ACTIVITY LEADER HANDOUT

Field Trip Teaching Hints

If you have any apprehensions about leading a group of children away from the classroom, relax! There are several techniques you can use to help keep the group's attention and maintain the feeling of freedom and open exploration.

Be Prepared

For a more fulfilling experience come prepared by becoming familiar with the activity you will teach in the "Read-Do-Ask" format and the *Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge's Resources* sheet. Practice presenting to friends and family before the field trip. The more comfortable you are, the more comfortable the students will be.

Remember you are the adult leader prepared to conduct this activity. On the day of the field trip, after staff orients you to the site, become familiar with the equipment and materials you will be using while the students are at the opening field trip activity.

Awaken Enthusiasm

Be energetic and interested in what you are teaching and the students will be engaged and interested. As the leader, you set the tone for the experience.

Focus Attention

Students tend to exhibit more energy when out of the classroom. Make eye contact with individual students when conducting the activity. Call on students by name and get up close to them to get their attention. Use silence as a way of getting everyone quieted down and be sure to find out the special signal used by the teacher to indicate silence. If disruptions arise get the teacher's help.

Speak With the Group

Introduce yourself to the group. Speak loudly and clearly, facing the group. You should be the one facing the sun and the wind, not the students, allowing the students' backs to be towards these elements. When you stop to look at something, before talking, gather the group around you with everyone facing toward the object of attention.

Acknowledge Respectful Behavior

Encourage students to engage in cooperation by working together, in caring and respect by showing concern for others and the environment and in responsibility by being accountable for their individual actions. Be sure to thank students whom you observe being respectful of nature and others.

Demonstrate

Demonstrate an activity as you explain it. Follow the "Read-Do-Ask" teaching format. Keep your explanations and vocabulary simple.

Learn From Your Mistakes

Be prepared to make mistakes. Learn from the things that didn't work well and those that did and change your plan accordingly. After each rotation assess what happened with the group. Be open to what the students can teach you.

Encourage Participation

Encourage thinking and group interaction by asking students questions instead of giving information. For example, " Why is there a hole in the ground here?" " How did it get there?" "What would you need to live here if you were a_____?" Praise students for contributing to the discussion whether or not their comments or answers were correct.

Use Patience

Students will appreciate and remember an answer better if they come up with the answer on their own. Make sure to allow time (at least 10 second count) for students to think about an answer to your question before giving the answer.

Arouse Curiosity

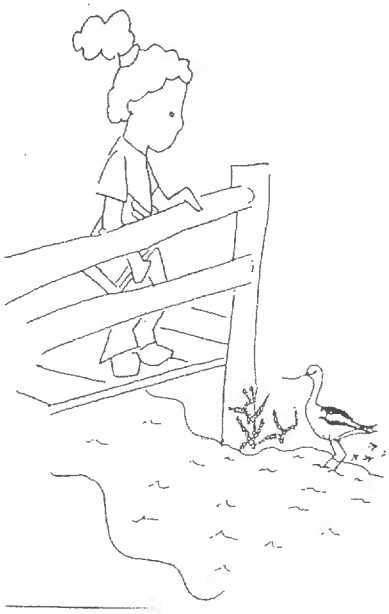
While they look, listen and discover what nature is doing around them, listen to the students' questions and comments. If they come up with questions that you cannot answer have them ask the question at the closing activity, ask the teacher, or look up the answer back at school.

Be Flexible

Utilize the magic moment. While in the middle of conducting your activity an animal appears, an egret, rabbit, duck, etc. take advantage of this opportunity for the students to observe and talk about it.

Wrap-Up the Activity with a Discussion

At the end of an activity be sure to pull it all together with the summary questions ("ask" format) at the end of the activity.

Have Fun

Relax and enjoy the students! Have a sense of humor about yourself. Spark their imaginations.