

# Caregiver Orientation

Involvement of and support from parents and/or caregivers sets the tone for the group as a holistic approach to prevention education. Having caregivers involved promotes healthy interaction between the child and their caregiver(s), it provides insight into the home lives of Participants, and provides opportunities to refer Participants and caregivers to outside services, if necessary. The caregivers' orientation ideally happens prior to the first session. At the end of the orientation, allow caregivers to complete necessary forms and permissions slips for the child to participate in the program.

**Length of Orientation:** 30 – 45 Minutes

Keep in mind that many of the caregivers will be coming to the orientation after a long day of work. Try and keep the orientation short, yet informative so that they have a clear understanding of the program and ample time to complete the necessary forms.

## Materials:

- Participant Permission Slips
- Sign-in Sheet
- Pens
- Outline of Planned Topics and Content
- Calendar of Special Events
- Resource packets—directory of local community organizations and service agencies (optional, but highly encouraged)
- Light Refreshments and Snacks (optional)

**Setting:** The orientation should take place in a quiet setting where caregivers can comfortably receive information about the program and sit in an area conducive to completing the necessary paperwork. An acceptable facility for the orientation could include a lunch or snack area with picnic tables or an auditorium with chairs and tables.

## Procedures:

1. **Welcome caregivers to the program!** This is a time for parent figures: mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather, foster parents, guardians, and others to familiarize themselves with the program and Facilitator, encourage questions!
2. **Briefly introduce yourself.** Include information such as why you wanted to facilitate the program or why you like or believe in it. Share your goals and expectations, and any exciting activities, guest speakers, or trips planned. Try to avoid sharing information that may be too personal to keep the focus on the program.

3. **Discuss the purpose and goal of the program.** Be sure to keep in mind the intent of the program and the need for the program at your site. Review Participant expectations (respectful, confidentiality) as well as the disciplinary policy for your site.
4. **Introduce the program themes.** Provide an overview of the program's three overarching themes (Empathy, Empowerment, and Equality) and review a few of the planned activities. Be sure to explain why topics that may initially seem sensitive are being taught and the purpose of discussing such topics. Share with the group how the topics gradually progress and are interconnected, thus consistent attendance is important.
5. **Share the schedule** with caregivers emphasizing events such as field trips, talent shows, and graduation. Be sure to share program logistics such as the time, meeting place, and daily overview.
6. **Discuss caregiver involvement** and stress how their support sets the tone for the program. Inform caregivers that there will be selective opportunities for them to volunteer. Communicate to caregivers the importance of upholding a "safe space" for the Participants where they each feel comfortable sharing their feelings and thoughts.
7. **Distribute and explain the resource packets.** These packets should be a directory of local community organizations and service agencies in your area (optional, but highly encouraged).
8. **Open the floor for questions and comments.** Let caregivers know, you and the hosting agency's director, if applicable, are available at any time to answer questions or comments.
9. **Distribute and collect permission slips.** It is highly recommended that all forms of communication, verbal and written, be in the language spoken by the caregiver(s) in the home.
10. **Thank caregivers** and welcome their feedback or suggestions throughout the length of the program.

