

PAC Chat #5

Field Trip 101

Some of the most anticipated days in the school calendar are the field trips! These days take a lot of planning and preparation by the staff who organize these fun events for the kiddos. One of the biggest factors, when considering how the day will play out, is the supervision of the children while they are offsite. Regular routines are upset, usual safety protocols are not guaranteed, and typical timing for the day is shuffled. The teacher will need adult chaperones (usually family members of students) to meet the requirements of the adult to student ratio, and to help keep the day organized, controlled, focused and safe.

What is your job when helping out on a field trip? What should you do? How can you prep?

Your job, when being charged with the important task of supervising students on a field trip, is to:

- **Follow the instructions of the teacher(s) in charge** – Don't deviate from the plan, or make decisions to change procedures, unless you check in with the teacher. Sometimes things come up (an exhibit is closed for cleaning, or a performance is rescheduled) and plans change, but always check in with the teacher before deciding to change things up. Stay on task & keep the kids focused.
- **Keep in visual contact with all the students who are assigned to you** –Your job is to compulsively count heads to make sure you don't lose anyone during the trip! Take note of what they are wearing, (snapping a picture on your phone is a great way to have that info handy) so you can identify them easily and in case you need to describe them to anyone.
- **Focus on the students, not on the exhibit/activity/performance** - Your purpose is not to see the sights, learn new things or take part in the activity. Oh, that will likely happen, and you will get to have fun with the kiddos, but that will be a residual effect of the day.
- **Pay attention and stay alert** – Listen to/read the instructions from the teacher(s), bus drivers, venue staff and event personnel. Watch for potential safety concerns regarding the event equipment, supplies, transportation, and the public.
- **Give the students kind, gentle instructions/correction about their behaviour** – Encourage your group to keep focused. If you have a student that gets out of hand, contact the teacher in charge. Don't hand out consequences unless you have already been informed on how to handle a situation.
- **Support the group, not just your own child** – Depending on how the groups are arranged, you may not be able to supervise your own child during the trip. (Actually, often teachers intentionally don't put children in their parent's group, so that all kids get a similar experience.) Understand, going in, that this is a class trip, not a one-on-one day out with your little.

Here's some field trip tips...

-Make sure you have the outline of the day, with time expectations. (Where you need to be and when, lunch instructions, location and time of departure etc.)

-Get the teacher's phone # or contact info if the groups will be separated at the venue.

-Get to know the students. Find out their names and something about them!

-Set the tone of the day with your group, by reiterating that you all need to follow the instructions and be responsible citizens.

- Keep calm and be kind.
- Be respectful of the teacher, bus driver, venue staff, event personnel and your environment – encourage the kids to clean up after themselves, say thank you to instructors/presenters, and stay with the group on the bus so that you can oversee their behaviour during the transportation too.
- Have fun!!