

Early Learning and Child Care Summer Safety Information

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are one small piece of an overall program plan and should complement and expand the learning goals and objectives of the program.

Field trips require thoughtful planning and effective supervision. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Evaluate

- Identify and evaluate the goals and the value of a field trip before booking it.
 - Is it appropriate for children's developmental needs?
 - Will it be beneficial, interesting and accessible for all of the children?
- Assess natural and other hazards to determine the appropriateness of the location and activities.
 - Can you provide appropriate and effective supervision to ensure the safety of the children?
 - Can you meet the children's basic needs for toileting, food, rest and sun protection?
- Weigh the value of the field trip with the travel time, transitions and costs to ensure it is appropriate and consistent with the learning goals of your facility.

Plan thoroughly

- Take small rather than large groups of children. Even with very small groups, a minimum of two staff, including a trained ECE, should be included on every outing.
- Organize supervision that is appropriate for the physical location and type of activities the children will be involved in:
 - Enhance adult to child ratios whenever you are away from the children's familiar environment.
 - Ask family volunteers to come on the trip. Remember that they cannot be left alone or included in staff to child ratios.
 - Develop specific plans for providing supervision including where staff are located, their specific duties and the children assigned to them.
- Organize appropriate methods of transportation, in accordance to the facility's policy on transportation of children and *The Highway Traffic Act*.
- Provide detailed information about each outing or field trip including the destination, method of transportation and supervision provided so parents are fully informed before providing consent. Remember to inform parents that they have the choice for their children to participate in a trip or not.
- Make sure that permission forms have been signed and are on file for all children participating on the trip.

- Determine groupings of adults and children prior to the morning of the field trip to help ensure group size and combinations are best suited for a successful trip. Assign volunteers to a staff person who provides support and direction for the group.
- Plan your lunch/snacks carefully to consider special dietary requirements and to avoid high-risk foods. Make sure food is stored and transported safely to avoid contamination. Plan for everyone needing lots of water throughout the trip.
- Bring current child information records and consider developing cards with important information on one side and a current photo of the child on the other side. Make sure adults are aware of any allergies, special health concerns and any other special considerations about the children in their group.
- Bring at least one cell phone for emergencies and additional cell phones and/or walkie talkies to communicate between groups.
- Bring at least one fully stocked first aid kit and hand sanitizer.

Supervise effectively

- Before leaving on a trip and upon arrival at your destination, explain the safety rules to the children and adults and what to do if anyone gets separated from the group.
- Make sure children are easily identifiable by wearing tags, pinnies, t-shirts or hats with the facility's name.
- Bring a master attendance record and group tracking forms to ensure all children are accounted for at all times.
- Do frequent head counts and take attendance:
 - ✓ before leaving your facility;
 - ✓ when you are seated in the transportation vehicle;
 - ✓ upon arrival at your destination;
 - ✓ several times during the field trip;
 - ✓ when a staff arrives or leaves the group;
 - ✓ before leaving the field trip location;
 - ✓ when you are seated in the transportation vehicle;
 - ✓ when getting out of the transportation vehicle; and
 - ✓ when you arrive back at your facility.