



VILLAGE TEMPLATE

Quick-Start Guide

WHAT IS THE VILLAGE TEMPLATE?

The Village Template is a document that gives everyone who supports your child the same information, without you having to repeat yourself over and over again. Instead of explaining your child to every new teacher, therapist, coach, and doctor from scratch, you fill this out ONCE and share it with everyone. They get the context they need. You get hours back every month!

WHY USE THE VILLAGE TEMPLATE?

What you get back:

- 10+ hours/month (no more repeating yourself to everyone)
- Mental space (your child's village now holds the information)
- Faster support (teachers cut their 'getting to know your child' time from 6 months to 2 weeks)
- Collaborative care (providers can talk to EACH OTHER, not just you – like a real village!)
- Time to parent (instead of coordinating everyone's chaos)

HOW TO USE THE VILLAGE TEMPLATE

Follow these 4 simple steps:

STEP 1: FILL IT OUT (10-15 MINUTES)

Open the template and answer the questions. Write like you're talking to a friend, no need to be formal or perfect.

Important reminders:

- You don't have to fill out every section, just what's relevant
- Done is better than perfect (you can always update it later)
- Use plain language (no medical jargon needed)
- Be specific (instead of 'gets frustrated easily,' write 'when he can't start a task, he might throw his pencil')
- Include what WORKS, not just what's hard

Pro tip: Look at the example template (included in your download) to see how an example of how to fill it out. It helps!

STEP 2: SAVE IT (1 MINUTE)

Save the completed template with a clear filename:

Example: 'Alex_Village_Template_March2026.pdf'

Save it somewhere easy to find (Desktop, Google Drive, Dropbox) so you can update it or share it quickly.

STEP 3: SHARE IT (2 MINUTES)

Send it to everyone who supports your child:

- Teachers (homeroom, specialist teachers, EAs)
- Therapists (OT, speech, counsellor, psychologist)
- Doctors (paediatrician, psychiatrist)
- Coaches (sports, music, tutors)
- Babysitters, extended family, anyone who regularly supports your child

Sample email:

Subject: Village Template for [Child's Name]

Hi [Name], I've created a one-page document that gives you helpful context about [child's name], what lights them up, what helps them succeed, and how we can work together to support them.

Please take a look when you have a chance. Feel free to share it with other members of the team, and let me know if you have any questions!

Thanks for being part of [child's name]'s village. — [Your Name]

STEP 4: UPDATE IT (EVERY 3-6 MONTHS)

Your child changes. Their needs change. The strategies that work change. Update your Village Template every 3-6 months (or when something significant changes).

Update when:

- New school year starts (new teachers need it)
- New diagnosis or medication changes
- New support person joins the team (therapist, tutor, coach)
- You discover a new strategy that works
- Something significant changes in your child's life (move, family change, etc.)

Pro tip: Add 'Last updated: [date]' at the bottom so everyone knows they have the most current version.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Do I have to fill out every section?

A: No! Only fill out what's relevant for your child. Skip sections that don't apply. You can always add more later.

Q: What if my child doesn't have a diagnosis?

A: That's totally fine! You can skip the diagnosis section or write 'no formal diagnosis' and focus on describing what helps your child succeed. You don't need a label to use this tool.

Q: Will teachers actually read this?

A: Yes! Most teachers love getting this kind of information because it saves them months of trial-and-error figuring out how to support your child. One teacher told me: 'This cut my time by 6 months of getting to know your son.'

Q: What if I don't know all the answers?

A: Fill out what you know. You're not expected to have all the answers, you're learning alongside everyone else. Write 'still figuring this out' or 'not sure yet' for things you don't know. You can update it as you learn more. You can always contact the Village of Play team with questions too! We're part of your support team too!

Q: How do I share it without violating my child's privacy?

A: Only share with people who have a legitimate need to know (teachers, therapists, doctors, coaches). You control who gets it. You can also create different versions, a more detailed one for therapists/doctors, a simpler one for coaches/babysitters.

Q: My child is a teenager. Should I involve them in filling this out?

A: Absolutely! For teens, filling this out TOGETHER builds self-advocacy skills. They might have insights you don't ('Actually, mom, fidget spinners don't help me, walking breaks do'). Plus, it gives them ownership over their support plan.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. Use Specific Examples

Instead of: *'Gets frustrated easily'*

Write: 'When he can't start a task, he might throw his pencil or put his head down. Give him a 5-minute movement break and then help him break the task into smaller steps.'

2. Focus on Strengths Too

Don't just list challenges, highlight what your child is good at, what makes them amazing, and what lights them up. This helps support people see your child as a whole person, not just a collection of problems to solve.

3. Include the 'Why' Behind Behaviours

When you explain WHY your child does something, it helps people respond with compassion instead of frustration. Example: 'When she asks to go to the bathroom frequently, it's usually a sign she's overwhelmed and needs a sensory break.'

4. Make It a Living Document

Don't treat this as a one-and-done task. Update it as you learn what works, as your child grows, as new challenges emerge. Keep the file somewhere easy to access so you can make quick updates.

5. Encourage Communication Between Team Members

In the 'Village' section, explicitly say: 'Feel free to contact each other, you don't have to go through me!' This gives them permission to collaborate without you being the middleman every time.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once you share the Village Template, here's what typically happens:

1. **People actually read it (because it's concise and helpful)**
2. **They start using the strategies you suggested**
3. **They contact each other (not just you) to coordinate support**
4. **You get fewer crisis calls because they have context**
5. **You get time and mental space back**

And most importantly? Your child gets more consistent, coordinated support, which means they thrive.

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

Filling out the Village Template is one of the best things you can do for yourself, your child, and everyone who supports them.

It takes 10-15 minutes. It gives you 10+ hours back every month.

You're not alone. You don't have to figure this out by yourself.

Feel free to contact the Village of Play Team with questions at hello@villageofplay.com.

VILLAGE TEMPLATE

THE BASICS

Child's Name: _____

Nickname or what they prefer to be called: _____

Child's Age: _____

Child's Current Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Best phone number to reach you: _____

WHAT LIGHTS THEM UP

These are the things that engage, motivate, and bring out the best in your child. When your child is struggling, these are the topics/activities that re-engage them.

Examples: Space/science, video games, soccer, Taekwondo, their dog, building things, helping younger kids, drawing, music, storytelling

 **Why this matters:** When your child zones out or gets frustrated, anyone in their village can use these to reconnect with them.

List 3-5 things that light up your child (interests, hobbies, passions)

DIAGNOSIS/SUPPORT NEEDS

Does your child have a diagnosis or identified support needs? (Check all that apply)

- Options:
 - ADHD - Inattentive
 - ADHD - Hyperactive
 - ADHD - Combined
 - Autism Spectrum
 - Learning Disability (Ex. Dyslexia)
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Speech/Language Delay

- Sensory Processing
- Other

If you selected "Other" or "Learning Disability", please specify:

In plain language, what does this look like for your child?

Example: "My son has ADHDc - combined type. This means he's hyperactive (always moving, fidgeting), impulsive (blurts out answers, reacts first), and inattentive (easily distracted, forgets instructions). Even with medication, he shows all three."

WHAT HELPS ✓

What HELPS your child succeed?

Select all strategies that HELP your child succeed:

- Options:
 - Short, clear, concise instructions (80% fewer words than typical)
 - Written instructions or visual schedules
 - Brain breaks every 10-15 minutes during long tasks
 - Checking in to make sure they know what to do
 - Priority when they raise their hand (they may forget if they wait)
 - Grace when they interrupt (they don't mean to be rude)
 - Encouragement to participate (easy for them to zone out)
 - Speech-to-text or typing instead of handwriting
 - Leadership opportunities (they excel when given responsibility)
 - Physical activity to release tension
 - Sitting at front/side of class to optimize focus
 - Positive praise (even for small things that come naturally to others)
 - Working in class with teacher support vs. at home alone
 - Other (please specify below)

If you selected "Other" above, please describe what else helps:

SECTION 5: WHAT DOESN'T WORK X

What DOESN'T work (makes things harder) with your child?

Select all things that make it HARDER for your child:

- Options:
 - Too many instructions at once (they get overwhelmed or forget)
 - Long periods of concentration without breaks
 - Being criticized in front of others (they're easily embarrassed)
 - Negative language (they're extremely hard on themselves)
 - Expecting them to work and listen at the same time
 - Time-sensitive tasks without support (time management is hard)
 - Written assignments on boring topics (they rush or zone out)
 - Other (please specify below)

If you selected "Other" above, please describe what doesn't work:

STRENGTHS & INTERESTS 

 **Why this matters:** Lead with strengths. Your child's village should know what they're GOOD at, not just what they struggle with.

What is your child REALLY good at?

Examples: Leadership with younger kids, speaking/presenting, analytical thinking, reflection when calm, physical activity, creativity, problem-solving

What are they passionate about?

Examples: Sports - rep soccer. Martial arts - Taekwondo. Space/universe. Video games. Their dog. Building/creating.

SENSITIVE TOPICS / IMPORTANT CONTEXT ⚠

Is there anything happening at home or in their life that might affect behaviour/mood?

Examples: Recent family changes, sibling relationships, loss of a pet, moving, parent separation, etc.

Is this a sensitive topic that should be approached with care?

- Options:
 - Yes, please approach with care
 - No, it's okay to discuss openly
-

MEDICATION / PHYSICAL NEEDS 💊

Is your child on any medication?

- Options:
 - Yes
 - No

If yes, please provide medication details (name, dosage/time, what it's for, side effects to watch for)

Are there things to know about your child's medication? (Check all that apply)

- Options:
 - Medication may affect appetite (reminder to eat snacks)
 - Medication wears off by end of school day (homework is harder at home)
 - Medication may make them more subdued/less animated
 - Other (please specify below)

Other medication notes:

Allergies or other medical information the village should know:

BEHAVIOUR & SELF-REGULATION 

When your child is calm and reflecting on a poor choice, what works best? (Check all that apply)

- Options:
 - "How would you want to handle that differently next time?" (puts them in control)
 - Calm, firm reminder with context (not punishment)
 - Acknowledge their feelings are valid, but they're responsible for how they show up
 - Remind them they can walk away to cool off before re-engaging
 - Other (please specify below)

If you selected "Other" above, please describe:

What are red flags that your child is struggling?

Examples: Gets hangry if they skip meals, becomes defensive when embarrassed, shuts down when criticized, gets frustrated if they don't get something right the first time

THE VILLAGE 🏠

The Village is everyone currently supporting your child. Roles might include: Teacher, EA, therapist (OT/SLP/PT), psychologist, counselor, tutor, coach, mentor, pediatrician, psychiatrist, case manager, extended family/caregivers

List everyone in your child's village (Name, Role, Contact info, What they're working on)

Example: Dr. Sarah Lee, Pediatrician, 403-555-1234, ADHD medication management

Please list each person on a new line.

NAME	ROLE	CONTACT INFO	WORKING ON
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES ✉️

How should your child's village communicate with you? (Check all that apply)

- Options:
 - Email
 - Phone call
 - Text message
 - Communication app (specify below)
 - Other (specify below)

If you use a communication app, which one?

How often do you want updates?

- Options:
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Only when there's a concern
 - Before/after big events or transitions
 - Other (please specify)

Best time/day to reach you:

 **YOU JUST BUILT YOUR CHILD'S VILLAGE!**

Now here's what to do:

- ✓ **SHARE THIS** with everyone in your child's village (teachers, therapists, coaches, doctors)
- ✓ **UPDATE IT** every 3-6 months as your child grows
- ✓ **USE IT** at IPP meetings, parent-teacher conferences, therapy intakes, coach meet-and-greets

This template keeps everyone on the same page, so your child gets coordinated support instead of scattered efforts.

WHAT'S NEXT?

You've built the village. Now where does your child **practice** these skills in a safe, supportive environment?

That's what we do at Village of Play.

THE MINDSET LAB is a 9-week program where kids (ages 5-17) learn and practice:

- Emotional regulation (managing big feelings)
- Impulse control (thinking before acting)
- Cognitive flexibility (adapting when plans change)
- Organization & planning (breaking down tasks)
- Self-advocacy (asking for what they need)

In a fun, play-based environment with trained coaches who GET it.

Want to learn more?

 Visit: villageofplay.com/mindset-lab  Email us at: hello@villageofplay.com

Questions? I'm here.

— Jamila, Village of Play



Template Example

THE BASICS

Child's Name: Alex G.

Age: 12 years old

Grade: Grade 7

School: XYZ Elementary School

Parent/Guardian: Jane G.

Contact: Jane.G@gmail.com | 403-999-1111

Best way to reach me: Email or text (I check both throughout the day)

WHAT LIGHTS THEM UP

When you see Alex engaged in these things, you are seeing him at his best:

- Video games (Minecraft, Roblox - loves building and creating)
- Lego and building things with his hands
- Skiing (he is fearless on the slopes)
- Animals (especially dogs - we have a golden retriever named Max)
- Cooking with dad (he loves trying new recipes)
- Science experiments and anything hands-on

Pro tip: If Alex is struggling, connecting through one of these interests helps him regulate and re-engage.

DIAGNOSIS/SUPPORT NEEDS

Alex has ADHD - Combined Type (diagnosed at age 8)

What this looks like for Alex in plain language:

- Struggles to start tasks (even when he wants to do them)
 - Gets overwhelmed by multi-step instructions - needs them broken down
 - Emotional dysregulation - goes from 0 to 100 quickly when frustrated
 - Forgets things (homework, gym clothes, water bottle) even when reminded
 - Difficulty with transitions - needs warning before switching activities
 - Hyperfocus on things he loves (can play Lego for 3 hours straight)
 - Gets hangry - low blood sugar = meltdowns
-

WHAT HELPS ✓

These strategies work consistently:

- ✓ Clear, specific instructions (one step at a time)
- ✓ Visual schedules and timers (he needs to SEE time passing)
- ✓ Movement breaks (Splashing cold water on his face or deep breathing works)
- ✓ Fidget tools (stress ball, putty - helps him focus)
- ✓ Predictable routines (changes need advance warning, around 5 minutes)
- ✓ Quiet workspace for focus work (noise-canceling headphones help)
- ✓ Positive reinforcement (he responds better to praise than consequences)
- ✓ Snack breaks (low blood sugar = dysregulation)
- ✓ Check-ins (ask 'When did you last have a snack? Or Have a snack.' if you see him getting irritable)
- ✓ Proximity - sitting near him helps him stay on task

Important: When Alex is dysregulated, calm presence works better than talking. Give him space, then process later.

SECTION 5: WHAT DOESN'T WORK ✗

Please avoid these - they escalate situations:

- ✗ Long verbal instructions (he will forget after step 2)
- ✗ Punishment-based consequences (increases shame, doesn't teach skills)
- ✗ 'Just focus' or 'try harder' (he's already trying his hardest)
- ✗ Comparing to other students
- ✗ Taking away recess or movement breaks (makes it worse)
- ✗ Raising your voice when he's escalated (he shuts down)
- ✗ Forcing eye contact when talking (it's actually harder for him to listen)

STRENGTHS & INTERESTS

Don't just see the challenges - here's what makes Alex amazing:

- Creative thinker - sees solutions others miss
- Compassionate - notices when others are struggling and helps
- Hilarious - great sense of humor, makes people laugh
- Resilient - bounces back from hard days
- Brave - tries new things even when scared
- Honest - tells the truth even when it's hard
- Loyal friend - would do anything for people he cares about, this is a big value of his

SENSITIVE TOPICS / IMPORTANT CONTEXT

- Alex is very aware of his ADHD and sometimes feels 'different' or 'broken' - please frame his challenges as skills to build, not deficits.
 - He experienced bullying in Grade 4-5 (kids called him 'stupid' and 'annoying') - he's sensitive about being left out or rejected.
 - His dad and I separated 2 years ago - he sees his dad every other weekend. Transitions between homes can be hard.
 - He's working with a therapist (Sarah at Therapy West) on emotional regulation and self-advocacy.
-

MEDICATION / PHYSICAL NEEDS

Medication: Concerta 27mg (taken at 7:00 AM before school) Wears off around 3:00 PM - you may notice increased hyperactivity/impulsivity after school

Side effects: Decreased appetite (doesn't eat much at lunch which can lead to irritability due to blood sugar dropping), difficulty falling asleep

Physical needs: Needs snacks throughout day (granola bars, fruit), water bottle (gets dehydrated easily), glasses (wears them for reading/screens)

BEHAVIOUR & SELF-REGULATION

When you see these behaviours, here's what's actually happening:

- Fidgeting, tapping, wiggling → He's trying to focus (movement helps his brain)
- Staring off into space → Overwhelmed or needs a break
- Talking out of turn → Impulse control challenge (he forgets to raise hand)
- Refusing to start work → Task initiation struggle (not defiance - his brain won't engage)
- Emotional outburst → Regulation capacity exceeded (like a cup overflowing)
- Asking to go to bathroom frequently → Avoidance when overwhelmed OR actually needs sensory break

Key principle: Behaviour is communication. If Alex is struggling, something in his environment or internal state needs to change.

THE VILLAGE 🏠

These are the people supporting Alex. Feel free to contact each other as I have given them permission to discuss areas they are working on with Alex - you don't have to go through me only!

NAME & ROLE	CONTACT	WHAT THEY'RE WORKING ON	FREQUENCY
Ms. Johnson Grade 7 Homeroom Teacher	mjohnson@school.ca	Academic support, classroom accommodations, organizational skills	Daily
Sarah Thompson Therapist (Therapy West)	sarah@therapywest.ca (403) 555-1234	Emotional regulation, self-advocacy, processing bullying experiences	Bi-weekly (Tuesdays 4pm)
Dr. Kim Pediatrician	drkim@clinic.ca	ADHD medication management, overall health monitoring	Every 3 months
Coach Mike Skiing Instructor	mike@cochraneski.ca	Confidence building, following instructions, teamwork	Weekly (Saturdays)
Jamila Village of Play Executive Functioning Coach	jamila@villageofplay.com	Executive Functioning group practice, routine & schedule support	Daily

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES ✉️

- Good news: Text or email anytime! I love hearing when Alex does well.
- Concerns/challenges: Email preferred (gives me time to process and respond thoughtfully)
- Urgent issues: Call or text - I'll respond ASAP
- Check-ins: Monthly email update appreciated (what's working, what's not)
- Please loop me in BEFORE situations escalate - I'd rather know early and problem-solve together

My promise: I will always respond within 24 hours. If you don't hear from me, send a follow-up - things slip through sometimes

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Having you on Alex's team means the world to us. Please reach out anytime - I'm here to support you in supporting him.
