

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre

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Field Trips for Young Children

Considerations when planning field trips

This resource has been developed to support child care programs to plan for successful experiences when heading out on an adventure away from the child care setting. While the points below have been reviewed with many sources, it is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to offer guidelines and suggestions. Please ensure that you comply with Licensing regulations and your organization's policies when planning field trips for young children.

Research your destination

- It is recommended to visit the site prior to your trip. Check out the location from a safety and age appropriate perspective. Check for accessible washrooms and a supply of running water.
- Taking smaller groups of children, instead of the whole group, on a field trip is sometimes preferable; the same destination can be visited by all, but on 2 separate occasions.
- Consider why you are taking the children on any field trip. Is it relevant to your children's ages, abilities and interests?
- Some destinations require closer supervision; consider extra parent/volunteer involvement.
- Is there a best time to visit to avoid other large groups?
- Consider how you will reach your destination and any safety concerns you may encounter in getting to and from it.

Before you go

- Assign staff to smaller groups of particular children – they will be responsible for monitoring these children throughout the trip and doing regular headcounts.
- Ensure that you have signed consent forms for all children participating in the field trip.
- Ensure that you have adequate adult supervision.
- Consider identifying the children in your group in some way (matching T-shirts or vests).
- Discuss simple safety rules with the children before trips.
- Develop a transit protocol – ex. boarding and exiting buses, appropriate insurance/licenses
- Ensure you have child safety restraints appropriate for a child's age and weight if you are travelling by private vehicle.

- Develop a food policy and share with all parents/volunteers on the trip – ex. no purchasing or sharing food with children, except food which is provided by staff. This is especially important when considering allergies.
- If appropriate for your centre, place a notice including a destination map, cell phone number and expected return time on the centre door for parents.
- Be sure you have a comprehensive missing child policy and all staff are familiar with it.

Remember to bring

- Children’s emergency consent cards, photos of children and emergency telephone numbers – keep this information up to date.
- A recently charged cell phone
- A first aid kit
- Sunscreen and hats, if sunny and warm
- Plastic bags for wet or soiled materials
- Extra clothing
- Hand wipes
- Food and drinks
- A camera

During the trip

- Count heads frequently – be aware of where the children are at all times.
- Be aware of your surroundings from a safety perspective.
- Make sure everyone – all adults and children – are aware of rules and responsibilities.
- Designate an emergency meeting place.
- Maintain basic hygiene – wash hands after handling animals.

Field Trip Destinations

In compiling this list, we have included some interesting new places to visit, along with the tried and true. They are all suitable for licensed group child care centres and preschools with children aged 3 – 5 years old, and are in the Metro Vancouver area. Smaller group sizes and higher adult to child ratios may be required for some destinations.

Birchwood Dairy Farm – family operated dairy farm, tours demonstrate how milk gets from the cow to the grocery store, farm animal area, country market

www.birchwooddairy.com

Abbotsford 604-857-1315

Capilano Suspension Bridge Park – suspension bridge, trails, First Nations culture, educational programs

www.capbridge.com

North Vancouver 604-985-7474

Cartwheels Inc – gymnastics, specialized preschool equipment

www.cartwheels.ca

Richmond 604-275-0020

Surrey 604-594-1555

Cates Park – waterfront trails, beach, tidal pools with sea life, green spaces, playground, totem poles

www.deepcovebc.com/parkscatespark.html

Deep Cove, North Vancouver

Crab Park at Portside – expansive green spaces, playgrounds, views of Burrard Inlet, North Shore mountains, Vancouver’s working port with a heliport, SeaBuses, and ships

www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-gardens-and-beaches.aspx

Scroll down to the Find a Park by Location map and click on Downtown.

101 East Waterfront Road, Vancouver

GardenWorks – offers tours and workshops year round with projects that are geared to helping kids learn about plants, bugs and gardening. The projects range from seed planting to worm composting, from feeding the birds to potting up vegetables and flowers.

www.gardenworks.ca/hours-locations/burnaby-lougheed

Burnaby, 6250 Lougheed Hwy 604-299-0621

Greater Vancouver Zoo – previously known as Vancouver Game Farm

www.gvzoo.com

Aldergrove 604-856-6825

Grouse Mountain – skyride and nature shows (requires higher adult/child ratio so will be more costly; may require parent/centre financial contribution or consider taking smaller group)

www.grousemountain.com

North Vancouver 604-980-9311

Honeybee Centre – bees & bugs lab, glass observation hive, educational programs

www.honeybeecentre.com

Surrey 1-877-975-2337

King George/Cambie Community Park – waterpark, playgrounds, picnic area

www.richmond.ca

Richmond

Maplewood Farm – hands on experiences with farm animals, feeding, demonstrations

www.maplewoodfarm.bc.ca

North Vancouver 604-929-5610

New Brighton Park – playgrounds, beach, picnic sites, green spaces, views of waterfront industries

www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-gardens-and-beaches.aspx

Scroll down to the Find a Park by Location map and click on Sunrise.

Vancouver

Queen's Park – waterpark, playgrounds, petting farm, green spaces
www.newwestpcr.ca/parks/community_parks/queens_park.php
New Westminster

Richmond Country Farms (The Pumpkin Patch) – pumpkin patch, hay ride, farm animals, music
www.countryfarms.ca
Richmond 604-274-0522

Richmond Nature Park – plants and animals in bog, forest and pond habitats, interactive Nature House, educational programs
www.richmond.ca/parks/naturepark/about.htm
Richmond

Science World – interactive science activities, including Kidspace especially for 2 – 6 year olds
www.scienceworld.ca
Vancouver 604-443-7440; to book a group visit call 604-443-7500

Southlands Heritage Farm – pumpkin patch, farm animals, vegetable gardens, educational programs
www.southlandsfarms.com
Vancouver 604-261-1295

Stanley Park – forest trails, beaches, waterpark, playgrounds, picnic areas
www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/stanley-park.aspx
Vancouver

Terra Nova Adventure Play Environment–The Terra Nova Adventure Play Environment is a play experience unique to the Lower Mainland
<http://www.richmond.ca/parks/parks/about/amenities/park.aspx?ID=116>
Richmond

Theatre – children's plays presented by companies such as Carousel Theatre and Greenthumb Theatre
www.carouseltheatre.ca and www.greenthumb.bc.ca
Vancouver

UBC Farm (Children's Learning Garden) – sustainable working farm, organic food gardening
www.ubcfarm.ubc.ca
Vancouver 604-822-5092

Vancouver Aquarium – aquatic life displays and activities, whale shows, penguins, Amazon Gallery
www.vanaqua.org
Vancouver 604-659-3474

Vancouver beaches – especially where there is shady grass and picnic areas (Jericho Beach, Trout Lake)
www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/beaches.aspx
Scroll down to read individual beach descriptions.
Continue scrolling to find **wading pool** and **waterpark** information

Vancouver outdoor playgrounds

www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/playgrounds.aspx

Click on Find outdoor playgrounds in Vancouver.

Click on individual playgrounds for detailed descriptions.

Vancouver parks

www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-gardens-and-beaches.aspx

Scroll down and click on individual parks for detailed descriptions.

Vancouver Public Library - 22 locations across the city of Vancouver, book ahead for a storytime or a library tour. Storytimes include: songs, rhymes, fingerplays and engaging stories for young children.

www.vpl.ca

Vancouver 604-331-3603

Westham Island Herb Farm – vegetable gardening, pumpkin patch/harvest festival displays, market

www.westhamislandherb.ca

Delta 604-946-4393

Transportation: Bus Services

The following bus companies have been used by some Metro Vancouver child care centres. The list is not comprehensive but should be helpful if you're not sure where to start when booking transportation for your preschool or child care centre's field trips.

Thirdwave Bus Services

www.thirdwavebus.com

604-247-1221

Lynch Bus Lines

www.lynchbuslines.com

604-439-0842

Vancouver School Bus Charters Ltd

www.vancouver-schoolbus.com

604-564-0807

International Stage Lines

www.islbus.com

604-270-6135

For more in-depth information consult

- your child care licensing officer
- Westcoast INFORM Guide – Chapter 6 (Westcoast Marketplace and Westcoast Library)
- Planning an Effective Response to Critical Incidents (Westcoast Marketplace)
- Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre Library

We hope this information enhances your trips and encourages your spirit of adventure!