

Field Trip Safety

Policy

Arrowhead Head Start will ensure the safety of children during field trips.

Procedure

- Parents must sign and return permission forms for each field trip experience to the classroom prior to the trip. Children without a signed permission form will either have to remain home for the day, or parents will need to take the child home during the scheduled field trip times.
- Staff will bring children's Emergency Contacts, a First Aid kit, and any prescribed emergency medications on all field trips.
- Children will wear a tag that includes the name of the Head Start site and program, program address and phone number (not the child's name).
- Staff will meet or exceed adult to child ratios during field trips.
 - 1 adult to 10 preschool children or 1 adult to 4 Toddlers will be present.
 - At minimum, 2 center staff will be present on a field trip even if there are 10 or fewer preschool children or 4 or fewer toddlers. This will ensure that if one child needs the full attention of an adult, another adult is available to tend to the safety and needs of the rest of the group.
 - Depending on the nature of the field trip, adult to child ratios may need to be higher. For example, a swimming field trip would have one to one adult to child ratios.
 - Staff will encourage parent participation and volunteerism.
 - Home Base sites will have at minimum 1 staff with 1 parent or guardian per enrolled family.
- All water related field trips, where children will be in or around open bodies of water such as lakes, ponds, or pools:
 - Staff will have a certified life guard on duty.
 - Every child will have their parent or designated adult within arm's reach at all times.
 - The parent or designated adult will be in the water with their child within arm's reach at all times for field trips that allow children to be in the water.
 - All site staff must participate.
- Field trips that do not meet ratio or water requirements will be cancelled. Staff will make every effort to reschedule and encourage parents and guardians to attend.
- Children who are identified as needing additional support and supervision will have one adult assigned to assist them throughout the field trip.
- All staff will count children immediately prior to leaving, frequently throughout the entire event, immediately before returning, and upon return.
- Staff will minimize pedestrian and traffic accidents during outdoor experiences by:
 - Closely and actively supervising children near traffic and positioning staff accordingly.
 - Having a staff person leading the group and another following at the end when crossing the street with children. Additional adults will be strategically placed within the group.
 - Utilizing traffic flags and/or child walking ropes. Toddlers are secured into strollers by center staff.
 - Teaching children to follow basic pedestrian safety rules, such as to look both ways when crossing the street, but never assuming they will do so.

- Seeking volunteers and parents to serve as extra helpers.
- Ensuring no Head Start family will transport a Head Start child, including their own child, to and/or from a field trip due to liability issues. This excludes Home Based sites.
- For field trips using bus services:
 - Child restraint systems most appropriate for the child's height and weight will be used.
 - Any car seat used by Head Start will meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213.
 - A minimum of one staff will have satisfactorily completed training on the proper use and installation of child restraint systems will be present.
 - An emergency evacuation drill will be completed prior to leaving only if not already completed.
- Staff will be strategically located during field trips to ensure all children are within view at all times.
- A Head Start staff person, not a volunteer, will always accompany children into restrooms during field trips.
- Siblings of Head Start children will not be transported on field trips, excluding Home Based sites and preapproved special events. Siblings attending field trips are the sole responsibility of the parent.
- Head Start families are not allowed to transport any Head Start children, including their own children, to and/or from a field trip, unless the field trip starts and ends at the classroom. (i.e. parents cannot transport children from a designated Head Start site to the location of the field trip.)

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 45 CFR Section 1304.21, 1304.22 and MN State Licensing Rule 3.

Previous policy "Field Trips & Field Trip Safety" created into separate policies titled "Intentional Planning of Field Trips" and "Field Trip Safety".

Approved by Policy Council on August 23, 2016.