

# FIELD TRIP SAFETY



## COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES LICENSING PROGRAM

Fieldtrips provide a wide variety of learning opportunities for children, and expand the children's experiences and their understanding of the world around them. The success of any field trip depends on caregivers planning activities ahead of time.

Planning not only includes selecting the activity and destination, it also includes determining how the group will get there and how caregivers will keep children safe during the entire trip. This involves being aware of potential risks and taking preventive actions to reduce those risks, and prevent serious incidents from occurring. It is the licensee's and/or manager's responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the children at all times.

Clear policies need to be established in order to manage risk in an effective way.

Here are a number of issues to be considered in planning a fieldtrip:

1. Obtain a signed consent from parents for all activities away from the facility. The consent should include the date of the field trip, time of departure and return, destination, purpose of the field trip, and any special considerations, such as consideration for a child with a special medical need.
2. Notify the parents at least 24 hours in advance of any planned outing. Advise parents of the appropriate dress for the activity.
3. Update emergency cards, ensuring parents' emergency home and office numbers are correct.
4. Prescreen all unfamiliar areas where you might like to take children, to note any potential hazards, and decide how to deal with potential risks. This is especially important when you have new staff that may not be familiar with the places you visit. Check regarding the availability of phones, washrooms, water and shaded rest areas, and other considerations such as wheelchair or stroller accessibility at the place of destination.
5. Consider carrying a cellular phone.
6. Make sure your first-aid kit is fully stocked, including emergency cards and/or records. Ensure that emergency and non-emergency medications for children are appropriately stored, readily accessible and all staff are aware of individual care plans for the administration of medication.
7. Establish your route to and from the destination and leave a copy of the instructions behind for staff at the center. That way, if help is needed, center staff or the police can locate you. This is especially important when traveling in rural areas.

OVER ►

South	Central		North
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8. When using the vehicles of parents, volunteers, or staff for transportation of children, make sure there is appropriate insurance coverage on all vehicles, and that all drivers have valid licenses. It is also important to determine if the center's insurance policy covers such occurrences. Ensure that safety requirements for each vehicle class (bus, van, etc.) are adhered to, (such as pre-trip checks of vehicle, vehicle capacity, etc.) Consider developing a policy to ensure staff adheres to safe driving practices while on field trips, including wearing appropriate footwear and no cell phone use while driving the vehicle.
9. Have a highly visible way of identifying children in your care, such as brightly coloured caps or T-shirts for the children to wear when you take them to areas that many other people use (e.g. public swimming pools, water parks, beaches).
10. Continue to use a checklist or attendance record to keep count of the children in each group and ensure that staff know exactly which children they are responsible for.
11. Bring extra clothing, fluids, sunscreen, food, snacks, etc. as required.
12. Discuss rules for appropriate conduct with the children before the trip, and again on the day of the trip.
13. When arriving at your destination choose a well marked area as a meeting place in case you become separated. Instruct children on what to do if they become separated from the group.
14. Be familiar with the children's abilities and personalities, (e.g. how well they swim, do they respond well to directions, how long have you known them). Assign a "buddy" to each child, and have them stay together at all times.
15. Weigh the risk of the activity with the size of the group and the number of staff present.
16. Always maintain the minimum staff to child ratios.