



## ***Volunteer Position Description for a Parent Companion***

A Parent Companion is a mature adult with experience in parenting/child care who has the time and desire to help a young/single or otherwise isolated parent. Our volunteers provide support to the parent, and act as a friend and confidante to the parent as she adjusts and develops positive parenting and family management skills. The work of a Parent Companion is needs-responsive, varying with the need of each individual family. The volunteers are sensitive, compassionate, flexible, dependable and non-judgmental. There are times during the experience of serving as a Parent Companion when great patience and understanding are required.

### ***Training***

#### **Each volunteer must agree to:**

- Complete the Parent Companion Program training offered by Mothercraft Ottawa and participate in on-going workshops and informal group sessions.
- Complete three reference checks and a police records check and attend a personal interview.
- Sign the volunteer agreement form and behaviour management policy.

### ***Responsibilities***

- Maintain regular bi-weekly contact with the parent and a minimum of one visit per month throughout the match, which may last up to two years.
- Provide on-going support, encouragement, understanding, help with problem-solving, and referrals to community resources.
- Attend workshops and events/activities with the parent whenever possible.
- Act as an advocate for the parent when appropriate.
- Discuss parenting problems with the parent and explore possible solutions.
- Address questions from parent about all aspects of parenting.
- Help the parent determine her goals for the family and how to take the first steps towards those goals.
- Initiate assessment with parent of useful support agencies/resources in the community such as drop-in programs, toy lending libraries, parent support groups, academic upgrading, clothing, shelter, food banks, subsidized child care, etc.
- Determine the comfort level of the parent in using the various agencies and resources, refer and/or accompany them if necessary for the initial visit.
- Explore options to help the parent learn how to cope with stress in her day-to-day life.
- Watch for signs of abuse in the parent and child, including substance abuse, and adhere to current reporting procedures.
- Encourage the parent to start a peer support system.
- Ensure that your role as a Parent Companion Volunteer is accurately represented.
- Complete the necessary evaluation forms and report on the experience to the program coordinator.
- Maintain strict confidentiality at all times.