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Making the Most of Field Trips

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Field trips can be a fun way for children to learn as they explore different places outside of the classroom. Children find field trips to be exciting—they get to go somewhere, see new sights, and learn new things. Some common places where children go on field trips include: a park, a zoo, an aquarium, a planetarium, a museum, an historical landmark, a factory, or a farm. Field trips can be in the local community or at a distant location that would require children to travel. Some field trips are just for the day, while others are for a period of several days.

Before the Field Trip

Below are some tips for helping prepare your children for going on a field trip:



- **Read up on where your children are going so that you can talk to them about the upcoming trip.** This can help to make them feel more comfortable as well as get them excited for their new adventure. If possible, you may even want to visit the destination beforehand to familiarize your children with the location.



- **Talk to the teacher(s) ahead of time to make sure that your children will have everything they need for their field trip.** These items can include things like medications, money, a packed lunch, or certain clothing. For example, the students on the field trip might have special shirts to wear, like shirts that are bright-colored or have the school logo or name on them. This can make it easier to identify all the members of the group and to keep everyone together.



- **Be sure to emphasize to your children how important it is to stay with the group at all times.** The “buddy system” is a way to keep everyone in pairs and within



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the larger group. Your child will stay with another child, and they will look out for each other throughout the entire field trip.



- **Let your children know that behavior rules on a field trip can be different than the rules in other places.** For example, if the class is visiting an art museum, you may want to explain to your children what *rare* and *fragile* mean, and that the museum has many of these special pieces that no one is allowed to touch.



- **Try to model good manners in different public places,** and have your children role-play these skills with you or practice them with helpers in the community, like a waitress, store clerk, or a ticket-taker at the movies. Practicing these social skills ahead of time can help your children be prepared for similar situations during a field trip outing.

After the Field Trip

After your children come home from the field trip, the learning does not have to stop! There are things that you can do to help reinforce

their experiences. You can ask questions about where they went and what they did while they were there. Have your children talk about the events of the trip. You could also have them draw pictures about the trip, write a story, make a clay sculpture, or maybe act out something they learned. These things will all help your children to better remember the newly learned information from their field trip.

Also know that you don't have to wait on your children's class in order to go on a field trip—you can take field trips with your family! These outings do not need to be expensive...you can watch a puppet show at the library, have a picnic in the park, or deliver a letter at the post office—learning opportunities are everywhere!



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