

# **THE CHILDREN'S NATURE INSTITUTE®**

## **Docent Assistant / Chaperone Guidelines**

**Everything you do sets an example. Please be respectful in your words and actions.**

### Before the day of the walk – 5 minutes

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1. Call your walk leader before the walk, introduce yourself (if you do not know him/her) and ask how you can help.

### At the beginning of the walk – 10 minutes

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1. Help the walk leader collect donations on Family Walks. You can make change or offer to accept checks. No one is turned away if they are unable to give. Proceeds from family walks help fund free fieldtrips for at-risk children.
2. Make sure walkers sign the liability release form. Make certain that their writing is easy to read.

### During the nature walk - Ongoing

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1. **Safety** is your primary concern!

Help your walk leader maintain our nature walk rules:

- ⊗ Everyone must stay on the trail.
- ⊗ Everyone must stay behind the Docents and ahead of the Chaperones.
- ⊗ NO sticks.

Keep your eyes on pregnant moms, babies in backpacks and children who are not closely supervised by their parents. If there is a drop off, slippery section, water, or other potential hazard on your walk, help the walk leader stop the group at least five feet before the hazard. Help her/him announce the danger and tell parents firmly that they must hold their child's hand or restrain them in a backpack or stroller. Visually check each parent-child group before proceeding on the walk. If a parent cannot keep their child safe, you may politely ask them to sign out and leave the walk. If you are far from the parking area and are concerned about their safety, you may escort them back to the starting point of the walk.

2. A Chaperone **stays in the rear** so the leader knows when he/she sees you there are no other hikers behind you. When the distance between the leader and stragglers becomes too great, it is the Chaperone's job to inform stragglers that it is time to catch up. A Chaperone may ask a parent to carry a child or put him/her back into the stroller in order to catch up with the rest of the group.

Stragglers usually occur when:

- a) a child is not a good walker
- b) a child decides to push the stroller him/herself
- c) the leader does a lot of interpreting without regard for the rear
- d) the Chaperone decides to interpret for the stragglers or for their own child. (This really slows things down.)

**Most importantly, have a good time!**

## FAQ

**Q:** May I bring my children?

**A:** Most of the time it works very well to include your child. If your child has a very active temperament or is going through a stage when he/she requires close to 100% parental focus, you might consider the following options:

- a) Bring a friend to help you.
- b) Arrange for an additional Chaperone by calling names on the volunteer roster. (Check with your Walk Leader or the Program Coordinator, if you need possible names.)

**Q:** May I administer first aid or CPR in an emergency?

**A:** You are legally not allowed to administer First Aid or CPR unless you are currently certified. The Children's Nature Institute recommends CPR and First Aid training for Chaperones, as well as Walk Leaders. *It should be made clear that you are acting under your own certification and not under the auspices of The Children's Nature Institute.*

IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL US  
Mon-Fri at (310) 860-9484.

**Welcome to The Children's Nature Institute family!**  
**Please keep our mission in mind when you volunteer.**  
**We hope you have fun, learn more about nature and meet new friends.**