



COSI On Wheels Coordinator Packet

Welcome to the world of COSI On Wheels

THANK YOU for taking the time to read through this information in order to make your COSI On Wheels experience run as smoothly as possible. We are coming to your school to excite your students and everyone involved about the science that surrounds us. In order to best facilitate the program we will need your assistance with the following things:

VOLUNTEERS:

15 to 20 Volunteers at all times (at least 16 years of age or older) for the duration of your program day(s).

The most critical aspect of every COSI On Wheels program are the volunteers who assist with the hands-on sessions. It is very important for them to be present in order to provide a quality hands-on science experience for the students. These volunteers need no science background, only ENTHUSIASM and ENERGY for a great day. Prior to your COSI On Wheels day they need to each receive a copy of the Volunteer Letter. The Volunteer Letter is the last two pages of this document.

Guidelines to assist you in your efforts recruiting this valuable resource:

- **Always recruit more volunteers than you need.** 15 volunteers per hands-on session is a minimum; the shows can utilize 18 to 20, providing more one-on-one learning for the students. Remember, it is inevitable that last minute sicknesses and emergencies will prevent people from volunteering.
- **Establish a recruiting timetable.** It is best to begin your search for volunteers four weeks prior to COSI's visit. Phone calls work best. Copies of the Volunteer Letter and the short descriptions of the hands-on activities should be sent to the volunteers as a reminder of the day's commitment. Remember to confirm with phone calls the night before to eliminate challenges the day of the program.
- **Be flexible in your scheduling.** Scheduling 15 to 20 volunteers for the whole day may be difficult. Having groups work only in the morning or afternoon is perfectly fine. However, all volunteers must attend the Educator's volunteer orientation. This may be accomplished by having the orientation the evening before COSI's visit instead of the morning of the program. All volunteers should also attend the assembly in order to get an overview of the program's content and science concepts.

- **No experience necessary.** The volunteer's main job is to have FUN! Many people think they must be experts in science to lead a COSI activity. The COSI Educator is there to help them understand the science. It is meant to be a learning experience for all: students, teachers and volunteers.
- **Let them know they are appreciated.** The COSI On Wheels program could not happen if it were not for those fabulous volunteers. The volunteers are donating their time and a great deal of effort. While the COSI Educator will have the students thank them for their hard work, something more tangible is often a nice gesture. Providing coffee in the morning or ordering out for lunch are great ways to say thank you for making the day a success. Many schools have tried potluck lunches with great results.

SETTING UP THE SHOW:

- Set up takes place in the late afternoon or early evening prior to the event.
- A contact person **must be present** during the set up to assure proper equipment placement for the event.
- The COSI Educator will be arriving with a 14 foot box truck full of equipment.
- **We require** three to four adults (age 18+) to assist in unloading and loading the truck. They will need to stay for about one hour to help set up the show's stage and hands-on equipment. Be aware that COSI On Wheels equipment is not easily moved once it is in place.

ORIENTATION:

- The COSI Educator will lead a 45-minute orientation session prior to the event for **all volunteers participating**. If volunteers will be coming in shifts it would be ideal to have all shifts present at the orientation.
- The orientation will include background and "how to" information for all of the hands-on activities. In addition, the Educator can answer any and all questions the volunteers may have about the day.

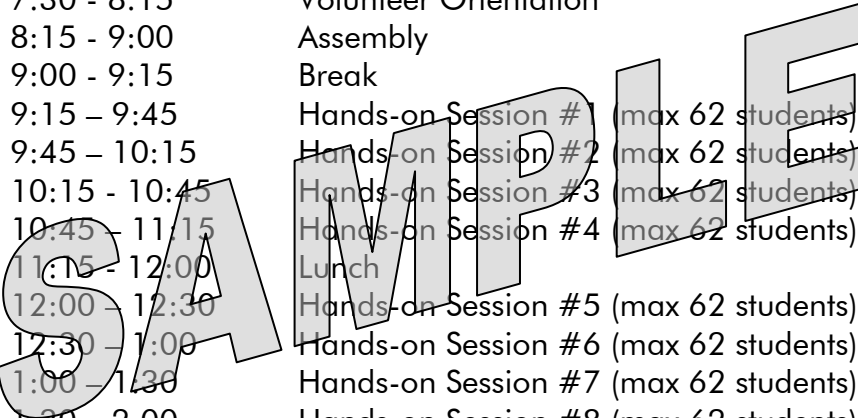
SCHEDULING THE DAY:

Due to safety considerations, necessity requires the following participation limit for hands-on sessions:

- 62 students or less per session
- Each hands-on session may last 30 to 45 minutes (the more students participating in each session, the more time required)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE:

Here is a sample schedule of a COSI On Wheels event. This outline is our **suggestion** for planning your daily schedule; you may choose to schedule differently based on the number of students you have or your hours of operation. You can have as many or as few hands-on sessions as you need. Keep in mind the preceding comments and adapt this schedule to fit the needs of your school.



7:30 - 8:15	Volunteer Orientation
8:15 - 9:00	Assembly
9:00 - 9:15	Break
9:15 - 9:45	Hands-on Session #1 (max 62 students)
9:45 - 10:15	Hands-on Session #2 (max 62 students)
10:15 - 10:45	Hands-on Session #3 (max 62 students)
10:45 - 11:15	Hands-on Session #4 (max 62 students)
11:15 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 12:30	Hands-on Session #5 (max 62 students)
12:30 - 1:00	Hands-on Session #6 (max 62 students)
1:00 - 1:30	Hands-on Session #7 (max 62 students)
1:30 - 2:00	Hands-on Session #8 (max 62 students)
2:00 - 2:30	Clean-up with volunteers

- The COSI Educator is the sole representative from COSI and is an integral part of both activities. It is not possible to have an assembly program and a hands-on session at the same time.
- You can schedule up to two assemblies per day, if necessary. If you require a second assembly you can do one in the morning, and the second one in the afternoon.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please remit invoices, schedules and school information to:

COSI

Attn: COSI On Wheels

333 W. Broad St.

Columbus, OH 43215

COSI's phone number is 614-228-COSI or toll free 888-819-COSI. You may also fax schedules and school information to: 614-629-3226 Attn: Outreach Coordinator.

If you need general information about COSI On Wheels you can visit our web site at www.cosi.org, or e-mail us at COSIOnWheels@cosi.org.

If you have specific questions about your event please give us a call at these extensions:

- Try First: Tammy Jackson, Call Center Manager - Outreach Programs, at Ext. 1703 or COSIOnWheels@cosi.org.
- Then Try: Nicole Rife, Manager of COSI On Wheels Outreach Programs, at Ext. 3144 or nrife@cosi.org.

COSI | 333 W. Broad St. | Columbus, OH 43215 | 888.819.COSI | www.cosi.org

COSI On Wheels: FAQ's



How many students can be in one assembly?

If the school's gymnasium/multipurpose room can accommodate the entire school (up to 500 students per day) seated on the floor or in bleachers for an assembly, you are welcome to do just one morning assembly and use the afternoon period for hands-on sessions. Do keep in mind that COSI will have tables and equipment set up around the perimeter of the room which will reduce the number of students that will fit.

We don't seem to have enough time for everyone to participate.

You can have more hands-on sessions than are listed on the schedule sheet that was included in this packet. Another option is to include everyone in the assembly and limit hands-on sessions to certain grades. You may wish to secure COSI On Wheels for two days in order to accommodate all of your students. Feel free to contact the Outreach Coordinator at 614-228-COSI or toll free at 888-819-COSI, ext. 1703 with specific concerns.

We are having a tough time finding enough volunteers. What can we do?

As you can see from the enclosed information, COSI On Wheels depends on the assistance of the adult volunteers. Most often these are the school's PTA/PTO members and other parents. Despite your best efforts, sometimes you cannot find enough adult volunteers. Here are some other options you may wish to pursue:

- **Grandparents** - Usually retired and at home, and what grandparent is going to say "no" to their grandchild?
- **Retired teachers** - What teacher wouldn't love a fun filled day with the students?
- **High school honor students** - (Ages 16 and older) Science clubs, Key Clubs, honor societies, etc., in your local high schools are another resource. Be sure to choose responsible students, however, because they will be role models for your students all day.
- **Local universities** - Education and science students and even professors often like the break in routine. These college students would be receiving practical field experience in education. Also, sororities/fraternities do service projects.
- **Local service groups** - There are many groups such as Kiwanis, the American Legion and church groups that give a certain amount of volunteer hours each year.
- **Active older adult organizations** - Check with your local YMCA or community center.
- **Local corporations** - Many larger corporations have volunteer programs that their employees are involved with in the local communities.

Are there any activities that the students can do in the classroom or at home that will continue the COSI On Wheels experience?

Extension activities (formerly known as Teacher Previsit Activities) for each program are located on our website at www.cosi.org. Simply locate the COSI On Wheels section and click on the 'Program Information Packet' and 'Extension Activity' buttons for your scheduled program, and you will be able to continue the experience.

The only large room available is the cafeteria. What do you suggest we do about lunch?
Because of all the equipment involved in the hands-on sessions, the tables needed for these sessions cannot be used for lunch tables. Many schools have students pack their lunches or pick up their lunch and eat in the classroom.

We have sent in our information packet. When will we hear from someone?
The COSI Educator will be contacting you about one week prior to your event to answer questions, go over your schedule, and confirm a set up time.

When can we reserve for next year?
Reservations begin on the first Monday of February. A request can be submitted over the phone at (614) 228-2674 or online at www.cosi.org. You will need to give us your top two program choices, a large span of dates that you are available to do the program, and any impossible dates within that specified time frame. The more available dates you give the Coordinator to work with, the more likely you are to get your first choice of program. In March and April the travel calendar will be built, and in early May the deposit invoice will be mailed informing you of the program and date your school has been reserved for.

Who do we contact if we have questions?
In your coordinator packet you will find a page that has contact information. If you need general information about COSI On Wheels you can visit our web site at www.cosi.org, or e-mail us at COSIOnWheels@cosi.org. You can also contact COSI's Call Center at 614-228-2674 or toll free 888-819-2674.

We hope this information will help you provide the best possible COSI On Wheels experience for your students and teachers. Please feel free to contact COSI with any questions or concerns.

Top 10 Things Every COSI On Wheels Volunteer Should Know

- 10) Get excited! The students get out of the experience what the volunteer puts into it. Your energy is contagious, as is theirs!
- 9) Wear comfortable shoes! You may be standing, stooping, bending, or leaning for long periods of time.
- 8) Layer, layer, layer! Sometimes the gym feels like you've just stepped off an airplane at the equator, while other times your lips turn blue from the frosty air. You can never tell what the temperature in the gym will be!
- 7) Bring water. You will be talking with the students all day, and it is quite refreshing to have something to wet your whistle throughout the day.
- 6) Ask questions! To the students, yourself, and the Educator. You are not expected to know all of the answers. In fact, it is a much more rewarding experience to have the students discover the answers through experimentation. You will be surprised at how a student will jump right into something to try to answer their own question.
- 5) Keep your hands clean. This can be a tough one, but make sure it is the students that are doing the experimenting, and the clean up!
- 4) Don't underestimate the abilities of the students. It's okay for them to try and fail, then try again.
- 3) Have fun! This is an informal setting with very active experiments. The kids love trying things for themselves while learning at the same time!
- 2) Learn! Regardless of your experience, there are plenty of opportunities to learn new things. This is a very fun way to expand your brain.

And the #1 thing you should know is.....

- 1) Thank you, thank you, thank you! We could not do this without you. Your time and effort is very much appreciated and you have really made a difference in a child's life!



HELLO VOLUNTEERS!

Thank you for volunteering for our COSI On Wheels program. **Exploring Ecology** is one of six traveling assemblies/hands-on experiences for students in grades K-6. During this program, students will learn more about ecology. Here are some things you can look forward to on the day of the event.

The day begins with a 45-minute assembly introducing the students to a variety habitats, animals and ecosystems. The COSI Educator is excited to share all the great things they have discovered while exploring our region. During the assembly the students will explore pollination, seed dispersal, animal adaptation and echolocation. The assembly is followed by hands-on activity sessions during which the students can further enhance their knowledge of ecology.

The COSI On Wheels experience is designed to encourage children to ask questions and explore science. Your role during the day will be to help guide students during the hands-on sessions. You do not have to be a science expert to be a COSI On Wheels volunteer. We would like everyone to have fun and learn on the day of the program, including you. Be sure to dress comfortably because you may be on your feet for the better part of the day!

Prior to the assembly you will be given an orientation so that you can become familiar with the activities, which are listed on the back of this letter. It is important to be on time for this orientation because we have only 45 minutes to get to know each other and learn about all of the activities. COSI On Wheels has six different program topics, so we rarely bring the same program to a school two years in a row. Even if you have volunteered for us in the past it is important to attend the orientation to learn the new information about **Exploring Ecology**.

Above all, you should know that you are a vital part of this COSI On Wheels experience. It is impossible for **Exploring Ecology** to be a success without you. We at COSI, as well as the students and faculty at your school, appreciate your time, energy, and support. Be prepared for a day filled with science, learning, and FUN!

Sincerely,

The COSI On Wheels Team

EXPLORING ECOLOGY HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Beaks as Tools:	Students will investigate the different ways that birds use their beaks as tools to acquire food: an adaptation developed in relationship to specific plants
C.A.M.O:	Students will explore how adaptations, such as camouflage, help animals blend in with their physical surroundings and survive in their habitat.
Ecological Monitoring:	Students will explore the same habitat in four different seasons to discover how living things adapt to seasonal changes.
Pyramid Power:	Students will build food chains to better understand the relationships between predator and prey organisms, as well as the relationships to plants and soil.
Just Fur Science:	Students will investigate real animal furs and learn how their fur helps them survive in their environment.
Mighty Morphin' Power Changers:	Students will explore the life cycles of animals that undergo complete body changes and how this cycle fits into the larger ecosystem
The Root of it All:	Using a large plant model, students will test their knowledge about the different parts of a plant and the role of photosynthesis.
Eye See You:	Students will experience how different animals and insects see and how those various methods of vision aid in the animals' survival.
ProSEED to Grow:	Students will test different types of seeds and explore how the strategy of dispersal relates to the ecosystem in which the plant is situated.
Who'da Trunk it:	Using a variety of tree rings, students will observe and discuss what changes in the environment could have impacted the tree's growth, a method an ecologist might use to look at an ecosystem over time.