

Get Ready,
Get Set, Go!
FIELD TRIP and TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

the first unit in a series on

SUPERVISION

a guide to the protection
of children and providers
in child care settings

DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

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HOW TO USE THIS FOLDER

This folder on ***FIELD TRIP AND TRANSPORTATION SAFETY*** is addressed to anyone who provides out-of-home care to children, and especially to child care providers in licensed homes and centers.*

It has been written to give clear, easy-to-follow guidelines for conducting safe field trips and transportation plans for children. These guides will help prevent incidents that sometimes lead to child abuse/neglect investigations in child care settings. More importantly, following these guidelines will protect children from harm.

The folder pocket contains a step-by-step handbook for planning and carrying out safe field trips and transportation. Read through it first. The pocket also contains all the sample forms that are mentioned in the handbook. You may find these forms useful. They can be copied as needed.

The flaps of the folder, titled **GET READY, GET SET, GO!**, contain checklists. These go along with the companion sections of the handbook. They are quick-reference guides to help you follow safe planning and preparation procedures on your field trips and in your transportation practices. *Master copies of the checklist are in the folder pocket. You should copy these and use them with each trip.*

A trainer's manual is available for **GET READY, GET SET, GO!** It can be used to conduct workshops or inservice training on safe field trips and transportation. This is the first unit in the **SUPERVISION** series, a guide to the protection of children and providers in child care settings, produced by the North Carolina Division of Child Development.

**An explanation of terms:* In this folder the term *facility* refers to both licensed child care homes and centers. Most suggestions and guidelines can be modified to fit any size facility.

FIELD TRIP and TRANSPORTATION SAFETY HANDBOOK

Field trips provide valuable learning experiences for children in child care. Children experience the world with their senses. These concrete experiences are essential for their development. Children welcome the opportunity to be out of their usual environment. Providers welcome the chance to add variety to their daily activity plans.

Transporting young children is a fact of life for many child care programs. It is an important service to families. All providers who offer this service want to be sure that children ride safely in their vehicles.

However, teachers, directors, and parents need to be aware that transporting children and taking them away from familiar surroundings require *careful planning and proactive, protective measures* to insure their safety. Careful planning will greatly reduce the risk of harm or injury to children in your care. It will also reduce liability for yourself and to your child care facility.

Are you confident that you can plan and strictly follow good procedures as you transport children to and from your facility? Are you sure that the field trip you want to take with your children will be fun for all? Will it expand their world? Can it be done safely? If so, you should . . .

GET READY . . .

GET SET . . .

GO!

GET READY . . . advance planning

PLAN AHEAD

What is the purpose of the trip? How does it fit into your curriculum? What concepts will the children learn? Which group of children do you intend to take, and is the planned trip developmentally appropriate for them? It is extremely difficult to plan trips for very young children and few will justify the effort and risk. *For children under the age of three, try to bring the field trip to them.* A storyteller from the library, firefighters with a truck, or a dance or gymnastics instructor are just some of the resources you may be able to invite to your facility. This way you can bring new experiences to young children while keeping them safe in familiar surroundings.

If you are convinced that the trip will be appropriate and worthwhile, be sure to request permission from your supervisor or director. Complete the trip request form for approval.

VISIT THE SITE

How can you be sure the place you plan to visit will be a good field trip? An *advance visit* is highly recommended. This allows you to check the route and find out just how long it takes to get there. Is it a reasonable distance to travel with the children? At the site, check to see if it offers things for the children to see and to do that fit the purpose of the trip. Can you have a good learning experience in the available time? It's always wise to schedule your visit. Learn what rules and regulations you will need to follow at the site. Will you need to pay any fees? If so, decide how these will be paid. Available brochures and posters will help the children to anticipate the experience.

On your advance visit, be sure to look carefully at the physical environment. Locate restrooms, water fountains, and phones. Ask yourself if anything about the site will make supervision difficult. Check all areas for safety, including playgrounds and lunch areas. How would you evacuate your group from the site in an emergency?

For children in your group who may have special needs, does the site provide opportunities for a variety of sensory experiences? Check for accessible ramps, restrooms, and elevators. Check for accessible paved parking areas and paved paths.

PLAN YOUR STAFFING

How many adults will be needed to make this a safe trip? Consider the following factors: What ages are the children, and how many will you take? How many hands need to be held? Does the place you're going present safety or supervision risks that require extra adults? Do you have extra adults to deal with situations that may require individual attention to a child? Volunteers may be helpful, but cannot be counted in the staff/child ratio unless they meet staff health requirements. Remember, *normal staff/child ratios will probably not be adequate to provide safe supervision away from the facility.*

Determine how many adults you will need with First Aid and CPR training. It is a good idea for the facility to have appropriate professional liability coverage for all adults working and volunteering in the program.

TRAIN YOUR STAFF

Orient all adults to the specific responsibilities they'll have on the trip. Assign a specific group of children to each adult group leader. Make sure that each group -- adult leader and children -- rides together on the same vehicle. Each group leader needs to carry the roster and the emergency forms for each child and staff member in the group.

Stress the importance of regularly taking attendance by name and by face including:

- ◆ before leaving the facility and after boarding the vehicle
- ◆ before leaving the vehicle and upon entering the site
- ◆ during the visit and before leaving the site
- ◆ on the vehicle and upon return to the facility

Discuss with your staff what to expect on the trip. Let them know what the timing and sequence of activities will be. Make sure they understand the objectives of the trip, the special things to see and do there, and what to emphasize with the children. They should know of any particular hazards or unique considerations at the site.

Talk with staff about the appropriate guidance of children's behavior. Consider with them how the children may behave differently in unfamiliar settings and recommend appropriate ways to deal with this. Alert them to the risks posed to children by strangers and new places. *Stress that it is their job to protect the children from those risks.*

Talk with the staff who are to remain at the facility during the trip. They need to know who is being left in charge. Staff must know who is responsible for any children remaining behind and guarantee that those children are properly cared for and supervised.

GET SET advance preparations

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE TRIP SITE

Advance arrangements with the site will help make your field trip a smooth one. Send a letter asking to make a field trip to their site. Consider the best day of the week and the best time of day for your visit. Describe the size of your group, the ages of the children, and your objectives for the visit.

Learn the name of a contact person and a phone number at the site. Be sure a copy of this information is left behind at the facility when you go. Confirm your arrangements a few days ahead with the contact person. If needed, make arrangements to have snack or lunch at the site.

INFORM THE PARENTS

Parents must always be informed of a field trip and must provide a signed permission form. Find out if your facility requires a standard liability release to be signed by a parent or guardian. Parents should be made aware of every trip, including the place, the date, the hours, and any fees. They should be told how you plan to travel and the names of the drivers. The best practice is to have a permission form signed for each trip, even if a general permission slip is kept on file. Allow enough time to distribute the permission forms and get them back before the trip. Decide how you will care for any children who do not receive permission to go on the trip. Post a reminder notice of the field trip two or three days ahead in a prominent place.

PREPARE THE CHILDREN

A written activity plan for the field trip guides your preparations. Talk about the field trip with the children -- where you're going, what will happen there, and what they will see and do. They'll be more receptive learners if they have been prepared.

Let children help in setting rules for behavior. Go over simple rules for traveling and visiting a new place. Discuss basic safety precautions. Explain how they will be grouped with an adult leader and that they must stay with their group at all times. If you will use a buddy system, practice it to be sure the children understand how it works.

Prepare identification for each child. This can be done in many ways. Most important is that the facility's name and phone number should be visible, not the child's name. The identification should not distract the child or be easily removed.

PREPARE NECESSARY FORMS

Make attendance rosters of all children who will be on the trip. You may want to prepare a *master list* to be carried by the trip leader, which lists adults with the children in their group and the vehicle they'll be on. You might prepare *group attendance rosters* to be carried by each adult in charge of a group of children. These can be copied and stapled together to form a master roster. These forms must include information about *medical alerts* (asthma, diabetes, allergies, etc.) for children and staff on the trip and *medications* that will need to be administered while away from the facility. Leave a copy of the master list or group rosters at the facility as a record of who is on the trip.

You may want to give each group leader a copy of the master list with their group highlighted, so they know where other children belong if any get separated from their group. Help any adults who are not regulars with your program, and may not know all the children in their group, with some helpful ways to identify those children.

Always carry emergency information forms for each child and adult. This is information in each child's application file that may be copied for carrying when transporting children. Each adult group leader should carry the forms for the children and staff in his/her group. The trip leader should carry *incident report forms*, *emergency telephone numbers*, and a *first aid chart*. If incidents occur on the trip, they must be recorded on the incident log upon return to the facility. A designated adult should carry *permission to administer medication forms* (from parent/guardian) and the *checklist for administering medication*. This adult will administer all medications and transfer the appropriate information to the medication log at the facility.

DEVELOP EMERGENCY PLANS

What will you do if a child becomes injured or ill on the trip? What if a child seriously misbehaves? What if a child becomes separated from the group? Make advance plans for each of these situations. These are reasons to have extra adults along on your field trip.

What if you have a vehicle accident or breakdown on the trip? Arrange to have a back-up vehicle that could be called on quickly if some of the group becomes stranded. If possible, you may want to have an extra vehicle along. Consider taking a cellular phone.

PREPARE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Determine what you need to take with you. Consider the following:

- 1) where you're going and what you'll do there
- 2) how you'll get there and how long the trip will take
- 3) the ages and special needs of the children who are going

- ◆ You must have a **fully equipped First Aid kit** that is easy to carry.
- ◆ Even if you won't be having a meal on the trip, **drinking water in a protective container** is necessary. Don't forget **cups!** You may want to have **juice and snacks**, as well. If lunches are taken, you'll need insulated containers to **keep them at a safe temperature**, whether warm or cool. You may need **napkins** and **trash bags**.
- ◆ For hygiene you'll need **liquid soap and paper towels**, possibly **wet wipes**. If you have any children on the trip who are not toilet-trained, be prepared to change diapers in a sanitary way. Take **gloves, diapers, diapering supplies and changing pad, plastic bags** for diaper disposal and to store wet or soiled things. **Extra** clothes may be needed for some children.
- ◆ **Medications** that will be needed during the field trip must be carried in a **locked container**. Remember that some must be kept cool. **Permission slips** to administer medications and the **checklist** of procedures for administering them must be taken on the trip. Don't forget to make entries in the medication log on return to the facility.
- ◆ On some field trips children will need to be protected against sunburn. Have parents sign **permission slips to apply sunscreen**, and take those. Remember that **sunscreen** has to be treated as a medication and **must be locked up**. Try to apply it before the trip so it is most effective. Wearing **hats** will protect children from sun and heat.
- ◆ Some trips will require special preparation, supplies, and equipment. Carefully anticipate what these might be. A swimming field trip requires (in addition to sunscreen) **suits, towels, plastic bags** for wet things, of course. You also must provide **identification** for children, such as colored wristbands, that is easy to spot.
- ◆ You may need to seat the children on the ground on your field trip. Take along an adequate number of **mats or blankets** so everyone has enough space. Picnic tables are usually not an appropriate size for preschool children.
- ◆ If possible, take a **cellular phone** with a well-charged battery and/or a car adapter. A well-stocked **activity chest** will help pass the time during an unexpected delay.

GO! safe transportation practice

MAKE SURE VEHICLES ARE SAFE

Vehicles used to transport children must be safe and well-maintained. They must be properly registered and insured. The vehicle body must be free of holes and the upholstery should not be ripped or torn. Vehicle condition must be checked regularly -- brakes, tires, fluids, annual inspection. Have vehicles serviced and filled with gas before the trip. Transportation provided through special lease contracts must be approved by facility directors and must operate under the same safety guidelines.

Keep temperatures comfortable on the vehicle. Run the heater when outdoor temperatures are below 50°F; run the air conditioner when temperatures are above 75°F. Test metal parts of car seats, seat belts, and plastic coverings to protect against burns. In hot weather, protect those areas with blankets or towels when not in use.

Age-appropriate child restraint devices must be used and properly fastened. All children under 4 years old must ride in car seats. All older children and adults must have individual seat belts; do not double-up. *Note of caution: Children should not ride in the front seat of vehicles with airbags.* Do not carry more people than the vehicle capacity allows. No one may ride in the cargo area. All doors must be locked and all passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is in motion. All body parts (heads, hands, etc.) must be kept inside.

Vehicles must be equipped to handle health emergencies. A fully-equipped First Aid kit and a fully charged fire extinguisher should be mounted or secured on each vehicle. There must be an adult trained in First Aid and CPR on each vehicle. Emergency information must be on the vehicle for each child and staff passenger. Vehicles must be properly equipped and modified for children with disabilities. Drivers and monitors must be trained to deal with any special needs of the children.

PROVIDE APPROPRIATE ADULT SUPERVISION ON VEHICLES

It is recommended that each vehicle have a minimum of two adults -- the driver and a monitor. Drivers must be properly trained, licensed and center-approved. They must have criminal history clearance. Drivers must practice safe driving habits and should drive at posted speeds. Drivers must have practiced drills getting children out of a vehicle in the

case of an emergency. Drivers must not have taken any medications, drugs, or alcohol in the previous twelve hours that could impair their judgment.

Note: THE DRIVER ALWAYS DOES A LAST PHYSICAL CHECK OF THE ENTIRE VEHICLE TO BE SURE THAT ALL CHILDREN HAVE EXITED.

On a bus or a large van, the monitor should ride in the rear of the vehicle and provide visual supervision of the entire vehicle. In a passenger car or van the monitor may ride next to the driver if all other seats are needed for children (who must not be in the front seat). No food or drink should be consumed while the vehicle is moving. There must be no smoking on the vehicle. If radio or tapes are played, keep the volume down.

The monitor maintains the roster and does attendance checks *by name and face* when children enter and exit the vehicle. It is not enough just to do head counts. A log of children transported and delivered to the designated adult (teacher, parent, or other) is kept by the monitor and filed at the child care facility. Keep pen and paper on the vehicle to record any information to be shared between parents and caregivers.

Each facility should have safe procedures for pick-up and delivery of children. The procedures should be written and given to parents. They should be carried on the vehicles and posted at the facility. Any transportation of children should be authorized by parents. Notify parents of any change of driver or procedures.

Children should be loaded and unloaded from the vehicle away from traffic, on the same side of the roadway as their destination. **All children must be received by a responsible adult when exiting the vehicle --** at the child care center, at home, and at a field trip site.

Note: NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED ON A VEHICLE.

PLAN AHEAD FOR TRANSPORTATION

Before transporting children, be sure to check the weather conditions. Vehicles need to be equipped for bad weather.

Have a clear map and precise directions for each driver. Leave copies of these behind at the child care facility when you go. Also leave a copy of the roster showing which adults and children are riding in each vehicle. Do this for both routine transportation plans and for field trips. You also need to leave behind a contact phone number for the field trip site, if

there is one. Arrange to have a cellular phone for easy communication between the trip leader or driver and the facility.

Be sure that the emergency form for each child and adult is on the same vehicle as that person. Use advance seating arrangements to designate where children will sit. Do not allow children to change places or switch vehicles.

Plan to have a back-up vehicle and driver available in case of an emergency. If needed, then the facility can quickly send a vehicle for help.

PLAN FOR WALKING TRIPS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Plan a route that all adults understand and stick to it. No adult or group should deviate from the agreed-upon route. Leave a copy of the route and plans at the facility.

Adult supervision is required at both the front and rear of the group. Very small groups of children may walk in a cluster with an adult who can see and reach them all.

Plan a way to keep everyone in a group together. Depending on their ages, you may want to have children hold an adult's hand, use a buddy system, or use a "walking rope" knotted at intervals to hold onto.

Using public transportation can present many risks. It also can be fun and teach children new things if planned and carried out carefully. Adults need to know the route well. Know the bus or train schedule so you won't have any unexpected waits. Plan how you will pay fares. Plan to ride when there will not be crowded conditions. Keep the distance and time spent traveling appropriate for the age of the children.

TIME TO GO and TIME TO RETURN

Before you leave the facility, there are last-minute things to do. Children will need to be taken to the toilet and the water fountain one last time. Children will need to be dressed appropriately for the weather, so allow time to put on sunscreen, hats, raincoats, sweaters, coats, mittens -- whatever is required. To get your trip off on the right note, maintain an orderly exit from the facility.

Upon your return to the facility, help the children to exit the vehicle safely and calmly. Take attendance one last time as the children enter the facility. The driver makes a thorough check of the vehicle for any remaining children and belongings.

FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up activities will help the children retain what they learned from the trip experience. Have the children help create and send thank-you notes to the adults who helped. Send a thank-you letter to the field trip site. File information about the trip site for future reference.

SUPERVISION: THE KEY TO SAFETY

To assure the safety of all the children in your care and to safeguard all caregivers against the accusation of neglect or abuse of children, you must follow these most important rules on a field trip and whenever transporting children:



VISUALLY SUPERVISE all children at all times.

Keeping children safe during a trip is a challenging task and must be everyone's priority.



TAKE ATTENDANCE at regular intervals, including each transition point, checking children by both *name and face*. *It is extremely dangerous to lose a child or to leave a child behind.*



PHYSICALLY INSPECT the entire vehicle for any remaining children. This must be done by the *last person off the vehicle*, which is almost always the driver. *Leaving a child unsupervised on a vehicle is extremely dangerous.*

FIELD TRIP & TRANSPORTATION SAFETY CHECKLIST

GET READY advance planning

PLAN AHEAD

- Identify the purpose and concepts (reasons and ideas) for the trip.
- Identify the group of children for the trip.
- Select an appropriate activity site (*form 1A*).
- Request child care facility supervisor's approval for planned trip (*form 2A*).

VISIT THE SITE

- Plan how to get to the site (your way to travel and route).
- Find out the travel time each way.
- Decide if the activities fulfill the purpose of the trip.
- Look for appropriate things for the children to see and do.
- Learn how much time should be allowed for a good visit.
- Learn how much site fees are and decide how the fees will be paid.
- Understand the rules and regulations of the site.
- Obtain brochures, posters, etc. about the site to show the children.
- Check for a safe physical environment (playground, equipment, etc.).
- Locate restrooms, water fountains, and phones.
- Know the field trip site's emergency evacuation plan.
- Ask if various sensory experiences are offered for special needs children.
- Locate accessible ramps, parking areas, paths, restrooms, etc.

PLAN YOUR STAFFING

- Set staff-child ratio for a safe trip -- normal ratios won't be adequate.
- Identify staff and other adults for the trip.
- Plan to have extra adults for emergency situations.
- Plan to have an adult with CPR and First Aid training on each vehicle.

TRAIN YOUR STAFF

- Clearly define each adult's responsibilities on the trip.
- Assign a specific group of children to each adult group leader.
- Assign each group of children with an adult leader to the same vehicle.
- Assign attendance and emergency forms to each adult group leader.
- Stress importance of regular attendance checks by name and by face.
- Discuss the purpose of the trip, sequence of activities, and time schedule.
- Consider how children's behavior may vary in new settings and suggest appropriate guidance techniques.
- Clearly designate who is in charge of staff remaining at the facility.
- Assign supervision and care of all children remaining at the facility.

GET SET advance preparations

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE TRIP SITE

- Send a letter to the site requesting a visit (*form 3A*).
- Choose the best time (day and hour) to make your visit.
- Learn the name and phone number of a contact person at the site.
- Confirm arrangements a few days ahead with the contact person.
- Make snack and/or lunch arrangements if needed.

INFORM THE PARENTS

- Get signature of parent/guardian on *Permission Slip for Field Trip (form 4A)*.
- Post a trip reminder notice in a prominent place 2 or 3 days in advance.

PREPARE THE CHILDREN

- Outline your trip on the weekly *Activity Plan (form 5A)*.
- Discuss the trip; talk about what they will see and do.
- Go over simple rules for travel and visiting.
- Discuss behavior rules and safety precautions.
- Explain and practice a possible buddy system.
- Prepare child identification with the facility's name and phone number.

PREPARE NECESSARY FORMS

- Prepare *Master List / Staffing Pattern* (carried by trip leader) (*form 6A*) and/or
- Prepare *Group Attendance Rosters* (carried by group leaders) (*form 7A*).
- Prepare *Emergency Information Form* on each child (*form 9A*).
- Take *Emergency Telephone Numbers (form 10A)*.
- Take *Incident Report Forms (form 11A)*.
- Take *Permission to Administer Medication Forms (form 12A)*.
- Take *Checklist for Administering Medication (form 13A)*.
- Take *First Aid Chart (form 14A)*.
- Leave copy of attendance roster at the facility as a list of children on the trip.

DEVELOP EMERGENCY PLANS

- Plan what to do if a child is ill, hurt, misbehaves or separated from the group.
- Plan what to do if a vehicle accident or breakdown occurs.

PREPARE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES (in protective containers)

- First Aid kit
- Drinking water, juice, snacks, lunches
- Insulated containers for keeping food at safe temperatures
- Wet wipes, soap, paper towels, paper cups, napkins, tissues
- Diapers, diapering supplies, changing pad, gloves
- Extra clothes
- Plastic bags, trash bags (out of children's reach)
- Medications & sunscreen in locked container(s)
- Equipment and supplies for special trips
- Mats or blankets for sitting on the ground
- Cellular phone

GO! safe transportation practices

MAKE SURE VEHICLES ARE SAFE

- Vehicles must be well maintained; check gas and tires.
- Vehicles must be registered, licensed, inspected and insured.
- Capacity limits must be observed for vehicles.
- Doors must be locked when the vehicle is moving.
- All body parts must be kept inside the vehicle.
- Vehicles need proper restraint systems: car seats for children under age 4; individual seat belts for each child and each adult.
- Vehicles must contain fully-equipped first aid kits and fully-charged fire extinguishers; each must be mounted or secured.
- Vehicles carrying children with special needs must be properly equipped.

PROVIDE APPROPRIATE ADULT SUPERVISION ON VEHICLES

- Drivers must be trained, licensed, and have criminal history clearance.
- Best practice: at least two adults in each vehicle -- driver and monitor.
- Best practice: monitor rides in the back of the vehicle (when practical).
- Monitor keeps roster, checks children on and off by name and face (*form 8A*).
- Strictly follow pick-up and delivery procedures; keep a copy in the vehicle.
- Load and unload children away from traffic.
- Each vehicle needs at least one adult trained in CPR / First Aid.
- Children are NEVER left unattended on a vehicle.
- DRIVER MUST ALWAYS MAKE THE LAST PHYSICAL CHECK OF THE ENTIRE VEHICLE TO BE SURE ALL CHILDREN HAVE EXITED.

PLAN AHEAD FOR TRANSPORTATION

- Check weather conditions shortly before leaving.
- Provide drivers with a clear map and precise directions.
- Leave a copy of the map and directions at the child care facility.
- Arrange for a back-up vehicle in case of an accident or breakdown.
- Carry emergency forms for the children and staff riding on each vehicle.

PLAN FOR WALKING TRIPS and PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- Set the route in advance so all adults understand and follow it.
- Leave a copy of the route and plans at the facility.
- Have adults visually supervise at the front and rear of the group at all times.
- Make provisions to keep all children together.
- Know the transit schedules, fares, and distances before you go.

TIME TO GO and TIME TO RETURN

- Take children to the toilet and water fountain before leaving sites.
- Dress children in needed sweaters, coats, raincoats, hats, mittens.
- Maintain an orderly exit from and return to the facility.

FIELD TRIP FOLLOW-UP

- Plan follow-up activities with children, including thank-you notes (*form 15A*).
- Keep information about the trip site filed for future use.