



PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

2025

Call | 919-779-5545

Visit | www.abletoserve.org

Email | info@abletoserve.org

Visit | 2100 Buffaloe Road, Garner, NC

PLGH25r01

Welcome

Welcome! We are grateful that you are part of the Able to Serve family! This parent/legal guardian handbook is designed to inform families of the Able to Serve policies and procedures that are implemented in support of our participants and to enable a successful family partnership. Please take some time to read this as it will hopefully answer many of your questions.

Who We Are

Able to Serve is a faith-based 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides a structured day program for adults with disabilities. By utilizing educational instruction, social experiences, and service projects, participants become more independent and have the opportunities to use their abilities to serve our community. Able to Serve sets a new standard for equipping people who have developmental disabilities to learn, grow, lead, and serve.

Our Goals



LEARN

Participants develop important life skills and gain an understanding of our community.



GROW

Participants explore new experiences that provide them with confidence to become the best they can be.



LEAD

Participants take responsibility for themselves and take initiative as role models among their peers.



SERVE

Participants engage in meeting the needs of the community by serving others.

We Believe

- We **believe** you must invest time in a person to understand their dreams, desires, and help them develop into the person they want to be.
- We **believe** people who have developmental disabilities want to matter and be a valuable part of their community.
- We **believe** the community is a better place when people of all abilities come together and serve those who are in need.

Parent/Legal Guardian Communication

Communication is an essential responsibility for both families and staff. Through verbal and written communication of information, thoughts, and ideas, and by collaborating on activities, projects, and events, families and staff strengthen their relationship and understanding. Our goal is to not only minister to and support participants in the program, but also to be a helpful resource for the families of those participants. Able to Serve strives to strengthen communication through various strategies, including:

- **Daily Verbal Exchange.** Families and staff exchange greetings during drop-off and pick-up. During this time, family members are welcome to walk into the building and convey essential information. Longer conversations should be scheduled when staff are not supervising participants.

- **Written Communication.** Monthly calendars listing all events and activities are placed in participant lockers. Flyers or notes about Able to Serve special events and direct notes to families are placed in participant lockers as needed. It is important that lockers are cleaned daily.

- **Electronic Communication.** Prior to the beginning of each week, a weekly update is sent out by email and text that details the activities and events of that particular week. These updates include important details about trips, events, lunches, supplies, etc. Texts are sent out to relay important notes and reminders throughout the week.

Not Signed up?- Let our office know!

For Emails: Email info@abletoserve.org

For Text Messages: Scan QR Code

or go to www.abletoserve.org/text



Our staff will make every effort to reply to voicemails and emails within a 24-hour (weekday) time frame. Any immediate need, please call 919-779-5545 between 8am-4pm or email info@abletoserve.org.

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Policies and Procedures

Program Days

Able to Serve operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Drop-Off runs from 8:30am-9:00am and Pick-Up runs from 2:45pm-3:15pm. If participants need to be dropped off earlier or picked up later on an as needed basis, please call at least a day in advance to schedule arrival and departure times.

Able to Serve closes the program for Christmas break, staff training days, and for certain special event days. In addition, we observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Independence Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Two Day's at Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. **Please see the Yearly Calendar that is distributed at the January Parent Meeting for closed days & important events for the year.**

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather, Able to Serve will make a decision about closures and delays based on road conditions and staff availability. We do not follow Wake County or Johnston County inclement weather plan. Closures and delays due to weather, will be communicated via email and text.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedure

Participants are dropped off and picked up at the side entrance of the building. Due to the safety concerns caused by the stairs, participants are not allowed to use the front entrance. It is vital that participants wait until they reach the **drop off zone** where the staff member is before letting the participant out of the car. This is to ensure safety of all participants.

A staff member or volunteer is outside to greet participants from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m and to assist participants to their cars from 2:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. **Please note:** If you arrive late or are picking up early, parents/legal guardian's MUST walk participants to the side door entrance and ring the door bell.

It is at the discretion of ATS to charge a \$10.00 late fee per occurrence for recurring late pickups. Late fees will be charged independently from monthly participant fees via electronic invoicing and/or hard copy invoicing and are to be paid within ten days of the invoice date.

Only persons listed on the approved pick-up list on the Registration Form will be allowed to pick up participants. Parents/legal guardian's should communicate to program staff any changes to the approved pick-up list via a hand-written note or email.

Parent/Legal Guardian Meetings

An annual all parent/legal guardian gathering in January includes everyone, and takes place at the beginning of the year for parents/legal guardians to get to know each other & staff.

We will meet individually with parents/legal guardian's during an Annual Parent Conference to review forms, revisit participant goals, and communicate important updates. Our staff's goal is to strengthen and support each participant while they are here at ATS

Our staff are always interested in meeting with parents/legal guardian's at any time throughout the year, please schedule a conference with your Participant's Program Instructor.

Safety

To ensure the safety of participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors, the Able to Serve facility is monitored by video and audio surveillance.

All entrances remain locked at all times. Participants are not permitted to grant access to anyone including family and friends. Only staff and volunteers can grant access into the building.

In the case of an emergency, families authorize Able to Serve staff to call 911 and administer basic first aid for an emergency medical situation. Any pre-existing medical conditions that could cause a medical emergency or life-threatening situation should be communicated via the registration form and updates should be given to program staff immediately.

Personal Belongings

Able to Serve asks parents/legal guardian's to exercise caution when allowing participants to bring personal items from home. Please label all items brought from home to the program. Able to Serve cannot assume responsibility or liability for any items brought from home that become lost or broken.

Under no circumstances are the following items allowed on campus or an ATS function:

- Weapons (items capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or inflicting injury) including but not limited to firearms and pocket knives.
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Tobacco products, including but not limited to cigarettes & e-cigarettes.

Registration

All families must fully complete a registration packet before a participant can attend the program. A new registration packet must be filled out at the beginning of each calendar year in order to communicate any changes in information.

During the registration process, families request how many and which days participants will attend the program. These days can be adjusted at any time during the year by submitting a written request to ATS. Requests made by new families and requests made by current families who wish to change days, must be approved based on availability of space and resources. Because group size and transportation availability is considered when planning activities, participants **cannot switch days** to attend certain events, and/or "make up" days that he/she may have missed.

Approval for adding a one-time additional day will depend on availability of space, resources, and incur an additional one-day program fee. Temporary adjustments to your schedule will also depend on availability of space & resources. Please contact the Program Office with any requests or questions.

Program Fee Policy

ATS is committed to providing a quality program for participants, and we appreciate your partnership in ensuring the success of our programs. Monthly Program Fee's are dependent upon the number of days a participant is attending the program. This Program Fee Policy outlines the terms and conditions for payment of program fees. Please read it carefully and feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

1. Responsibility for Program Fees:

- The parent or legal guardian is responsible for all program fees, as ATS is not associated with any government funding program.

2. Fee Schedule Disclosure:

- The schedule of program fees, along with this policy, is discussed with parents or legal guardians during the interview process.

3. Fee Increases:

- Any increases to the program fees are communicated in October and take effect on January 1 of the subsequent year.

4. Payment Schedule:

- Program fees are due on or before the first week of each month, with a grace period until the 15th of the month in which payment is due.

5. Fee Payment Confirmation:

- Parents, legal guardians, or participants who pay program fees will receive a letter in February stating the amount of program fees paid to ATS for the previous year.

6. Fee Coverage:

- Program fees cover the participant's enrollment, all transportation for trips, admission fees, field trip activities, cookouts, special events, and other related expenses with some exceptions. For example, items purchased at a gift shop and/or food purchased on a trip or special event is the participants responsibility to bring their own money if they would like.

7. Invoicing:

- Program fee invoices will be emailed to the parent or legal guardian on file on the 1st of each month.

8. Prorated Fees:

- Program fees are prorated for the first month if a new participant begins after the first business day of that month.

9. Payment Methods:

- Program fees may be paid online using a credit card, in which case a bank service fee will be charged, or via a bank transfer from a checking or savings account with no service fee.
- Program fees may also be paid via a personal check, money order, or cash.

10. NSF/Returned Checks:

- Any NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds) or returned checks will be subject to a \$25 fee.

11. Past Due Fees:

- Program fees pending payment beyond 30 days are considered past due.
- Past due program fees beyond 60 days will require a conversation with ATS's Finance Manager to explore and develop a payment plan to bring the account up to date.
- In the event of a hardship, a conversation with the Executive Director is required to explore assistance options.

12. Third-Party Payments:

- Program fees to be paid by anyone other than the parent or legal guardian must be pre-arranged and agreed upon by ATS. However, this does not release the parents or legal guardian from liability if the third-party defaults, and it does not affect the operation of any other terms and conditions outlined in this policy.

13. Taxable Donations:

- Third parties paying program fees on behalf of a participant who is not a legal entity for the participant; those funds will be considered taxable donations. Third-party payers will receive a letter in February stating such.

ATS values your commitment to our programs. We believe that this Program Fee Policy ensures transparency and fair treatment of all participants and their families. If you have any questions or need clarification on any aspect of this policy, please do not hesitate to contact us.

PROGRAM FEES

Days per week	2025 Monthly Cost
2	\$384
3	\$463
4	\$541
5	\$620

Lunches

Families are responsible for sending lunch with participants each day. Refrigerators are NOT available to participants for keeping lunches. Program staff may assist participants with food preparation in the microwave. Please do not send lunches that require stovetop or oven preparation.

Birthdays

If families want to celebrate birthdays by bringing food to Able to Serve, we ask that you make arrangements with the office as early as possible. As you make plans, please consider the monthly calendar for outings and events.

Participant Interaction

Participants and families are encouraged to develop meaningful friendships with other participants. However, to ensure the safety of participants, staff, and volunteers, please adhere to the relational boundaries as set forth in these guidelines for participant interaction while at Able to Serve.

The program staff should approve all gifts and donations to the program or to the participants before they are given/exchanged. We discourage giving gifts to a single participant during program hours as other participants may feel left out and/or feelings may be hurt.

Participants/families should not allow another participant to develop a personal interest in him/her that goes beyond a simple friendship while at Able to Serve. Participants may express affection toward members of other families. We encourage high-fives and side hugs among participants and families that are not related.

Code of Conduct

At Able to Serve we strive to maintain a consistent and safe environment with age-appropriate rules that are explained and enforced. Our **Code of Conduct** guides our behavior.

- We will include all of our friends.
- We will look and listen quietly when someone is talking.
- We will build people up by using kind words and actions.
- We will ask permission to borrow things that belong to others.
- We will respect personal space by giving side hugs and high-fives only.
- We will treat others in the same way we want them to treat us.

Staff will address any behaviors that are not consistent with this Code of Conduct. If unwanted behaviors persist, staff will communicate with parents/legal guardian's to set up a conference to determine next steps.

Physical Harm or Aggressive Behavior Policy

Able to Serve is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all participants, volunteers, and staff. We have a zero-tolerance policy regarding any form of physical harm or aggressive behavior within our programs.

Policy Details:

1. Zero Tolerance for Physical Harm or Abuse:

Any act of physical harm or aggressive behavior directed towards another participant, volunteer, or staff member is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

2. Assessment of Incidents:

Incidents involving physical harm or aggressive behavior will be promptly and thoroughly assessed by Able to Serve's management team. The severity of the incident will be evaluated based on the nature and impact of the behavior, as well as any potential risks or further risks to the safety of others.

3. Corrective Action:

Depending on the severity of the incident, appropriate corrective action will be taken. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Issuing warnings to the participant and the participant's family/caregiver.
- Temporarily suspending the participant from the program.
- Dismissing the participant from the program permanently.

4. Communication with Families and Caregivers:

We will promptly notify the families and/or caregivers of any participants involved in an incident and inform them of the corrective actions being taken. While our main goal is to support the well-being of the participants, our involvement will primarily focus on ensuring the safety of all program members.

5. Re-evaluation for Re-entry:

In cases where suspension from the program is deemed necessary, re-entry will be considered on a case by case basis. However, depending on the severity of the incident it may be only after the participant's family and/or caregiver can provide evidence that the underlying issues have been effectively addressed. This may include medical or psychological evaluations, behavioral assessments, or other relevant documentation indicating assurance that the issue has been effectively addressed and resolved.

Able to Serve is dedicated to fostering a safe environment for all participants, volunteers, and staff. Any violation of this policy will be treated with the utmost immediacy and seriousness, and necessary actions will be taken to protect the safety and well-being of everyone involved in our programs.

Health and Nutrition

In an effort to provide the healthiest environment possible for participants, staff, and volunteers, and to prevent the spread of illness, please follow these guidelines concerning health.

Families should assess their son or daughter's health and wellness before arriving at Able to Serve. If upon arrival staff identify that the participant is not well enough to attend Able to Serve, the participant will be sent home with a parent/legal guardian.

If the participant becomes ill while at Able to Serve, they will be isolated from the rest of the participants. Parents/legal guardian's will be notified and asked to come pick up the participant as soon as possible within one hour. Participants must be free from the symptoms listed for at least 24-hours before returning:

- o Fever
- o Vomiting
- o Diarrhea
- o Conjunctivitis
- o Unexplained or Contagious Skin Rash
- o Nasal Drainage that is green or yellow
- o Sore Throat
- o Open Sores
- o Excessive Coughing / Shortness of Breath
- o Parasites (lice, nits, mites, ring worm, etc.)

Food Allergies

If participants are allergic to any food (or develop an allergy after enrollment) please inform the program staff immediately, verbally and in writing.

Parents/legal guardian's must provide supporting medical verification (a signed and dated note from the doctor) identifying the condition (such as Celiac Disease or Diabetes) and listing specific foods the participant is not allowed to eat. Able to Serve will make every effort to uphold the health and safety of every participant.

Medications

Participants should not receive the first dose of a newly prescribed routine medication at Able to Serve due to any potential unknown reactions.

Parent/Legal Guardian must physically bring in the participants prescribed or over-the-counter medication(s) to the Able to Serve office, where a Staff Member will assist with completing or updating the Medicine List/Waiver Form and answer any questions our staff may have. This includes medication(s) taken at home. **Have a new medication, not listed on your registration form?** Please contact the Program Office to complete the proper paperwork.

At no time should a participant bring in prescribed or over-the-counter medication and keep it on their person or in their locker. The exception to this policy is when a participant has a Participant Self-Carry and Self-Administration of Regular Use Medication or Participant Self-Carry of Emergency Medication Form on file.

Any participant authorized to self-carry and self-administer medication (i.e., insulin) or any participant authorized to self-carry emergency medication (i.e., EpiPen) **MUST** have a Participant Self-Carry and Self-Administration of Regular Use Medication Form completed by parent/legal guardian and be in the participant's master file.

All **prescription medication(s)** must be in the original container from the pharmacy with an unexpired pharmacy label, dosing instructions, and a description of the medication listed on the container identifying the medication. In extreme special circumstances, exceptions to this policy can be made.

All **over-the-counter** medication must be in its original container with an unexpired label, dosing instructions, and a description of the over-the-counter medicines listed on the container identifying the over-the-counter medicines.

Participants with over-the-counter medicine(s) listed on the Medicine List/Waiver Form "as needed" will only be allowed to receive medicine(s) once per day. Any additional dose of "as needed" medication will need a parent/legal guardian's approval before a participant can receive an extra amount.

Apparel

We encourage participants to wear Able to Serve gear anytime to our ATS program, especially on days we are off-campus! You can purchase apparel on our website at www.abletoserve.org under the "Get Involved" drop down. Please contact our office if you have any questions!

Transportation

Families are responsible for providing or arranging transportation for participants from home to the program and from the program to home. Able to Serve does not offer pick-up and/or drop-off services.

Transportation for program outings and trips during program hours is provided by Able to Serve.

Staff and volunteers are strictly prohibited from offering transportation to participants in personal vehicles to or from the program unless authorized by the parent/legal guardian and the Program Office.

Confidentiality

For the safety of our participants and their family, if a participant or a participant's family shares confidential information with you, let the participant know that you are required to pass the information on to a staff member who can offer them help.

It is unacceptable to share personal information about a participant and/or a participant's family with other participants, volunteers, parents/legal guardian's, and/or any parties not related to the participant.

Suggestions and Feedback

To ensure continued success at Able to Serve, we feel it is very important to maintain ongoing communication between families and program staff. We encourage you to share your thoughts, ideas, and feedback regarding the program with our staff team at any time.

Thank you for allowing our team to serve your family! We are truly grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside each participant & family each week!

Together, we are **giving abilities a chance** each day here at Able to Serve!