



**The Arc of Opportunity
in North Central Massachusetts
WEEKEND RECREATION PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Program Overview/Focus

Intake Form and Emergency Contact Sheet

Sign-In Policy

Staffing

Transportation

Hours and Location

Membership and activity fees

Recreation Calendar

Medication Policy

Behavior Policy

Lost Items Policy

Health Policy

Weather Cancellations

Contact names and numbers

INTRODUCTION & CLUB OVERVIEW/FOCUS

The Arc of Opportunity's Recreation Program is an optional program that offers a variety of community-based recreational activities for people ages eighteen (18) and up. The program offers people the opportunity to engage in fun recreational activities throughout New England. It also offers opportunities to socialize with friends and meet new people. A great deal of planning and coordination is involved in each weekend's activities and, thus, we require that participants register for the program, as well as pre-register through the online registration link, or by contacting the Program Coordinator, Daniela Perez-Varela. **Please note, this is no longer a drop-in club, as everything is planned and budgeted ahead of time.**

Our #1 Saturday Goal is to provide interesting, meaningful, inclusive, recreational, and educational opportunities for as many people as is practical. Hence, the registration limitation to 6-12 participants, depending on staff availability. We have scheduled staff on Saturday, depending on activity and participants. **Thus, it is critical we include individuals who are independent in areas of self-care and have basic self-preservation skills.** We do not make exceptions to the limit of 6-12 participants due to safety concerns for all involved. We want our participants to integrate into the general community with our gentle guidance and promotion of the potential for typical social/cultural interaction.

We also appreciate the need for families, staff, providers, et al. to seek a breather from their regular responsibilities to their person(s). So, we offer a variety of activities, ranging from in-house leisurely crafts and activities to community exploration. **We trust that people are given the choice of attending on the days that include plans they enjoy.**

The activity fees vary based on the activity, and we make every effort to schedule activities at different price points throughout the month. The fee covers all the expenses from gas, to meals, to the cost of events, to staffing.

Submission of the signature page of this Weekend Recreation Program packet will facilitate the approval process for a participant to join the Weekend Recreation Program. The Weekend Recreation Packet and signature pages are updated on an annual basis.

There is also an opportunity for a partial scholarship for the program. Please contact Maia Wentrup, Program Director for Family Supports and Recreation for further information.



INTAKE FORM AND EMERGENCY FACT SHEET

Anyone interested in becoming a program participant must first complete an intake Weekend Recreation Program Packet. **The packet includes this club handbook, program release, recreation assessment, emergency medical information, and media release.** An individual will not be able to participate in any activities until the proper paperwork has been completed, reviewed by recreation staff and approved. This can take up to two weeks. Please plan accordingly.

Each member is responsible for keeping the information on the Emergency Fact Sheet up to date. Members must communicate any changes with the program staff.



SIGN UP AND SIGN-IN POLICY

In order to sign up for a weekend recreation club activity you must **register and pay for the event. This can be done online, in person or over the phone.** In order to allow ample time to plan and prepare for an activity, registration for an activity will be closed the THURSDAY prior to an event by 6:00pm.

Any individuals who shows up on Saturday without prior registration will not be permitted to stay. A relevant emergency contact number for each member must also be provided. No exceptions will be made. **Please DO NOT arrive prior to scheduled time. There will not be any staff and the doors will be locked. The Arc staff are not responsible for participants before arrival time.**



STAFFING

The Saturday Recreation Program is staffed by well-trained and knowledgeable professionals. The club has a full-time Family Support and Recreation Coordinator, Daniela Perez-Varela, and one additional staff. The staff to club member ratio is typically no more than a one to six ratio; however, this can vary based on activities and transportation availability. Staff are responsible for ensuring the overall safety of the club members. Staff are also responsible for the coordination and transportation of club members to and from the community-based activity.

PLEASE NOTE: If you bring your own 1:1 staff, they will need to pay for their meal and any activity fees. Please note if you are bringing your own 1:1 staff when you sign up.

Staff are NOT responsible for transportation to and from the club, administering of any medications, and/or money management.



TRANSPORTATION

All program participants are responsible for securing transportation to and from the club.

The program is equipped with 1-2 vans that are used to transport program participants to and from the scheduled community recreation activity. All individuals are required to wear seat belts and act in a safe manner while riding in vehicles. Any infractions of this will result in disciplinary action.



HOURS AND LOCATION

The program is housed at The Arc of Opportunity, 564 Main St., Fitchburg, Massachusetts. **Entrance is off 161 Boulder Drive through the main reception door.** Hours are typically from 11:00AM to 4:00PM on Saturdays. These times may vary due to the time and location of a scheduled activity. A lot of planning and coordination is involved in each weekend's activities and, thus, we require that participants pre-register through the online registration link, or by contacting the Program Coordinator, Daniela Perez-Varela. **The building is open at 10:45AM and the van leaves at 11:15AM.** The van cannot wait for any person that is late.

It is important that all participants are picked-up on time. Staffing costs are included in the fees and have a specific end-time. We understand things happen, however, failure to be on time on a regular basis could result in the participant not being allowed to attend future events.

PLEASE be considerate of others and adhere to the schedule when picking up or dropping off individuals.



MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY FEES

All fees are payable before the day of attendance. Members who arrive without his/her advanced payment will not be able to attend the club activity, unless other arrangements have been made ahead of time with the Recreation staff.

There are partial scholarships available. Please contact Maia Wentrup, Program Director of Family Supports and Recreation, for further information.



RECREATION CALENDAR

Each month's Recreation Calendar is available in a variety of ways: distribution to the Recreation E-mail list; a link to the full calendar on the Recreation page of The Arc's website, each event listed individually on the Events page of The Arc's website, and printed copies available in Reception. Times and costs for each event are listed on the calendar, as well as on the events listing for each activity. Registration is open as soon as the calendar is distributed.

The agenda, which is distributed the Thursday before an event, will list the time that the van will be departing the club for a scheduled activity or event. These times are scheduled to allow adequate time to transition and arrive at the event on time. Also, all participants that attend the Weekend Recreation Program on a particular day **need to be willing/able to participate in the planned activity since staff are not able to remain at The Arc.**

All activities and events are scheduled based on input from Recreation participants. The program's focus is to offer each member a variety of enjoyable activities while we strive to make it enjoyable for each member; **however, there may be times that an event or activity may not be appropriate, or of interest, to a particular participant.** (eg. A member that has difficulties ambulating on un-even terrain may not want to attend if there is beach trip planned).



MEDICATION POLICY

Any participant requiring medications **must be able to self-medicate.** Saturday Recreation staff are not permitted to administer medication. Staff may offer some assistance, such as a reminder to take medication, holding medication envelopes, etc., but they are not responsible for physically administering medications or any type of preparation (eg. crushing or mixing).



BEHAVIOR POLICY

To ensure that each participant can enjoy, and safely participate in the Recreation Program, a behavior policy is in place and will be implemented as follows:

If a serious behavior (physical aggression, non-compliance with staff, safety concerns, property destruction) does occur during a Saturday Recreation activity, family/provider will be called to pick-up the individual or to make immediate travel arrangements to return the individual home, at their own cost. Serious behavior can result in suspension and/or termination of an individual.

Once a participant arrives and signs-in, they are expected to stay with the group until they are picked-up. This will be strictly enforced due to safety and accountability concerns.



LOST ITEMS POLICY

The Arc and staff are not responsible for any lost items or belongings that are lost while attending the Recreation Program. Please do not send or bring any valuables along as the staff cannot ensure that they will not be lost. If the items are needed, the participant is responsible for ensuring that they do not lose or leave behind any belongings.



HEALTH POLICY

Please use your best judgement regarding attendance if you have any health concerns. We want to keep everyone healthy. If you have any illness that is contagious or communicable, such as COVID-19, scabies, staph infections, strep throat, head lice, chicken pox, etc., please do not attend a Recreation event. Also, if you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or persistent cough/abnormal discharge please do not attend.



WEATHER CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

If the weather causes a delay or cancelation, a phone call will be made to all family members/providers as soon as a decision is made. While we hope to offer all scheduled activities, we are not willing to risk the safety of individuals to do so. If there is any doubt an activity will take place, please confirm it is happening and the hours prior to leaving home.



CANCELATION POLICY

The Saturday Recreation Program has a **24-hour (Friday 11:00AM) cancelation policy** for a refund or credit.



CONTACT NAMES & NUMBERS

Daniela Perez-Varela, Program Coordinator of Family Supports and Recreation
(978) 343-6662 ext. 1013 · (978) 382-4636 · d.varela@arcofopportunity.org

Maia Wentrup, Program Director of Family Supports and Recreation
(978) 343-6662 ext. 1011 · (978) 857-0911 · m.wentrup@arcofopportunity.org

SIGNATURE PAGE

By signing this document, I am acknowledging that I have received *The Arc of Opportunity in North Central Massachusetts WEEKEND RECREATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK* and reviewed it with the participant. I further acknowledge that I understand the expectations of the Saturday Recreation Program and agree to follow all policies and procedures therein.

Caregiver/Provider/Family Signature

Date

Recreation Participant Signature

Date