

Tips for PWLC Chaperons

“If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder ... he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.”

From The Sense of Wonder by Rachel Carson



Thank you very much for taking the time to chaperone a field trip to the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. Your child's teacher, the PWLC staff, and most of all, your child appreciates your participation!

Your child's teacher or a PWLC staff person will organize the class into several small groups, one for each chaperone present. The more chaperones that can help out, the smaller the group size will be and the better quality experience you, your child, and the whole class will have. The ideal ratio is one chaperone per five students.

Teachers are asked to provide students with nametags so that you and PWLC staff can call on them by name, allowing for more effective management of the class.

We ask you to take an active role in this field trip. Please help your small group of students with following directions, raising their hands, and quieting their voices when needed. PWLC staff will direct the class as a whole, distribute equipment to chaperones, and provide trail leadership. Your help is especially needed to follow-through on instructions with your small group of students.

Please allow students to make discoveries for themselves. Instead of showing them where they can find what they are searching for outdoors, join them in their spirit of discovery, or guide them to it without giving it away. Prompting them with questions helps, as does modeling the behavior you are expecting from them. Children thrill at their own ability to find that monarch, gopher mound, or snowflake. Doing so increases their motivation for learning.

Don't worry if you don't know the names of plants and animals in the prairie. PWLC can help with that as needed. Your companionship is far more important than your knowledge of facts for this trip.

Please also allow students to answer questions asked by PWLC staff. We try to provide them with 10 seconds or more to think and answer questions. Ten seconds sometimes seems like an eternity, especially if you are excited and already know the answer. However, given adequate time or re-phrasing of the question by staff, they will get there.

Thank you for your patience with their young minds and hearts! We look forward to your visit and to exploring the prairie together with your child!