

SACERS Technical Assistance Papers
Paper #4: DEVELOPING A PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE THAT
SUPPORTS QUALITY EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL AGE CARE
Examining Perspectives on School Age Care

How We Understand School Age Programs and Out of School Time. As the school age profession has developed over time, two experts in the field have identified three levels of staff understanding which they label “Generations.”¹ According to Ollhoff and Dougherty, staff progress from one Generation to the next as their experience and understanding of quality programming increases. See chart: Summary of the Generations of School Age Care (SAC).

Summary of the Generations of School Age Care (SAC)*

GENERATION ONE. This is the most elementary level of understanding of school age care; it is usually the first level of understanding for adults. This level is associated with the following beliefs:

-  The goal of school age care is to provide a safe place for kids to wait until their parents pick them up. SAC is a holding place.
-  The ideal site is a polite, quiet atmosphere with obedient children. Safety is held up as the key reason to have children in SAC.
-  The job of the adult is to supervise the children so that no one gets hurt. Adults usually do not get involved in the children’s activities. Adults are the police officers.

GENERATION TWO. Because Generation One tends to be sterile and boring, most adults who stay in the field achieve a new level of understanding with Generation Two. New understandings are characterized by the following beliefs:

-  The goal of SAC is to provide a fun and exciting curriculum so that kids will want to continue in the program.
-  The ideal site is a fun site with lots of learning activities. Giving kids the choice of their activities is the primary value.
-  The job of the adult is to create environments that foster creative choice. Adults lead activities and think of new ideas to entertain children. Adults are activity leaders.

GENERATION THREE. Adults who continue to have a passion for children’s welfare often discover SAC as an opportunity for children to learn life skills. Staff reaching Generation Three hold the following beliefs:

-  The goal of school age care is to create a network of families, school, and community to guide and mentor the optimum development of life skills.
-  The ideal site is where children learn peaceful living skills. Children and their social and emotional growth is the primary value.
-  The job of the adult is to teach social skills – and this is usually done through the process of games and spontaneous play. Adults are facilitators of positive development.

*Excerpted and adapted from L. Ollhoff. *Ollhoff Theories #4: How We Understand SA/OST: The Generations (SAC Planning Guide, Ollhoff, L. 2000).*

¹ L. Ollhoff. *Ollhoff Theories #4: Generations of SA/OST*, adapted from *Effective Practices in SA/OST; Developing a Profession* by Nancy Dougherty.

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Developing Best Practices and Higher Levels of Understanding. As programs plan for the future and work to improve quality, it is worthwhile to pause and reflect on the level of SAC understanding represented by program leadership and staff. Share the chart summarizing Ollhoff's and Dougherty's Generations of SAC with colleagues in your school age program (E.g. staff, program leaders, administrators, policymakers, and others). Then, have a meeting to share perspectives on the following questions:

- Which Generation of understanding best describes the current status of staff in your program?
- Do staff in your program have varied levels of understanding of school age care? If yes, what problems or issues can be traced to differences in understanding? What can you do to help staff develop a shared level of understanding?
- Which Generation of understanding best describes the kind of program you want to provide?
- In addition to the understandings identified by Ollhoff and Dougherty, are there additional understandings do you think should be fostered in school age staff? If yes, what are they?
- What understandings would you like to develop in those who lead and care for children in your program to maximize the quality of services provided?

Designing and Implementing Schedules for Balanced Programming²

It is critically important for staff in school age programs to understand the relationship between space, activities offered, and the program schedule. A well designed schedule allows staff to provide a quality program that offers an array of diverse activities, experiences, and choices in a well organized, yet flexible environment. Overall, quality schedules provide a combination of freedom and structure, spontaneity and predictability. How the schedule is designed often determines the extent to which a program achieves its vision of quality programming.

Considerations and Issues to Address When Planning Schedules. There are a number of factors that will influence the program schedule. To plan a workable schedule, staff must consider the program's staff to child ratio, the type of space available, the layout of the space (floor plan of interest and functional centers), and the kinds of activities that will take place. Effective schedules help all these elements of the program to function harmoniously.

Effective schedules are much more than a general list of activities planned for the day. Planning for quality schedules addresses the following issues:

- WHAT activities, experiences, and routines will happen.
- WHEN activities, experiences, and routines will happen.

² Adapted and excerpted in part from R. Newman. *Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care: Trainer's Guide. Developing a Schedule Which Reflects the Needs of School-Age Children.* Union Bridge, MD: Summerwind Communications, 1993. Page 75 – 80.

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- WHERE activities, experiences, and routines will happen.
- WHO will supervise activities, experiences and routines.

While all these issues may not be documented on the schedule posted in the program, each issue is discussed when the daily schedule is developed.

Characteristics of Effective Schedules. Schedules that support quality programming generally have the following characteristics:

- They are paced to meet the needs of school age children.
- They provide simultaneous opportunities for both active and quiet experiences throughout the program hours.
- They allow for changes in plans.
- They allow children to choose from a variety of simultaneous, diverse activities.
- They allow for smooth transitions from one activity to another and before and after routines such as arriving and leaving the program and having snacks or meals.

Types of Activities Supported by Effective Schedules. Effective schedules provide support for a mix of program activities and experiences such as:³

- Daily, varied group and individual activities (short-term activities, long-term projects, life skill development).
- Group meetings.
- Nutritious, tasty snacks.
- Visiting with friends.
- Talking one-on-one with staff.
- Enjoying private time.
- Doing Homework.
- Special events and program visitors.
- Clubs and related activities.
- “Down time” for staff to greet and chat with children, monitor routines.
- Clean-up activities.

See chart: Sample Flexible School-Age Program Schedule.

³ List excerpted and adapted from R. Newman and SD Department of Social Services, Office of Child Care Services. School-Age Certificate Modules: *Exploring Effective Schedules, Diverse Activity Formats, Planning Tools, and Staff Roles*. Pierre, SD, 2004.

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Sample, Flexible School Age Program Schedule

(Designed for a program serving 45 children with 3 staff available for each time block)

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 3:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrival/Greeting/Store Belongings - Self-Service Snack - Outdoor or Indoor Informal Physical Activity Options - Quiet Activity Options (In or Out) |
| 3:30 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group Gathering (Possible Activities: Announcement of session activity options, sharing news, reviewing rules or expectations, brainstorming new ideas for projects and activities, discussing or role playing problems, playing a group game, singing a group song, etc.) |
| 4:00 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Varied Activity Options: Set One (As Follows) - Outdoor Activities – Free Choice Options and Organized Games - Free Choice – Small Group and Independent Activity Options - Planned Activities (E.g. Special Art Project, Science Experiment, Drama Game, Life Skill Activity) - Club Meetings (1 or 2 Clubs – new or continuing, staff or child led) - Homework (as needed) - Special Visitor (optional – 1 or 2 days per week or month) - Community Activities (optional – 1 or 2 days per week. Scouts, Service Projects, Walking Field Trip, Site Beautification Projects, etc.) |
| 4:45 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Varied Activity Options: Set Two (As Follows) - Outdoor Free Choice Options and Organized Games (if weather and light permit) - Indoor Free Choice – Small Group and Independent Activity Options (new or continued) - Club Meetings (1 or 2 Clubs, new or continuing, staff or child led) - Special Projects (E.g. Individual Hobbies, Collections, etc.) - Homework (as needed) - Special Visitor, continued (optional 1 or 2 days per week or month) - Community Activities (optional 1 or 2 days per week) |
| 5:20 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin End of Day Clean-Up (as needed for various activities) |
| 5:30 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finish Clean-Up - Quiet Activities - Departure/Parent Pick Up and Greetings (if parents pick up) |

* Excerpted and adapted from R. Newman. *I.D.E.A.s: Integrated Developmental Enhancement Activities*. Cape Charles, VA: Newroads Media, a Division of Cape Charles Development Company, 2004.

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Planning and Managing Smooth Transitions

Effective programming does not require children to wait for the next activity or event to begin. When children have to spend time waiting for things to happen, they become bored, disinterested, restless, and frustrated; these feelings are breeding grounds for misbehavior and conflicts among children. Staff can use a variety of strategies to help children move smoothly through transitions that occur throughout the session.

Strategies for Easing the Transition from School to the Program. One of the most important transitions is the transition from the school day to the program day. *Technical Assistance Paper #2: Health and Safety* provides detailed suggestions for helping children manage this transition. Listed below are general guidelines for supporting children as they enter the program each day.

- Respect the diverse needs among children: provide varied simultaneous opportunities for children to relax, unwind, burn off pent up energy, chat with friends or staff, have snack or other activities that help children settle in after school (see Sample Schedule).
- Anticipate the needs of children who have difficulty with transitions: provide individualized support to these children when they arrive before or after school (E.g. help children store belongings, facilitate interactions and friendships with other children, help children find a place to relax and settle in, assist children with making a decision about what to do first, etc.). When children come to the program from home in the morning, identify activity options that would help them prepare for the transition to the school day.

Strategies for Managing Transitions During Program Hours. As children change from one activity or experience to another, they often need assistance in making the transition. The following strategies can help children when they are starting or ending an activity, when they are participating in routines such as snack or bathroom visits, and when they are in transit from one activity or routine to the next.

- Provide supplementary short-term self-service activity centers to engage children when they finish activities before others.
- Develop no-prop back pocket games and activities to facilitate movement from one activity to another or to engage children while waiting.
- Incorporate a Maximum Activity Plan (MAP) when playing games. The overarching goal of a MAP is to keep all children involved and engaged in games as long as the games continue. In his book *How to Play with Kids*, nationally recognized play leadership expert Jim Therrell advocates the use of MAPs to ensure full participation in program. Maximum Activity Plans lead to greater participation per child, more positive play experiences for both staff and children, and less waiting around. The level of involvement for everyone at any given time is greater with a MAP. See chart: Implementing a Maximum Activity Plan (MAP) for ideas on using MAPs in your program.

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Implementing a Maximum Activity Plan (MAP)*

The four main methods for fostering a MAP include: 1) Game Selection, 2) Smaller Groups, 3) Rule Innovations, and 4) "IT POWER."

- **Game Selection.** Any games can incorporate a MAP, but it is easier and more effective to choose games that have a built-in MAP. Traditional games like soccer and basketball already have a good MAP; everyone stays actively involved during the game. Most parachute games or "New (cooperative) Games" have built-in MAPs. Softball or kickball, under normal rules, do not incorporate a good MAP. In these games, too many kids stand around for too long in low, uninvolved activity. These games need to be adapted. (See methods for adapting games below.)
- **Smaller Groups.** It is possible to incorporate a better MAP for many traditional games by playing the games in small groups rather than in one large group. For example, if you have fifteen children for kickball or other playground games, consider dividing teams into three groups of five. With smaller teams, when a team is at-kick, each child waits less for a turn.
- **Rule Innovations.** The goal of rule innovations is to increase every child's participation. For example, in kickball, try a rule that says "Everyone has a turn to kick each time the team is up; it doesn't matter whether the team makes 5 outs or no out." After everyone kicks, rotate with the team in the field. By doing this, you've ensured that each player has a turn each time up. Fewer children are standing for less time – no marathon innings. You've also created more movement/running and active involvement.

Other innovations for increasing participation in kickball might include: "Different pitcher (or other positions) at each change of team at kick" so that all children may eventually have a chance to pitch and play different positions (this keeps interest high), OR "Two foul balls is an out" in order to encourage keeping the ball in play so that the game flows without too much interruption.

- **IT POWER.** Play leader, Dr. Bill Michaels, developed IT POWER around the idea of using effective strategies to adapt the challenge level of games for the person who is IT in tag or other chasing games. Adapting the challenge level, higher or lower, leads to optimal involvement and enjoyment for everyone. The age of the children and their commensurate developmental abilities will determine whether you need to raise or lower the challenge level. Staff can adapt the challenge level of games so that children are neither bored (under-challenged) nor over-anxious (over-challenged) by utilizing five main categories for adapting activities:
 1. **Boundaries & Formations** (E.g. Extend or decrease the boundaries or simplify or increase the complexity of game formations, making it easier or more difficult for IT to tag or catch another player)
 2. **Rules** (E.g. Adapt the rules for ITs by increasing or decreasing the challenge for the role of IT)
 3. **Methods of Locomotion** (E.g. Increase challenge by requiring IT to hop, rather than run, to catch someone in a game of tag)
 4. **Fantasies** (E.g. Increase the challenge for IT by introducing the element of fantasy into an ordinary tag game – declare you are playing Fish Tag and require IT to swim like a trout when chasing minnows)
 5. **Number of "ITs"** in the game (E.g. Decrease the challenge for IT and increase the challenge for other players by designating more children to play the role of IT)

* Excerpted and adapted from J. Therrell. *How to Play with Kids*. Austin, TX: Play Today Press, 1992.

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Strategies for Managing Transitions from the School Age Program to Home.

Another important transition that happens daily is the transition from the program into the care of parents. In most school age programs, parents pick children up at the end of the session. The following strategies are helpful in preparing children to make the transition from program to home:

- Give children ample notice for ending activities that require extensive clean-up, calm-down time, or take-down procedures before the close of the program.
- Help children gather items to take home so that children are ready when parents arrive to pick them up.
- Provide engaging, no prop activities and games for children during the last segment of the program; keep children involved in productive experiences until parents arrive.

Promoting Staff Collaboration and Communication

Strategies for Promoting Collaboration, Communication, and Teamwork.

Creating a quality infrastructure for school age programs requires collaboration and close communication among program staff. Listed below are some ways program managers can give staff the support and guidance they need to work together as an effective, performing team.

- Provide training and materials that help staff development a commitment to the program's philosophy, vision, mission, and goals.
- Provide time and space for staff planning and teamwork.
- Provide staff with a wide range of resources to use as they develop plans for daily, weekly, and monthly activities – activity books, research-based articles and books, DVDs, etc.
- Provide staff with guidance and tools for creating daily and weekly plans – planning sheets, calendars, activity evaluation forms, and other forms related to programming.
- Set expectations for effective, cordial communication and cooperation among staff.
- Encourage staff to plan for and play diverse roles while working with children and colleagues (E.g. activity leader, play facilitator, helper, participant, problem-solver, mediator, observer, listener, collaborator, teacher/mentor, role model, coach, cheerleader, etc.).
- Provide opportunities for professional development and leadership on an ongoing basis – program sponsored workshops, state and national conferences, seminars and institutes sponsored by local or state organizations or agencies.
- Create a program environment that incorporates areas where staff can store personal belongings and organize program information and materials appropriately. See *Technical Assistance Paper #1: Effective*

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School-Age Environments, Planning Functional Areas, for more ideas for incorporating needs of staff in the program environment.

Motivating Staff for Quality. Acknowledging and rewarding the contributions and accomplishments of staff are important ways that programs can motivate staff for quality. Research has shown that for rewards to be motivational, they must be linked to excellence and achievement. The field of school age care can adapt strategies from the business world to develop a systematic plan for rewarding achievement and excellence of staff performance. See chart: Ideas for Rewarding Achievement and Promoting Quality.

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Ideas for Rewarding Achievement and Promoting Quality*

Emphasize Achievement. Rewards must be motivational. Reward contributions that are of genuine benefit to the organization.

- *Seek early chances to promote able, younger members of your staff.*
- *Use monetary rewards as flexibly as possible to get the most from their motivational value.*
- *Use task forces to develop your best people. A task force is a high-performance, high-morale team set up to undertake a clearly defined task. It fosters leadership qualities and places paramount importance on achievement.*

Motivate through Change

- *Take every chance to preach quality and practice improvement.*
- *Make one major change, while also going for many small ones.*
- *Change staff roles and responsibilities as needed to keep people fresh and interested in their work.*
- *Ensure that all staff members are involved in quality improving schemes - cultivate the attitude that NOTHING is the best it can be.*
- *Use an approach to change that involves both gradual and radical change. Assess carefully how and when to introduce and implement change.*
- *Always talk with staff in advance about changes that will affect them.*

Provide Additional Rewards for Exceptional Achievements

- *Give performance related rewards, not just pay raises, where possible.*
- *Use certificates, engraved presents, or trophies as reminders of high achievement.*
- *Look first at those rewards that do not cost anything to supply. Possibilities might include:*
 1. *Public Recognition (e.g. handwritten notes, press releases, posted announcements, "home-made" posters, broadcast emails, etc.)*
 2. *Gifts and Privileges (vacations, sports events, local discounts, merchandise, employee of the month reserved parking space)*
 3. *Special Events (weekends away, parties, theater trips)*
 4. *Professional Development (on or off site courses and conferences)*
 5. *Self-development (personal, non-vocational training or workshops)*
 6. *Equipment (computers, cell phones, etc.)*
- *Make contests for nonfinancial rewards as much fun as possible.*
- *Consider financial rewards such as:*
 1. *Salary Increases*
 2. *Commissions and Bonuses (attached to target goals)*
 3. *Performance Related Pay*
 4. *Shares/Stock Options*
 5. *Special Rates (mortgage, insurance, etc.)*
 6. *Family Health Benefits*
 7. *Days Off Related to High Performance*
- *Celebrate success with parties and award dinners.*

* Excerpted and adapted from R. Heller and T. Hindle. *Essential Manager's Manual*. New York, NY: DK Publishing, Inc. 1998. Pages 240, 249

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Maximizing Community Resources to Enhance Your Program

Connecting with community resources is very important to school age children. As they grow towards independence, school age children want to explore the world beyond school, home and family. They want to be part of the “real world.” There are at least four major ways children in school age programs can connect with their communities:

1. They can interact with people in the community who are willing to visit the program and share special talents, skills, knowledge, and skills through one-time visits or performances or ongoing mentoring.
2. They can participate in field trips that allow them to explore community resources at museums, parks, recreation centers, business establishments, service organizations, etc. and follow up on these visits through program activities.
3. They can participate in service projects that help make their community a better place to live, work, and play.
4. They can discover and explore community resources by searching the Internet to learn what about community events and services.

Planning for Community Connections. Think about the community connection possibilities for children in your program and take a systematic approach to planning a variety of community connection opportunities and experiences. Listed below are suggestions to help you get started:

- *Assess the Availability of Community Resources.* Brainstorm a list of individuals, organizations, places to visit, etc. that would be of interest to children. Involve children in the brainstorming process. Create a home-grown “Catalog of Community Resources” with contact information. Involve children and parents in creating the catalog. Scan your local yellow pages to jumpstart your brainstorming and explore your community newspaper. Contact local community organizations and information agencies and request lists of programs and services.
- *Recruit Community Adults with Special Talents, Skills, Expertise, and Knowledge to Share with School Age Children.* Request help in recruiting from parents or others you know who may have access to local celebrities, artists, sports figures, etc. Once you’ve made contact, explore ways each community adult might be interested in connecting with children in your program. Consider developing an on-going mentoring program See Suggested Resources.
- *Arrange Special Events Provided By Visitors to the Program.* There are endless possibilities for working with community adults to provide exciting, engaging special events in school age programs. See chart: Ideas for Special Events Provided by Community Visitors to School Age Programs.

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Ideas for Special Events
Presented By Community Visitors to School Age Programs*

- Multicultural Celebrations (featuring volunteers from community groups)
- Art Demonstrations (featuring painters, potters, fiber artists, glass blowers, sculptors, and others)
- Sports Demonstrations (presented by local teams and individual athletes)
- Nutrition Clinics (presented by Extension Departments or other local nutrition experts)
- Cooking Demonstrations (provided by local restaurant chefs)
- Fitness Clinics (presented by local fitness organizations, businesses, or recreation departments)
- Cheerleading Demonstrations (presented by local college and high school cheerleading teams)
- Gardening Demonstrations and Projects (conducted by local garden clubs)
- Flower Arranging Demonstrations (provided by florists, hobbyists, or garden clubs)
- Building and Design Festivals (demonstrations and building activities conducted by local architects, builders, planners, and/or skilled workers (brick masons, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, etc.)
- Pet Care Festivals (provided by trainers, Humane Society, breeders, veterinarians – with live pets)
- Health Festivals (featuring demonstrations by Dentists, Physicians, and Other Health Professionals)
- Toast of the Town Family Fest (sample dishes provided by local chefs and restaurants)
- Concerts (presented by local musicians and music groups)
- Bird Watching Festival (demonstrations, exhibits, and activities conducted by nature and bird watching clubs)
- Book Fair (provided by the library or commercial book vendors)
- Film-making and Photography Demonstrations and Hands-On Activities (led by local film-makers, photographers, and video producers)
- Drama Presentations (plays, skits, mime artists, street theater, puppetry and marionettes – presentations provided by local actors and theater groups)
- Magic and Clown Shows (presented by local magicians and clowns)
- Local Celebrity Days (presentations by well known people in the community with interesting stories to tell and talents to share)
- Career Fairs (exhibits and demonstrations from selected organizations and businesses in the community)
- Mini-Museum Festivals (featuring small traveling exhibits from a variety of museums, nature centers, etc.)
- Animal Fairs (demonstrations and exhibits provided by local nature centers and/or zoo keepers)
- Public Servant Days (presentations, exhibits, and demonstrations by local government officials and agency representatives)

*Excerpted from R. Newman and SD Department of Social Services, Office of Child Care Services. School-Age Certificate Modules: *Creating Successful Clubs, Special Events and Field Trips in School-Age Programs*. Pierre, SD, 2004.

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- Use the Internet to Connect with the Greater Community. If you have access to the Internet in your program, help children learn about their community by visiting Web sites of government agencies, recreational facilities, parks, arts organizations, businesses, and more. Be sure to monitor children's use of the Internet and ensure that children do not visit inappropriate sites or share personal information with strangers while using the Internet. Research resources for protecting children on the Internet before implementing its use in your program.
- Engage Children in Service Projects. School age children want to make a positive difference in the world. They want to participate in meaningful projects and activities that can help others in the community and in the broader world community. Look for organizations in your community and national or world-wide organizations that can provide opportunities for children to be involved in service learning. Youth expert Barbara Lewis has authored several books related to involving children in service projects. See Suggested Resources at the end of this paper.
- Plan Mini-Field Trips to Locations within Walking Distance of the Program. Even if your program does not have the resources or capability for organizing frequent field trips requiring transportation, there may be many field trip possibilities within walking distance of your program. A walking field trip doesn't have to involve a point of interest or destination. But, it is helpful to choose a focus for the trip (E.g. How many different birds can we hear singing on the walk: What kind are they? Listen for the most interesting sound you hear on our trip and then write a poem or story about it when we return. Look for places of business on our trip – what are they? What do people do who work there? How much trash is strewn on the ground where we take our walk? Does it need to be removed? How could we help keep our neighborhood free of litter?)
- Plan Occasional Bus Field Trips to Off-Site Locations. Lack of time, financial resources, and program vehicles may limit the program's ability to take regular field trips. However, with resourcefulness, creativity, and advance planning, it is usually possible to plan and implement a few field trips each year. Popular trips in school age programs include recreational parks, nature reserves, museums, concerts, tours of factories and large businesses, cultural festivals, celebrations of local heritage and history, and sporting events. Explore the possibilities in your community. When planning field trips, it is critical to do careful planning and to prepare the children for what will happen and what is expected of them. See chart: Field Trip Planning Guidelines for suggestions to help you plan safe, successful field trip experiences.

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Suggested Field Trip Planning Guidelines*

Listed below are basic guidelines for planning safe, successful field trip experiences. Be sure to adhere to your own program policies and procedures when planning field trips. Evaluate each field trip event to ensure that you have taken precautions to keep children healthy and safe.

1. Identify field trip events that are developmentally appropriate for the interests, needs, talents, and readiness of children in your program.
2. Form a Field Trip Planning Club and engage children in helping to brainstorm ideas for field trips and do research on possible field trip sites.
3. Research all field trip sites carefully. Make preliminary visits to ALL sites before making your selections. Select sites that meet the following criteria (and other criteria important to your program):
 - a. The site is conveniently located.
 - b. The site is clean and well maintained to protect children's health (e.g. bathroom facilities are sanitary and well-supplied; food service areas are sanitary, store food appropriately, and provide healthy items).
 - c. The site is free of hazards and is well maintained to protect children's safety (e.g. equipment children may use is free of splinters, barriers are erected to keep children from unsafe areas, areas are free from broken glass and other debris).
 - d. Parking areas are conveniently located near the entrance to the site.
 - e. Exhibit Areas, Demonstration Areas, and Performance Areas are well maintained, easily accessible and visible to children, and comfortable.
4. Check Admission Prices (if applicable) and select affordable field trip events, based on your program budget.
5. Secure maps to the field trip location as well as maps or diagrams of the field trip site.
6. Identify meeting places that can be used when children are at the site (emergency meeting places as well as meeting places that will be used at designated times).
7. Evaluate safety considerations.
8. Select the field trip site.
9. Make arrangements for safe, appropriate transportation to and from the trip.
10. Assess supervisory needs for the trip. Assign additional staff and recruit volunteer helpers/parents, if needed.
11. Develop written guidelines to ensure safety on the selected field trip.
12. Talk with children about the selected field trip. Help children link the field trip to their ongoing interests and other program activities. Help children identify field trip goals.
13. Publicize the field trip to parents. Distribute Field Trip Permission Forms and ensure that parents return forms prior to the trip.
14. Gather and update emergency information for each child. Plan to take original copies of emergency care permission forms with you on the trip (emergency care professionals usually want original copies of signatures). Retain back up copies at your program site.
15. Prepare a First Aid Kit (or Kits for multiple vehicles and groups). Take the kits with you.
16. Prepare a list of "back pocket" activities you can do with children in case of a bus breakdown or other delays.
17. Before the trip, meet with children again.
 - a. Talk about the purpose of the trip and what children can expect.
 - b. Review logistics – when and where you will arrive, meet for snacks or lunch, meet for departure, etc. Introduce adults who will provide supervision on the trip.
 - c. Review and discuss safety rules and guidelines. Encourage input from children.
18. Have Fun! Be sure to share and build on your field trip experience when you return.

*Excerpted from R. Newman and SD Department of Social Services, Office of Child Care Services. School-Age Certificate Modules: *Creating Successful Clubs, Special Events, and Field Trips*. Pierre, SD, 2004.

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Suggested Resources

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