Responding to Problems on Trips

Think about how you would respond to problems on trips away from the building. Print the activity. Answer the questions. Talk about your responses with your supervisor, trainer, or coach.

Your school-age summer care program is located within walking distance of a neighborhood. Many of the children live in this neighborhood and their families walk them to and from the program. Jana, a first grader, arrived very upset this morning and has not cheered up. You are walking the children to a nearby bowling alley this morning. As your group is walking, a few children notice a new bird’s nest in the tree. The children are so excited; you and your co-teacher take turns lifting the smaller children to see into the nest. You take a headcount before beginning to walk again, but your count is one child short. Your co-teacher counts, too, and confirms a child is missing. You quickly consult your roster. Jana is no longer with the group. You suspect Jana has started walking towards her house (or where she thinks her house is).

1. How do you respond to Jana’s disappearance?

   *Quickly scan the area. Use your walkie-talkie or cell phone to immediately notify your administrator. Jana is at serious risk, and you must take immediate action.*

2. What is your plan for notifying administration and/or authorities that a child is missing?

   *Notify the administration immediately. If you cannot see the child, you must notify authorities (police, security police). Provide the child’s name and address. They will send a patrol to look for the child.*

3. How do you maintain ratio and safely escort the rest of the children back to the classroom?

   *When you notify an administrator, make sure another adult comes to help supervise your class. If you are involved in reporting the missing child or looking for her, you will not be able to keep the other children safe.*

4. What is your plan for notifying parents?

   *Call Jana’s family immediately after notifying authorities.*

5. What can you do in the future to prevent such incidents?

   *Make sure each adult is actively supervising at all times. Improve communication between you and your co-teacher. You should not both be so engrossed in activities that you cannot visually see all children at all times. Recruit volunteers to assist on trips away from the building. If you divide children, make sure adults know who they are responsible for watching.*
6. What other concerns do you have?

*Prioritize responsive caregiving for Jana. Talk with her earlier in the day about her feelings. Find out what is wrong. Adapt your supervision to meet her needs. If she is angry or upset, stay close.*

Your group of school-age children is on a field trip to a local nature preserve. Suddenly, Sheridan screams out and begins to cry. When you ask what’s wrong, he says a bee stung him. His face begins to swell.

1. If you know Sheridan has a Health Care Plan, what do you do?

*Follow the instructions on the Care Plan. You should have his emergency medications (epi-pen) in your field trip emergency kit. Follow directions. Follow his Care Plan for notifying parents and/or EMT.*

2. If Sheridan does not have a Health Care Plan, what do you do?

*This is a life threatening event. Use your cell phone to call EMT immediately.*