yourself with the teacher's instructional methods for individual and group activities.
- ▶ become acquainted with the instructional materials in the classroom.
- ▶ observe how the teacher deals with students' special needs.
- ▶ carefully observe student behavior, watching particularly for changes. Share observations with the teacher.
- ▶ ask for clarification, if necessary, when directions for an assignment or responsibility are given.
- ▶ be a self-starter. When reasonably certain of what the teacher wants done, don't wait to be asked.
- ▶ unless instructed otherwise, when the teacher is absent and a substitute is hired, continue to follow the normal routine as closely as possible.
- ▶ take on new responsibilities with a positive outlook.
- ▶ share spiritual concerns with the teacher.
- ▶ keep a positive attitude.
- ▶ maintain a sense of humor.
- ▶ avoid confrontation by expressing concerns to the teacher privately.
- ▶ **practice confidentiality; never publicly discuss students, parents, professionals or classroom situations (moral ethics and legal liability issues at stake).**



Ways to Support the Teacher in Making the Classroom Atmosphere Pleasant and Positive

- ▶ Reflect warmth, friendliness and respect.
- ▶ Be interested in what students are doing personally.
- ▶ Respect students' growing maturity.
- ▶ Help students feel secure and safe including the reporting of student accidents to the teacher.
- ▶ Cultivate positive self-esteem in students.
- ▶ Encourage student involvement in worthwhile endeavors, such as work, extracurricular activities and service to others.
- ▶ Help students learn to be leaders; suggest positive activities.
- ▶ Help students cultivate skills in which they can excel.
- ▶ Help students learn how to act in social situations.
- ▶ Focus on strengths, not weaknesses.
- ▶ Help set simple, short-term goals.
- ▶ Be aware of individual learning styles and abilities.
- ▶ Model confidence and security.
- ▶ Inspire students to live in harmony with God's Word.
- ▶ Review expectations with students.
- ▶ Teach students that mistakes are not personal defeats.
- ▶ Help students learn how to give and accept compliments.
- ▶ Assure that all reward and praise is specific and deserved.
- ▶ Discourage inappropriate behavior, i.e. bullying, put downs, profanity, etc.



Gaining and Maintaining Students' Interest

Students don't always sit quietly, eagerly listening to your every word! They sometimes misbehave. When adults work with students, they must learn to manage these situations. Intervention techniques that teach students self-control are the preferred practice. Teaching self-control or self-discipline has two important aspects: **preventive** discipline and **corrective** discipline. Preventive discipline helps avoid problems. The following techniques may prove helpful:

1. maintain eye contact with the students.
2. use varying voice levels to convey messages.
3. use vocabulary appropriate for student level.
4. use various approaches to gain student interest:
 - ▶ alternate quiet and active periods.
 - ▶ provide a variety of hands-on activities.
 - ▶ plan activities for students who finish assignments early.
5. involve as many students as possible by having them:
 - ▶ respond to questions.
 - ▶ participate in demonstrations.
6. if you sense student interest declining:
 - ▶ change your body position.
 - ▶ move closer to the student.
 - ▶ lower your voice.
 - ▶ change the pace of the lesson.
7. do not make inappropriate threats.

NOTE: Assistants should always cooperate with the teacher in following classroom management procedures. Corporal punishment should never be used for disciplining students. (Columbia Union Conference Education Code 1.8.01 #4)



Role of the Teacher to the Classroom Assistant

The teacher should regard the classroom assistant as a co-worker to be included in the planning, development and implementation of goals and objectives when possible or appropriate. The teacher may use the following guidelines:

1. direct and supervise the classroom assistant.
2. discuss goals to be achieved.
3. plan ahead for the classroom assistant providing information such as location of materials, directions on setting up activities and books to use.
4. recognize and utilize the talents and abilities of the classroom assistant.
5. model and expect promptness, regular attendance, and a willingness to follow directions.
6. keep communication lines open with the classroom assistant regarding his/her activities and performance, giving opportunities for questions and expressions of concerns.
7. inform the administration/school board of the classroom assistant's activities and performance.
8. make the classroom assistant aware of any schedule changes.
9. discuss with the classroom assistant appropriate and inappropriate touching of students.
10. offer positive support and encouragement.
11. encourage the classroom assistant to participate in staff meetings and morning workshops.

Interviewing and Hiring Classroom Assistants

It is important to have a good match between the teacher and the classroom assistant to ensure that the teacher's classroom needs are met and the assistant's skills are used effectively. The teacher should not be required to work with someone with whom he/she feels uncomfortable. Therefore teachers and principals (or designated board member in small schools) should choose and hire a classroom assistant through a careful process that includes the following:

1. Review all applications (see page 16 & 17 for a sample application).
2. Arrange for a personal interview. Provide a job description and a daily schedule before the interview so the applicant will clearly understand the qualifications needed and work load required.
3. Recommend names to the hiring body, in order of preference.

**General Information About:
The Primary Child
Six to Ten Years
(Grades 1-4)**

Physically, the child is . . .

- ✧ active, energetic, and well coordinated – plays hard and works hard.
- ✧ growing more slowly than during preschool years.
- ✧ learning eye-hand coordination for small muscle skills.
- ✧ generally healthy but may get childhood diseases.
- ✧ independent in caring for his/her own physical needs.
- ✧ learning skills for school, games, work or special talents.
- ✧ losing baby teeth and acquiring permanent ones.
- ✧ somewhat farsighted until around eight years of age.
- ✧ conscious of body types – sees others as tall, short, large, or small.
- ✧ an enthusiastic singer.

Mentally, the child is . . .

- ✧ curious, inquisitive and mentally alert.
- ✧ a literal thinker who needs pictures and objects to help understanding.
- ✧ imaginative but starting to distinguish between fact and fantasy.
- ✧ a doer – thinking and acting cannot be separated.
- ✧ learning to read and eager to use these skills.
- ✧ word-conscious – likes to use new words, talks about experiences and new ideas.
- ✧ beginning to enjoy group discussions.
- ✧ learning to earn and use money.
- ✧ very fond of stories.
- ✧ strongly committed to fairness and rules – expects everyone to play by the rules.
- ✧ a quick memorizer.
- ✧ limited in understanding of time and historical sequence.
- ✧ accepting of words and concepts as the absolute truth.

Socially, the child . . .

- ✧ wants to play with others – special friends are important.
- ✧ wants to participate but is a poor judge of his own abilities.
- ✧ respects authority – believes a teachers is to be trusted and followed.
- ✧ enjoys non-competitive group activities.
- ✧ needs help to develop social skills (can be self-centered or selfish at times).
- ✧ wants to be grown-up and independent, but needs adult backup.
- ✧ identifies with an admired adult.
- ✧ realizes his/her own differences, uniqueness.
- ✧ motivated most by individual goals and recognition.
- ✧ needs purposeful activity – not activity for activity's sake.
- ✧ is conscious of death – fears it may disrupt own family.



Emotionally, the child is . . .

- ✧ easily excited.
- ✧ developing self-awareness.
- ✧ longing for adult approval and affection.
- ✧ a worrier with many fears.
- ✧ sympathetic with others.
- ✧ sensitive and easily offended.
- ✧ sometimes withdrawn, although usually confident.
- ✧ generally able to control own feelings.

Spiritually, the child . . .

- ✧ has rapidly expanding ideas about God and religion.
- ✧ is beginning to understand simple religious symbolisms.
- ✧ wants to accept Jesus as personal Savior.
- ✧ memorizes easily and is capable of learning much about the Bible.
- ✧ is developing greater discrimination between right and wrong.
- ✧ wants to be good, wants to please adults and God.
- ✧ is very rule-oriented – understands the Ten Commandments.
- ✧ is very practical, realistic, and wants a clear “this is the way.”
- ✧ needs encouragement to have private devotions.
- ✧ needs help to understand own specialness in God’s sight.
- ✧ needs help with stewardship concepts.
- ✧ needs examples of Christian living – heroes to emulate.
- ✧ is a doer and has expanding capabilities for service.



**General Information About:
The Pre- and Earliteen Student
Ten to Fourteen Years
(Grades 5-8)**

Physically, the young person is. . .

- ✧ strong and healthy.
- ✧ active, energetic, noisy and restless.
- ✧ sometimes careless about personal appearance but can become more careful.
- ✧ eager to practice physical skills.
- ✧ growing rapidly because of hormone explosion.
- ✧ sometimes awkward due to rapid growth.
- ✧ changing from a child to an adolescent with new sex roles and appearance.

Mentally, the young person. . .

- ✧ memorizes quickly and easily but needs motivation.
- ✧ learns by doing – needs active involvement.
- ✧ becomes easily bored unless interest is sparked.
- ✧ wants facts.
- ✧ is curious and has many interests.
- ✧ enjoys developing projects in history, geography, map study, reading, etc.
- ✧ can be creative – writes stories and poems.
- ✧ reasons from cause to effect, discovers relationships, considers alternate solutions to problems, foresees consequences and can imagine the thoughts of others.
- ✧ likes to collect things.
- ✧ has the skills for independent study.
- ✧ has a strong sense of humor.
- ✧ distinguishes fact from opinion, accepts different ideas from different people, and listens to reason.
- ✧ sometimes lacks vocabulary to express intellectual ideas.

Socially, the young person. . .

- ✧ needs to belong to a group – the “gang age” – very gregarious.
- ✧ is a hero-worshiper.
- ✧ needs to learn respect for authority.
- ✧ may feel insecure in new social situations, will stick with old friends rather than smile or speak first to a stranger.
- ✧ would rather cooperate than submit – doesn’t like being “bossed”.
- ✧ tends to generalize relationships – may classify all adults alike.
- ✧ needs to be deeply involved during class time to maintain interest.
- ✧ generally dislikes the opposite sex until earliteens.
- ✧ is very competitive – especially with the opposite sex.
- ✧ wants independence but also desires understanding from adults.
- ✧ responds best to rules made by the group.
- ✧ hesitates to draw attention to self yet may dress in an outlandish manner.
- ✧ needs responsibilities to develop leadership skills.

Emotionally, the young person. . .

- ✧ is unsure of self.
- ✧ may be easily upset or have frequent mood changes.
- ✧ sometimes has unexplained outbursts.
- ✧ seeks affection.
- ✧ needs support in decision making.
- ✧ displays a sensitivity to others.
- ✧ may overreact to minor incidents.
- ✧ may be overly sensitive to criticism (corrections best addressed in private).
- ✧ occasionally is withdrawn and quiet.
- ✧ responds well to humor (not sarcasm).
- ✧ may rebel as a reaction to confrontation.

Spiritually, the young person. . .

- ✧ is approaching a period of unpredictability.
- ✧ may be unaccepting of adult actions and motives.
- ✧ may display a negative attitude to gain peer approval.
- ✧ asks probing questions about fundamental beliefs.
- ✧ may become hostile when decisions are questioned.
- ✧ is reasonable on a one-to-one basis and is open to spiritual guidance.
- ✧ needs private time for introspective thinking and decision making.
- ✧ struggles to do what adults perceive as right.
- ✧ needs encouragement to maintain private devotionals.



Changes in Student Behavior

Observant classroom assistants may notice behavioral changes that indicate problems in a student's life. The teacher should be made aware of any changes noted initially. Continue to observe and note the actions for reference if the problem continues.

Physical changes to note:

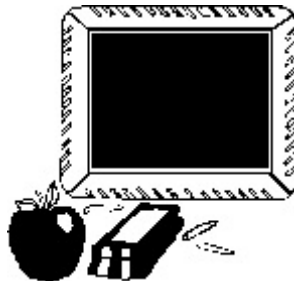
Headaches	Gassiness	Twitchy eyes
Flushed or hot face	Diarrhea	Nervous tics
Cold hand or feet	Burping	Shortness of breath
Grinds or clinches teeth	Constipation	Constant fatigue
Sweaty hands or feet	Shaky hands	Vomiting
Constant thirst	Frequent urination	

Behavioral changes to note:

Belligerence	Loss of interest	Preoccupied
Change in eating habits	Loss of concentration	Rebellious
Clinging	Lying or stealing	Tiring easily
Declining grades	Nail biting	Secretive
Overly dependent	Often sick	Uncooperative
Distorting facts	Overactive	Withdrawn
Overly sensitive	Dramatic change in attitude	

Note: Physical or behavior changes due to suspected child abuse should be reported immediately to the teacher.

While these indicators might be meaningless, they could signal a developing problem that may be solved through early intervention. Reoccurring incidences should be reported to the teacher, not directly to the parent. Avoid suggesting any diagnosis.



Trouble Shooting “What If’s” for the Classroom Assistant

Some student behaviors are common to all classrooms. The teacher and classroom teacher can use the following to discuss preferred procedures in meeting many of these common classroom situations. Possible solutions are offered as a starting point for discussion.

If a student has difficulty with then

working independently	clarify what is already known and require directions to be re-read.
remaining on task	determine cause of distraction and endeavor to resolve.
completing class assignment	report to the teacher.
reversing letters/numbers	report to the teacher.
forming letters correctly	demonstrate and guide in practice of correct form.

If a student frequently. then

loses books	report to the teacher.
misuses free-time	have enrichment materials available.
demands/craves attention	acknowledge need but lengthen intervals between attention giving – reinforce positive behavior.
exhibits inappropriate behavior: e.g., lying, stealing, profanity, obscene gestures	isolate from group and report to the teacher.
tattles*	follow Matthew 18:15.
cheats	indicate awareness of the problem and report to the teacher.
refuses direct request	offer another option, then deal with problem privately in collaboration with the teacher.
destroys property	report to the teacher.
disturbs others by talking, pinching, poking, hitting, etc.	place student in “timeout” and report to the teacher.

*Tattling is telling something to get someone in trouble. Telling is informing the teacher of something she needs to know.

Trouble Shooting
“What If’s” for the Classroom Assistant
(Continued)

When a student then

- | | |
|---|--|
| requests a special favor
(granting special favors can create problems) | remember all students are to be treated fairly. |
| is left out | encourage active participation. |
| indicates a desire for baptism | share information with the teacher . |
| does not have a lunch (or breakfast) | report to the teacher. |
| complains of not feeling well | report to the teacher. |
| is injured | take appropriate action and report to the teacher immediately. |
| has head lice | report to the teacher. |
| has or reports a communicable disease | report to the teacher. |
| requests medication | refer to the teacher. |



Application for Classroom Assistant

Name of school _____ Date _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Baptized member of SDA church? _____ For how long? _____ What church? _____
(Only Seventh-day Adventist personnel may be considered for classroom assistant positions.)

Highest degree/diploma held _____ Year received _____

School granting degree/diploma _____

List majors and minors (if applicable) _____

List work experiences and dates of service:

Position/Organization	Dates of Service
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

List three (3) references with contact information:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please answer the following questions:

1. Have you ever pled guilty to or been convicted of any criminal offense? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, attach details providing dates, circumstances and disposition.

2. Are you currently serving probation for any criminal conviction? Yes ___ No ___
If yes, attach detail providing dates, circumstances and disposition.

3. Have you ever been accused, charged or disciplined for any unlawful Yes ___ No ___
sexual conduct, child abuse, and/or child sexual abuse?
If yes, please explain, giving name, address, and telephone number of a reference/professional who dealt with the case.

I agree, as a condition of my becoming employed and continued employment, to allow the school to which I am applying or the local conference office of education, to conduct an investigation of any public criminal records to ascertain if I have ever had any convictions of a crime involving moral turpitude. Proof of such crimes will be cause for my dismissal as an employee.

Applicant's Signature _____

Application for Classroom Assistant (continued)

Times you can be reached by phone _____ a.m./p.m. _____ a.m./p.m.

Please list volunteer work experience that would help you relate to teachers, children and their classwork:

Goals: What do you expect to give to and receive from this job?

What grade level are you interested in assisting? _____

Please list a few of your interests/hobbies: _____

Please fill in the schedule below showing the hours you would be able to work.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Is your schedule likely to vary? _____ If yes, please explain: _____

Signature Page

Date _____

I have read and/or been in-serviced in the Columbia Union Classroom Assistant Handbook and will use it as a guide in my responsibilities as a classroom assistant.

School _____

Assignment _____

Signatures:

Classroom Assistant _____

Teacher _____

Person conducting in-service _____