Planning an excursion in early learning.

Excursions run by an early learning service can have many benefits for the children involved. It's a change in their usual routine at the service and can create unique learning opportunities.

However, removing children from their relatively familiar and predictable environment creates additional risks for a service to identify and manage. Thorough planning is essential!

Additional risks may exist when on an excursion because

- You're in an unfamiliar environment and it may be difficult or impossible for you to alter or control the environment in terms of safety factors. For example – if there's no fence around a lake in a park, you won't be able to erect one to reduce the risk of a child entering the water.
- Transportation will be required. It may be in a vehicle such as a bus or it may be on foot if walking to the location. Regardless of the mode of transport used, this transport will present new risks.
- You'll possibly be in the presence of members of the public. This can create risks such as children getting lost in a crowd or wandering off with other people.

Tips for planning a safe excursion

- Be sure your insurance will provide the right cover for your excursion. If you hold a Guild Insurance Early Learning Business Insurance policy, you need to be aware that as of December 2024, new exclusions were added in relation to high-risk activities. High-risk activities that will no longer be covered includes, but isn't limited to, merry-go rounds, air filled castles, water slides, theme parks and pony rides. For the full list of exclusions, please refer to your policy wording or speak to your account manager.
- It's a requirement under the Education and Care Services National Regulations that a risk assessment be carried out prior to the excursion. You need to note the risks which have been identified and assessed and how you intend to manage them. An excursion risk management plan template is available from the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Your risk assessment isn't limited to, but must include the following:

> the proposed route and transport for the excursion.

> water hazards.

> the number of children and adults attending and any special skills required from the staff.

> the proposed duration of the excursion and activities to be undertaken.

> items to be taken, such as a first aid kit and emergency contact details.

> Consider visiting the site while planning and conducting your risk assessment. This will provide you with a better understanding of how safe the site is and what the risks are.

> Obtain written authorisation from a parent or another person named on the child's enrolment record as having this authority. This is to be done after the risk assessment has been completed. Be sure the authorisation contains the required information as set out in the National Regulations.

> Adhere to the required educator-to-child ratios. While there's no requirement to increase this ratio for an excursion, following your risk assessment you should consider if additional staff or volunteers may be warranted.

> Create a plan for how you'll verify attendance numbers at various stages throughout the excursion.

> The National Regulations require all early learning services have a policy regarding excursions. Be sure your staff are aware of this policy and refer to it when planning an excursion.

ACECQA and state-based regulatory authorities provide a great deal of information to assist services understand and adhere to regulations.

For further information please visit **acecqa.gov.au** or **acecqa.gov.au/contact-your-regulatory-authority**.

1800 810 213
guildinsurance.com.au

Guild INSURANCE

Don't go it alone