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Attending a Medical Mission to Honduras as a Family

Requirements for Minors on Medical Missions

- **The minimum recommended age for a child to attend a medical mission is 5 years old.** You know your child best. While we trust your judgment regarding whether your child is ready to attend a medical mission, we have also found that the ideal age for a child and supervising adult (often a nonclinical parent) to fully experience this as a *service trip* is 10 years old and older. A trip with a child under 10 tends to be more of an *experiential learning trip* for the child and the supervising adult. There are plenty of new experiences and lessons to learn in the surgery center and on the ranch.
- **Children under 13 must be accompanied by a nonclinical adult at all times during the mission. This includes when walking around the ranch, in the surgery center, and when participating in work stations and other activities.** In the past, families have brought a grandmother, a cousin, or family friend to help supervise younger children. Sometimes, two or more families will attend a medical mission together. This enables the nonclinical adults to fully participate in the service aspect of the trip and experience the workstations and roles with minimum age requirements. **One World Surgery staff and other medical mission volunteers are not able to supervise your children.**
- **Children under 18 must attend the mission with a parent or another adult guardian who will assume responsibility for the child and accompany him/her for the entire duration of travel.** This includes traveling on the same international and domestic flights.

Travel and Accommodations

- To break up travel or avoid early morning flight times, some families have chosen to fly to Houston, Atlanta, or Miami on Friday and complete their travel to Honduras on Saturday morning.
- Rooms in the Moscati Center can typically accommodate up to 6 family members in a room. A member of the One World Surgery team will contact you prior to the mission to confirm your preferred rooming arrangements if we anticipate having to split your family. **Children under 13 are required to share a room with their parent or guardian.**
- One World Surgery provides 3 meals a day. The meals typically consist of Honduran food (rice, beans, tortillas, soup) and Italian meals. We always have peanut butter and jelly and snacks on hand, but if your child is a picky eater or has allergies or dietary restrictions, we recommend bringing some additional food items from home. There is a refrigerator to store items and a microwave, stove, and oven to prepare any items you bring.



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Preparing Your Child for a Medical Mission

- Review the Code of Conduct, Media Policies, and Safety Policies in the informational packet with your child prior to departure. You are responsible for ensuring that your child complies with these policies during the trip.
- Set the expectation that this is a service trip and not a vacation. Your child should be prepared to work hard and to sometimes help with tasks that may not seem interesting or fun in order to contribute to the team.
- Review the [One World Surgery](#) website and watch some of our [videos](#). Help your child to visualize where he/she will be going.
- Share some information about Honduras and global health. Encourage older children to do their own online research. Look for Honduras on the map, and investigate its history, geography, food, culture, general statistics, etc.
- If your child is not used to trying new foods, start to introduce them at home. Rice, beans, tortillas, and plantains are staples of Honduran cuisine and a good place to start if there isn't a Honduran restaurant in your area.
- Review the General Volunteer packet with your child. Help him/her think about what workstations he/she would like to participate in during the trip.
- Try learning a few words or phrases in Spanish. See the resource at the end of the Trip Informational Packet.
- Depending on your child's age, some of the questions below might be helpful for guiding discussion prior to the trip.
 - Where are you going, and how might it be different from home?
 - Why did your family decide to participate in this trip?
 - What are some things you might do or see on the trip?
 - What is a service trip or medical mission? Why does your family think it's important to participate in service activities?
 - Do you know anyone who has had a surgery? What do you think the experience was like for that person?
 - How will your child be expected to behave?

During the Mission

- All minors will participate as general volunteers, rotating through jobs and activities in the surgery center and on the ranch. Every night after dinner, they will sign up for the next day's shifts.



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- For safety reasons, some volunteer jobs have a minimum age requirement.

Jobs	Age Requirement
Kitchen Helper (preparing meals)	10 and up
Turnover Crew, Trash Helper, Surgery Center Kitchen Helper	13 and up
Photographer	15 and up
Instrument Helper, Interpreter	18 and up

- There are a number of assignments that children of all ages can participate in, under the supervision of an adult:
 - Trash helper
 - Surgery center kitchen helper
 - Ranch Kitchen helper
 - Garden
 - Playtime with Casa Suyapa (youngest children on the ranch)
 - Tea with the abuelos (visiting with the elderly)
- Please see the General Volunteer Informational Packet for more details on general volunteer duties.
- If you don't feel comfortable with your child 13 or older walking between workstations (with other participants), please make arrangements to meet him/her before and after workstation shifts.
- If you'd like to visit a hogar (children's home) or play with the kids after school, first check with the One World Surgery Program Assistant to make sure it's an appropriate time to do so. Please be aware that it may not always be appropriate because the kids may have school work or chores to do.
- Help your child to reflect on his/her experience. In the past, some parents have asked their child to journal each day of the trip.
- We encourage you to bring games, books, etc. to help keep younger children occupied during any downtime.
- Evening programming occasionally goes as late as 9 pm. You are welcome to excuse yourself after the meal if your child is ready for bed.

Observing Surgeries

- One World Surgery prides itself on providing U.S. level surgical care in a developing country setting, adhering to U.S. standards whenever possible. For this reason, our



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policy is that an individual must be at least 15 years old to observe a surgery and at least 18 years old to scrub in on a surgery.

- Observation shifts will be assigned by One World Surgery staff, and it will not be possible for any volunteer to spend the entire mission observing and/or scrubbing in to surgeries. We advise that a volunteer observe one full shift before signing up to scrub in.

Other Information

- One World Surgery will gladly provide documentation of service hours for your child's school. Please send any forms that need to be completed and signed to medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org
- Interested in speaking with a family who has attended a medical mission with One World Surgery? Reach out to medicalmissions@oneworldsurgery.org and we'll be happy to connect you with past volunteers.