



Tips for Teaching Outdoors: What You Need to Know as Field Trip Helpers

Parents are a valuable resource in outdoor learning.

Here are some things to remember to be the best you can be when helping with an outdoor field trip.

- **Be on time.** Teachers rely on volunteers and if you need to cancel be sure you can find a back-up to fill in for you. Schedules are usually structured in terms of the times and locations of bus pick up and drop off, and program bookings.
- **Come prepared.** Dress for the destination, wear layers and good footwear. Bring water and a backpack to carry extra supplies including hand sanitizer, toilet paper, extra food.
- **Know your job.** Make sure you have the itinerary, know the logistics, and how you will be supporting the teacher on the trip. When things get busy, ask the teacher - how can I help?
- **Be a role model.** Be attentive and listen. Stay positive. Your interest and enthusiasm are infectious. Restrict cell phone use and conversations with other parents while the teacher or program leader is talking.
- **Be an active participant.** Take part in the activities and learning opportunities. Have fun and learn with the kids.
- **Keep them safe.**
 - Remind children of the boundaries when they push them.
 - Keep your own and the students' safety in mind. Defer to the teacher with any dangerous behaviour or serious problems.
 - Stand close to a child who is having a hard time following the rules. Stop unsafe behaviour.
- **Help support learning.**
 - Learn children's names.
 - Honour each child by keeping information you learn about students' relationships, abilities and background confidential. Spread the love – not only to your child.



BC Parks



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- Invite students to come back after they have been distracted.
- Let the children explore.
- Ask permission - Can I help you zip your coat? Do you need a hand?
- Give think time. Allow lots of time to answer questions.
- Offer extra information or another way to look at things.

You are not expected to know all the answers. This learning is about finding the answer, or the next question, together.

Questions to ask that guide student inquiry:

Some examples of great questions to use when working with students:

- What do you think?
- Why do you think that?
- How do you know?
- Can you tell me more?
- Are you curious about anything else?
- What do you see?
- How is it the same as? Different than?
- What does this remind you of?
- Do you notice anything surprising or unusual?

Questioning strategies should embrace the following:

Good questions are:	Avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thought-provoking (they stimulate thought and response) ▪ Clear and brief (stated in as few words as possible in a way that students understand what is meant) ▪ Followed by wait time (at least 5-10 seconds of silence after the question, often more with young children) ▪ Purposeful (asked to achieve a specific purpose) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes-No (did you go to the woods today?) ▪ Vague (doesn't give students a clear idea of what is asked for: "Tell me about the wildlife in the woods.") ▪ Tugging ("Come on, can't you think of any animals in the woods?") ▪ Guessing (encourages speculation rather than thought: "How far do you think the badger travels at night?")

Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company.

