



Mentor Guide

What is CoderDojo?

CoderDojo provides a free, safe and fun environment for children aged 7 to 17 to learn to code.

At Dojos children have the opportunity to discover and understand the technology which shapes the world they live in.

As of December 2015 there are 850+ active, free CoderDojo clubs (Dojos) in over 63 countries which meet regularly to share their passion for technology.

In these clubs children learn how to build websites, apps, video games, experiment with hardware and much more! Young people who attend Dojos also learn complementary skills of logical thinking, problem solving, presentation and communication skills.

In the CoderDojo community there is a focus on peer learning, mentorship and self led learning while showing how coding and technology can be a force for positive change in the world.

Most importantly, CoderDojo is about encouraging creativity and having fun with technology in a safe and social environment. CoderDojo makes development and learning to code a fun, sociable, rewarding experience.

FAQ: What kind of time commitment is required?

Dojos typically meet for two hours on weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis. Most Dojos require mentors to make a commitment of mentoring at least once a month. If you are able to make it every week/fortnight that's fantastic but if you can only make it one session a month that is also makes the world of difference to a Dojo!

If you are preparing projects or content for your Dojo this can take a little more time during the week.

Mentors usually source content for the Dojo. The CoderDojo Foundation Sushi cards are a great place to expand from. Some mentors like to make their own content.

“Volunteers are people from all walks of life, that have a common goal. This goal is the desire to make a difference in their community by giving their time to help others.”

What is a CoderDojo Mentor?



A **mentor** is a technically skilled individual who guides Dojo attendees and facilitates their learning and project work during the sessions. Mentors usually have a preferred area and expertise within which they like to work (eg. HTML, Python etc.) and this can influence the topics covered in the Dojo.

Mentors facilitate young people's learning at a Dojo. Rather than lecturing and having a top down teaching attitude mentors are there to encourage the young people to explore technology and develop their own unique projects!

Dojos are always looking for technically skilled mentors to help out, for a couple of hours a week, helping to share their knowledge with local young people.

Whether you are a pro at Python, can write HTML blindfolded or love tinkering with hardware like Raspberry Pis and robotics, your knowledge and experience would be welcome at any Dojo!

Volunteering at a Dojo is an incredibly rewarding experience, and many mentors are surprised at how much they learn and gain from the experience! It gives you an opportunity to directly help and impact kids to learn how to code and create with technology.

FAQ: Can I volunteer if I'm not technical?

Yes! Dojos are always looking for volunteers to help with a wide array of tasks, from registration and administration through to keeping their website up to date. You should get in touch with your local Dojo if you have skills that you think could help. You can also support beginner attendees with the basic languages like Scratch and HTML and learn with the young people!

Some examples of non-mentoring roles for volunteers:

- Registration & check In
- Producing fliers
- Updating the website
- Helping support general Dojo activities
- Youth outreach to attract youth

“My favourite thing is being able to directly help young people gain confidence in digital skills.

These skills will be important no matter what career they go into in the future, so by mentoring you'll be making a direct impact on their future employability.” Craig Steele – CoderDojo Scotland

What do young people learn at Dojos?

Coding Skills

Scratch
HTML
HTML5
CSS
CSS3
Javascript
Python
Java
PHP

Hardware

Arduino
Raspberry Pi
Lego Mindstorm
Makey Makey
Technical Skills
Graphic Design
Game Design
Animation
App Creation

Soft Skills

Presentation Skills
Team Work
Teaching Skills
Project Planning
Empowerment
Leadership Skills



...and much more!

“My favourite thing about volunteering as a CoderDojo Mentor is seeing the satisfaction in kids’ eyes at the end of a Dojo. This makes me think I’m always doing the right thing” Agnese Addone – CoderDojo Roma, Italy

How do young people learn at Dojos?



Informal and fun!

The atmosphere in a Dojo is fun and social. Dojos are clubs with their own communities. Seats are set up in groups, with young people chatting and working together (avoid lecturers/teachers at the top of the room and young people sitting in lines listening.)

Kids and young people are at the center of all Dojos, their engagement and happiness are monitored to ensure that all are included and involved. Kindness is at the core of what CoderDojo is about: 'One rule; be cool!'

Project based

Encourage young people to develop their own unique projects. Whether they're working with Scratch, making websites or building games encourage them to make it their own!

Self led learning: Ask 3 then me!

Encourage young people to have a choice about what they are learning and encourage them to try to find the answers to their own questions from their peers, the internet and then from mentors. "Ask three then me" is the motto that reminds adults that kids look for three other sources of help and information before approaching the mentors.

Collaborative

Encourage young people to self organise into teams to work on a project or problem. This helps children to understand their strengths and assists them in developing teamworking skills. Learning from each other is a benefit of working in groups and teams. At CoderDojo young people of different abilities are encouraged to work together on projects and to learn from and mentor each other.

An easy way of encouraging this is to ensure there are two/three young people working on the same computer occasionally, taking turns at the keyboard and encouraging to share and help each other.

Uses Technology and Coding as Tools for Positive Change

Young people are encouraged to work on themes and projects of direct interest to them. Socially, environmentally or community beneficial goals can be introduced to help young people identify opportunities to positively influence the world around them.

Kids and young people are frequently motivated by projects focused on; protecting the environment, sharing knowledge, solving a social problem, supporting a community and themes around physical and mental wellbeing.



Safeguarding Children and Background Checking

It is recommended that ALL CoderDojo Volunteers and Mentors are background checked according to regulations in your region. In some regions this could involve having a background check, providing references or attending child protection training.

Here are some overview do's and don'ts to take into account when mentoring at your Dojo:

Do

- Do provide a safe, secure environment for the young people attending the Dojo.
- Do ensure that the minimum ratio of 1:10, adults: young people, is always present at all CoderDojo activities.
- Do treat all young people as individuals, equally and with respect, regardless of gender, age, religion, ethnicity or creed.
- Do involve Dojo attendees, where appropriate, in decision making.
- Do offer constructive, age-appropriate criticism, encouragement and praise.
- Do use material appropriate to the age and wishes of the group.
- Do have fun and encourage a positive and collaborative atmosphere.
- Do be aware of what is appropriate physical contact and engage in this contact only.
- Do respect the personal and sexual boundaries of others.
- Do discuss any uncertainties with the Dojo Champion or another adult member.
- Do discuss discipline procedures with the Dojo beforehand and be familiar with their policy.

Don't

- Do Not spend time alone with children. If meeting with children individually do so as openly as possible, leave the door open and inform another responsible adult of the meeting.
- Do Not use or allow the use of offensive or sexually suggestive physical or verbal language to go unchallenged.
- Do Not single out an individual child for unfair favoritism, criticism, ridicule or unwelcome focus of attention.
- Do Not allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form. However there may be unavoidable occasions when this takes place, such as providing comfort or reassurance to a distressed child. In all cases physical contact should only take place with the consent of the child.
- Do Not physically chastise children or young people.
- Do Not socialize inappropriately with children or young people outside of structured organisational activities.
- Do Not take children to your home.
- Do Not take children alone on car journeys. If this is unavoidable do so only with the full consent and knowledge of the parents and someone in the hosting organization.
- Do Not do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Do Not allow allegations a child makes go without being recorded and addressed.

“It's very pleasant to be an important part of children's development – sometimes it's very visible, for example once I've been a protagonist in a computer game designed by one of our Ninjas on his own, and I was – as a pixel-art avatar – trying to save the world. How cool is that?” Kamil Sijko – CoderDojo Poland

Learning Support and Resources for Mentors

Kata

Kata is an open forum for the CoderDojo community to share resources with one another and work together to grow the knowledge of the members within the movement. Here you will find learning resources, information on Organising a Dojo and access to information about the CoderDojo Community!

CoderDojo Sushi

CoderDojo Sushi is a format for learning resources specifically for Dojos that was originally developed and shared by a CoderDojo mentor!

CoderDojo Sushi is delivered on double-sided laminated cards known as Sushi Cards. One card = one concept. Dojo Sushi is a method of communicating programming concepts which are suited to the CoderDojo environment. Concepts are communicated in easy-to-digest, bite-sized chunks (hence Sushi).

CoderDojo Community Platform

- Join your Dojo Community
- Community Forums

Here you can connect with community members from around the world, share your knowledge and experiences from your Dojo and ask questions! There are forums dedicated to setting up Dojos, learning resources and even CoderDojo Girls!

- Go to zen.coderdojo.com to register!

Social Media

Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter to keep up to date on all CoderDojo news!

Newsletter

Sign up to our newsletter at CoderDojo.com for all the latest updates.

CoderDojo Foundation

Contact us with any further questions you may have at info@coderdojo.org

Through technology the world is becoming increasingly borderless and Mentoring at CoderDojo has enabled me to connect with like minded people around the world. Everyone in the Community has been brought together with the same goal of sharing their skills with the next generation.” Ursula Clarke Everett – Docklands Dojo, Dublin



How to become a Mentor at your local Dojo?

Go to our map of global Dojos at zen.coderdojo.com and search for your nearest Dojo!

There you'll find contact information and can contact your local Dojo directly about volunteering with them.

If there isn't a Dojo in your local area at the moment why not set one up?

Check out CoderDojo.com/Start to find out how!

Contact Us

If you have any questions, feedback or further input on this document please feel free to contact info@coderdojo.org

