

## FIELD TRIP SAFETY

Field trips can be a wonderful extension of early care and education by reinforcing what children are learning or introducing new concepts. As a parent choosing an early care and education program, you should discuss the following field trip procedures with your current or potential child care provider:

- Each group of children on the excursion should have an adult who is solely responsible for their care. The adult should carry a list of the children in her group, emergency contact information for each child, and a first-aid kit.
- Ask what the group size is for children during field trips. Child care licensing standards require a ratio of up to one caregiver per 12 children, depending on the ages of the children and the destination.
- How are the children transported? Texas state law requires all children under 17 years of age to wear a safety belt and children under the age of four and/or less than 36 inches tall to ride in an approved safety seat.
- Does the program have good field trip policies in place? Children should use a buddy system, wear name tags with the program's name and phone number, and be aware of a meeting point should they get separated from the group. A cell phone should be carried with the group in case of an emergency.
- Caregivers should continuously count heads throughout the duration of the outing. Before departure, formal role should be taken prior to leaving the classroom and after loading the vehicle. Upon arrival, a head count should be taken as the children exit and when they return to the vehicle, before departure. Upon return to the center, a final head count is taken as children exit the vehicle and upon their return are to the classroom. A caregiver should be appointed to check the vehicle to ensure all children have departed.
- Can parents volunteer on field trips? Consider being a volunteer when you can. Not only will you get to spend quality time with your child, but you can also serve as an additional set of eyes, ears, and hands to assist the caregivers.

Even if you cannot attend the field trip, you can take action as a parent to ensure a safe and successful outing for your child.

- Know where the children are going, how they will get there, and when they are scheduled to return to the center.
- Sign the permission slip and supply emergency contact information.
- Talk with your child about the field trip and what to do if he or she gets separated from the group.
- Supply older children with change for a phone call and a number where you can be reached that day.
- Provide sunscreen, insect repellent, and appropriate clothing.
- Pack a lunch and/or a drink, if applicable.