



Child Care Safety Field Trips

Things To Do Before a Field Trip

- Plan details of the trip or activity ahead of time.
- In day care centers and school-age programs, staff must receive approval for all field trips from the program director.
- Written approval from children's parents must be received by the program prior to children attending field trip activities.
- Know the route you will take; leave a copy at the program.
- Before leaving, go over your plan of supervision with all adults. Establish who is in charge and make sure parents and volunteers know they cannot be left alone with any child except their own.
- Make sure emergency contact/blue card information for all children is up to date.
- Gather forms/permission slips/contact information for the program to have on hand in case of an emergency.
- Know what facilities will be available at the destination: phones, bathrooms, medical service personnel or water.
- Day care centers and school-age programs planning field trips that include an activity where emergency medical care is not readily available and/or activities such as wilderness hiking, rock climbing, horseback riding, and bicycling, must be accompanied by staff who possess a current first aid certificate and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification. This is also best practice for family-based programs.
- Plan for medication administration training (MAT)-certified staff or caregiver and necessary medications to be administered during the trip if applicable.
- Verify that children with disabilities will be able to participate or make appropriate arrangements for their participation.
- Plan lunches/snacks/meals.
- Always have water on hand.
- Bring a First Aid kit.
- Confirm your reservations in advance.

- Consider posting a reminder to parents three days in advance.
- Consider having all staff, caregivers, and children wear certain shirt colors or designs so they can be easily identified in a crowd.
- Consider identification tags for all children that include the name of the school/center and phone number. Tags should not be worn around the neck, nor have the child's name on them.
- Be sure to bring an accurate list of children in attendance. A copy should be also left at the program.
- Checking that the group remains together should be done by putting a list of names to faces, not by counting heads.
- Establish a procedure and bring a sign-out sheet for parents to take their own children home or pick children up from the field trip location.

Things To Do With the Children

- Talk to the children about the trip or activity so they know what to expect.
- Let the children know what your expectations are.
- Set ground rules: invite children to help make a list of safety rules. Write them out using words and pictures, and post them where they are easily visible to the children.
- Talk to the children about what they should do if they become separated from the group.
- Assign children a line partner or "buddy." (The "buddy system" is not a substitute for competent staff supervision or maintaining staff/child ratio.)

Tips on Supervision for Field Trips

- Talk to children about supervision.
- Make eye-to-eye contact with children.
- Take name-to-face roll call every five minutes if you are mingling with the public.
- Ask parents to have children wear a shirt with a certain color/design on the day of the field trip.
- Staff and caregivers are to enter the restroom with the children; try to have male and female staff or caregivers if possible. Never let children enter public restrooms alone.
- Staff and caregivers are to remain attentive to children and avoid distractions.
- All staff and caregivers should know how many children they are caring for and take name-to-face attendance.
- Children age 3 and older should be instructed on the use of the "buddy system." (The "buddy system" is not a substitute for proper ratio supervision.)
- Different age groups should not commingle on trips and maximum group size must not be exceeded.

General Health and Safety

- All staff and caregivers must know who is in their care at all times.
- Establish and enforce simple safety rules. Consistent rules and procedures that are predictable help children feel safe and help the caregiver maintain structure.
- Access to at least one charged cell phone along with relevant emergency phone numbers.
- Always have water, snacks, a First Aid kit, trash bags, attendance sheets/copy of blue cards, a phone list with program information, and staff members on the trip.
- Always have emergency contact information on hand.
- Keep the children's developmental levels and best interest as a priority.
- Be aware of children's allergies.
- Know and follow regulations always.

When You Have an Accident Involving a Child

- First, obtain appropriate medical treatment for the child which may include calling 911.
- Never move the injured child unless qualified medical staff instruct you to do so.
- One staff or caregiver should care for the child while the other caregivers supervise the rest of the group.
- The children take cues from you; if you panic, the children will also panic.
- Consider developing an emergency protocol that can be practiced with the children; the provider can use a specific phrase or sound that indicates that the children should stop what they are doing and stand or sit quietly so that they can hear directions.
- Notify the parent of the child involved; notify New York State Office of Children and Family Services; and if appropriate, notify the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.