

Foundational Supports

Tips for Leaders

Get to know the child

- Focus on the child's personality, unique strengths and interests - not their disability
- Don't make assumptions or define anyone by a particular behaviour or interaction - build a positive relationship based on who the child is, not how they handle difficult situations

All children should feel welcome

- Greet and treat every child with the same level of enthusiasm and warmth
- Shut down gossiping, bullying and negative conversations
- Support program participants to interact and build connections with each other

Be respectful

- Listen carefully to the language used by the child and family; ask if you should use the same terms or phrases
- Always talk directly to the participant - even if a family member or support worker is with them or they need assistance to communicate
- Make sure participants are prepared before entering their personal space
- Assistive devices are considered part of a person's physical space - do not touch or interfere with them without asking for permission first

Creativity has no limits

- Keep an open mind and be willing to try new ideas and approaches
- Use your creativity to try out possible solutions, instead of dwelling on challenges
- Not every idea will work, but you may discover even better ways of doing things
- Sometimes, the best ideas come from children - so don't be afraid to ask them too!

Embrace learning from mistakes

- It's ok to make mistakes. It is how we learn!
- Embrace opportunities to self-reflect on your own biases, discomfort and areas of frustration.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help - sometimes, another set of hands is just what's needed. Consider how an additional leader or volunteer could enhance the overall program and contribute to everyone's collective success.

Have fun!

- Enjoy the opportunity you have to make a positive impact on young people's lives.
- Being a recreation leader can be incredibly fun and rewarding. Keep your sense of humour and enjoy yourself as much as possible.
