



Guide To Planning Your Event

Congratulations! Your decision to host a ***Kids, Cops and Canadian Tire Fishing Days*** event promises to be a very enjoyable and rewarding experience... for everyone involved.

Your generous commitment of time and effort could change the life of a child... or many children. Your participation in this exciting program is a wonderful opportunity to connect with youngsters as a positive role model and as a new friend. The new relationships you are about to develop can help provide comfort, security and instill confidence in children who may be living in an environment where none of these essentials exist.





About This Guide

This event guide contains all the information you need to host a successful and memorable event. If at any point you need more information, please contact Fishing Forever at 940 Sheldon Court, Burlington, ON. L7L 5K6. Telephone: 905-632-8679 ext 224.

How Your Event Can Benefit Children

Mental health experts have rated fishing as one of the best outdoor activities for children. It is one of the few activities where a youngster can outperform an adult. For example, a child has an excellent chance to catch a larger fish than a parent. This provides a legitimate sense of accomplishment and a logical source for sincere praise. These are two of the most essential elements contributing to a child's feeling of self-confidence. Moreover, fishing is often done in a quiet setting with youngsters and adults waiting anxiously for the next bite. The thrill of the catch, or just the anticipation of a bite, adds enormously to the enjoyment of the experience. This connection can add immeasurably to the feeling of self-worth often lacking in kids at risk. Whether the youngster is physically, emotionally or socially challenged, your selfless act of providing a day of fishing can be far more significant than you might ever imagine.



Getting Started

There are a few fundamental decisions that your organization must make before getting down to the implementation stages.

The first step is to decide what type of event you intend to host.



1. Just Kids, or Kids and Parents?

Taking responsibility for safely managing children will add to the manpower you require for your event. For shoreline fishing, one adult to every 4-5 youngsters is a safe ratio for most settings. If you intend to have children fishing from a boat, one adult can handle no more than three passengers. Depending on the extent to which children may be physically or emotionally challenged, the supervision ratio could drop to 1 to 1. If parents are fishing, they should be asked to monitor the safety of their children. Event staff should always be on the lookout for youngsters who appear to be beyond the immediate control of an adult.

2. Fishing From Shore and/or Boats

This decision plays an important role in where your event is held. If shore fishing, it is essential to have adequate safe space where children can fish. Most fish are not far from shore, so shoreline fishing can be very productive. Docks, piers or other permanent shoreline structures can also provide great fishing opportunities. Obviously, those with safety railings are ideal, but others should not be overlooked, provided adequate adult supervision is in place. Another important consideration is the amount of room each angler will have. The concern here is that youngsters have enough room to cast without accidentally hooking another child or adult. Keep this in mind when allocating space for each participant. If you anticipate the use of boats, a nearby boat launch is a must. Ensure that the launch is in good condition and has ample parking nearby. It is a good idea to have at least 2 volunteers present to assist boaters in launching their craft. (Many boaters are not as adept at this activity as you might think.) This is a good time to check each boat for all the required safety equipment. (Each event will be supplied with Canadian Coast Guard Safe Boating manuals that describe the necessary equipment and other safety and navigational practices.) Boat operators should have a valid Boater Competency Card.

Whether boat or shore fishing, it is a good idea to invite a conservation officer from the nearest Ministry of Natural Resources district office to assist at your event. It is a wonderful idea to have a large deck boat on hand to take kids, parents or spectators out on a tour of the immediate area. With help from an experienced angler or fisheries biologist, fish habitat and other aquatic ecosystem features can be pointed out. The boat can also be used to return fish to areas of the lake with suitable habitat. It is possible that a local marina that sells this type of craft may be willing to lend the boat for a day in exchange for the exposure and the goodwill it would generate.

3. Which Groups of Children Do You Wish To Host?

For those wishing to accommodate kids at risk, some special considerations need to be made. It is recommended that you engage the support and assistance of the agency most familiar with the group of children you intend to host. These specialized agencies have experts to care for their clients and often have a corps of volunteers with special skills to assist with community events. It is strongly recommended that you establish contact with these agencies to invite their support and guidance in handling youngsters with special needs. In many cases, the parents or guardians will accompany the children, allowing you more time to relate to the children and help them fish.

Agencies mandated to care for children with a wide variety of challenges exist in most communities. A good starting point is to contact your local Children's Aid, Children & Family Services or United Way offices. These contacts should enable you to identify groups of children you may wish to host at your event.

Other youth organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Scouts Canada, Guides Canada, Boys & Girls Clubs and the 4-H Clubs exist in many communities and are easily contacted. If kids from all segments of the community are invited, the event will likely be somewhat larger and your supervisory responsibilities will increase. Parents are less likely to accompany their kids to a closed event, therefore it may necessary to recruit more volunteers to monitor the safety of the participants. Again, the ratio should not exceed 4 or 5 youngsters per adult supervisor.

4. How Many Participants Can You Accommodate?

The nature of your event and the number of adult volunteers available will be the primary deciding factors in the number of anglers to host. A safe and enjoyable event should be your first goal. You can have an extremely successful event with both large and small groups. The degree of supervision and the suitability of the event site will help you determine whether to try to accommodate 300 participants or 30. The emphasis should be on the quality of the experience for the child, rather than the number of participants you host.

Timing and Duration of the Event

Events can be held any time of year where water or ice conditions are safe. Whether you choose summer or winter, fishing events can be lots of fun. Obviously, particular attention must be paid to ice and fast water conditions. The Ontario Family Fishing Weekend occurs on the first full weekend of July each year. Fishing licenses are not required from Thursday at midnight through Sunday midnight. This is an excellent time to schedule an event if parents are invited to fish. National Fishing Week coincides with this same weekend in Ontario and the media is full of fishing-related content, making media coverage easy to garner. Another important decision is what time of day to start and end your event and how long the youngsters are expected to fish. There is no need to start fishing at 6:00 a.m. or 7:00 a.m. This simply adds stress for all concerned. It is recommended that you begin your event at about 9:00 a.m. with the fishing period ending not later than 2:00 p.m. Kids do not have long attention spans, as most parents know. After the fishing portion of the day concludes, you may wish to have an hour or so of other entertainment, or perhaps provide a simple barbecue. In any event, a good target time to wrap up is not later than 4:00 p.m. Obviously, exceptions can be made for special events or features, but remember that the kids will have been active all day and behavioral problems may arise if they get too tired.

Participant Drop-Off and Pick-up

In most cases, participants will be responsible to get to and from the event. If children are dropped off at the event for pick-up at a pre-determined time, it is imperative that organizers have at least one, and preferably two adults they can contact to ensure that every youngster is returned to the custody of their parent or authorized adult. The event application form attached to the brochure contains a space to record this information.

A Word about Prizes

Each organization or police association that decides to host a Kid, Cops and Canadian Tire fishing event will receive a "fishing kit".

The 2007 kit contains the following items:

- Logo baseball hats (maximum quantity 150)
- Logo fridge magnets (maximum quantity 150)
- Logo bobbers (maximum quantity 150)
- Catch Fishing booklets (maximum quantity 150)
- 6 tackle boxes
- 6 Zebco rods

The kids do love to receive something that they can "take home" therefore hats, magnets and bobbers will be provided for that purpose. The tackle boxes, and rods can be used as prizes if your event is run as a derby or they can be used as draw prizes during your event.

How Many Volunteers Do You Need?

This depends largely on the number of participants and the facilities available at the chosen event site. While some organizers will have no problem acquiring adequate numbers of volunteers for the event, others may require assistance. Consider soliciting volunteers from other local community groups, fishing clubs and service organizations.



What About Fishing Equipment for the Kids?

Obviously, many children may not own their own fishing equipment. Depending on the nature of your event, you may find it necessary to borrow or otherwise provide equipment and/or bait for your participants. Local fishing clubs or tackle retailers are one possible source of rods, reels and equipment. The Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters operates a program called Tackle Share, which loans equipment to anyone wishing to try fishing for the first time. To determine whether there are outlets in your area, contact the OFAH at 705-748-6324. Perhaps the best way to obtain equipment is to make a pre-event, public media appeal to anyone wishing to donate equipment to your event. Fortunately, most households in this country have some equipment stored somewhere. Such appeals have produced excellent results for other events. See the event media section of this guide for more details. It is advisable to have plenty of bait on hand. Dew worms are still the bait of choice for kids and local tackle stores maybe willing to provide them either free or at a discounted price. This is a good item to ask a supporting business to sponsor.



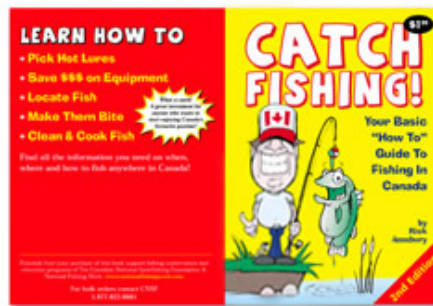
PFDs are a Must

Whenever possible, we highly encourage you to have all participants wear Personal Flotation Devices. Whether fishing or just exploring the shoreline, mishaps can occur. Even adults are advised to wear their PFDs, not only for their safety, but also to demonstrate to children that it is a logical and necessary piece of fishing equipment. Your pre-event media appeal is a good place to ask the public to give or loan PFDs. All boat owners own PFDs, and parents should be encouraged to borrow a suitable device from a friend or neighbour. Fishing clubs can be approached to provide these items and also to assist with the event.

Other Equipment to Keep on Hand

Fishing line: keep lots of fishing line on hand. Ideally, line should be between 6 and 8 lb test, unless you are targeting large fish such as carp. Heavy line tangles more easily and kids do not need help to tangle lines. We recommend snap swivels to attach the lure/hook to the line. Split-shot sinkers are inexpensive and easy to use. Have a supply of bobbers on hand. These are attached to the line and keep the bait suspended just above the bottom, preventing continual snags, which can frustrate both the kids and the volunteers.

NOTE: For basic fishing tips, each event will be provided with a quantity of books entitled: “*Catch Fishing... Your Basic “How-To” Guide to Fishing in Canada*”. It contains everything you need to know about helping a youngster learn to fish.



What Species Should You Fish For?

Before you decide which species to target at your event, contact the nearest MNR office and discuss your options with the district biologist. The professionals know the relative abundance of the species closest to your site. They can also help you select the best fishing periods and the most effective bait or lures to use. Wherever possible, include a variety of species so that every child can catch a target fish. Panfish such as rock bass, sunfish, perch, bullheads and crappie are prolific in most waters and removing limited quantities from the population does no harm. The practice of live-release is an excellent conservation practice, unless the MNR has advised you not to do so. All kept fish must be eaten, so it is perfectly acceptable for kids to take their catch home for the table. If a large, spawning-age sport fish such as a trout, walleye, bass or muskie is caught, in or out of season, take a picture for the youngster and help him or her feel good about releasing it to spawn again.





Other Event Activities

While fishing is intended to be the focal activity of the ***Kids, Cops and Canadian Tire Fishing Days***, you may wish to consider other fun and enjoyable features for your event. In most cases parents, grandparents or friends will accompany the kids to the event. This audience brings with it an opportunity for you to expand the positive community messages you wish to impart to children.

Some possible activities include: casting competitions for spectators, fishing seminars by local fishing personalities, fly-tying, knot tying or rod-building demonstrations, MNR resource education exhibits, canine unit exhibitions or other police demonstrations.

What about Food?

Kids have voracious appetites when they escape to the outdoors. Parents are asked to send their kids to events with their favourite drinks and snacks. In many cases, youth fishing events culminate with a free barbecue for participants. If you intend to host a barbecue or provide food during or at the end of the event, it would be helpful to inform parents of this. In this way, parents have an idea as to what

quantity of food to send with their child. Also, it can be a signal for parents to alert you to any youngsters with eating disorders or food allergies. A fish fry is an outstanding way to end the day. While it can be a bit labour intensive, kids will never forget their first taste of fish, fresh from the lake, especially if they caught it. Business sponsors for the barbecue are usually not difficult to source. Even if the food and drinks are purchased, the average cost per child is usually less than \$2.00.

What the Kids Should Bring

The following is a list of items that kids and parents should be advised to bring to the event.

- Fishing rod, reel and tackle, if not otherwise provided
- Drinks and snacks
- Personal flotation devices (PFDs)
- Appropriate clothing for weather forecast
- Rain gear
- Rubber boots or old sneakers
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Camera
- Entry form with parents permission to participate (if applicable)

(If parents do not accompany kids to the event, obtain names and telephone numbers of two adults who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.)



Other Necessities

While all police officers are trained in first aid, you may wish to seek additional help from the local St. John's Ambulance Chapter. If none is available, ensure that adequate, fully stocked first aid kits are on hand. Another obvious consideration is the proximity of adequate washrooms. Portable "biffy" rental businesses exist in most communities and they may be willing to donate or reduce the cost of the items.



Working with Local Sponsors

You will find that many local businesses will be keen to help support your event with products, services and possibly with cash to help defray expenses. Based on the premise that many hands make light work, you are encouraged to reach out to would-be sponsors to make your event a true community endeavor.

Here is a short list of potentially willing supporters.

- ❑ Newspapers, radio and television stations make perfect sponsors as they may provide free media support to help promote your core message that Kids and Cops make good friends and fishing buddies.
- ❑ Food stores or distributors may help with snacks and drinks, and the local propane supplier may be able to provide the barbecues and the propane.
- ❑ Your local Canadian Tire store, tackle and bait stores are logical sources for equipment and bait.
- ❑ Marinas should be approached if you plan to offer a deck boat tour for kids or spectators.
- ❑ Portable washroom rental businesses may be willing to provide facilities at a reduced rate or in exchange for promotion at the event.

Sponsors can make a huge difference in the success of your event. It is important to offer them the chance to participate, but it is even more important to do everything possible to acknowledge their cooperation publicly.

Media for Your Event

One of the key elements of a successful event is the cooperation and use of media. Effective media coverage accomplishes a lot. It reinforces the program message to youngsters as well as to the rest of the community. It serves to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of those officers who helped organize and deliver the event. It is also a good way to acknowledge sponsors' support. Most Police Associations, as well as Canadian Tire stores, have strong ties to local media. You are encouraged to make use of those contacts to garner as much positive media coverage as possible. The ultimate objective is to get the core message out to the community: that police officers are keenly interested in the health and well being of children. It is best to provide as much lead time as possible for the media outlets so they can plan the most effective way to support the event. In some cases, they may wish to devote special pages in a newspaper or promote the event with a radio feature. In exchange, your event can provide a selling opportunity for their sales staff to solicit advertising, thereby making it a win-win situation for all parties.

Pre-event Media Coverage

The extent of media coverage desired has much to do with your specific goals. If you wish to use the media to invite youngsters from the community to attend the event you will require media exposure in community publications, radio and TV stations. This content is promotional in nature. If you have already invited your participants and confirmed their attendance, then the media releases sent out would be more of a photo-op type release. In the media kit for your event, you will find a sample of a pre-event media release that you may tailor to your own use. These contain certain elements that make it more attractive for media to carry.

Post-event Media

Newspaper stories, TV footage and radio airtime that report the success of your event are extremely important for a number of reasons. They reinforce your message to the community, they serve as a proud reminder of the hard work invested by your members and volunteers and they reaffirm the friendships you have established with the children (and parents) who participated. Post-event media release samples are also included to reinforce the positive accomplishments of your association and to demonstrate the main benefits to the children who participated.

Special Media Note

It is important that organizers of local events also do what they can to generate local media coverage. The two levels of approach to media will help guarantee strong and effective coverage for your event.