The Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program (Connect Kids) is a field trip refund grant program connecting New York school-children with nature, outdoor recreation and history.

How Does It Work?
Connect Kids will refund up to $1,000 of the field trip costs for visits to:
- New York State Parks, Nature Centers and Historic Sites
- Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Environmental Education Centers and Fish Hatcheries
- Adirondack Loj
- SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry’s Newcomb Campus
- Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum
- Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center
- Montezuma Audubon Center
- Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary

Grants are available on a first come, first served basis. Eligible expenses include:
- transportation,
- program fees,
- entry fees,
- and/or pavilion fees.

Schools, youth bureaus, or after-school programs pay for services first and are then reimbursed their expenses after the trip. Chaperones who drive separately will not be refunded any field trip expenses.

Eligibility
Any public school in a district with a Title 1 school (grades preK-12 including school-sponsored clubs), Advantage After School Programs, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and village, town, or county youth bureaus in communities with Title 1 schools are eligible to apply. Each class or after-school/youth bureau group is eligible for one transportation grant per academic year.

Timeline
Applications accepted on a rolling basis.

How to Apply Online
Prior to completing the field trip grant application, educators are required to make arrangements with staff at the field trip destination.

Anyone interested in a special guided program should confirm the program date and time with State Park Nature Center or Historic Site staff or DEC Environmental Education Center staff. Self-guided trips should be confirmed with the State Park or Historic Site manager before the trip.

For self-guided programming ideas, contact Susan Carver at 518-474-6736 or susan.carver@parks.ny.gov. Educators wishing to visit a DEC state forest or wildlife management area that does not have DEC staff should contact Susan Carver.

When making your field trip arrangements, let the field trip location staff member know that you are applying for a Connect Kids grant.

After completing the field trips plans, complete the online application at parks.ny.gov.

Applications are due at least two weeks before the field trip. Applications submitted after the trip will not be approved.

If the application is approved and funds are available, confirmation materials will be sent to the teacher/educator. If funds are not available or the application is not eligible for a grant, the teacher/educator will be informed. Applications may take up to three weeks to process.

On Date of Field Trip
Bring the application form with you to the site; a staff member from the site that you visit must verify the visit by signing the application. If the class is taking part in a guided program, the guide will sign to verify the visit. If the field trip is self-guided, onsite staff must verify the application.

Refunds After The Field Trip
Complete the application form (Refund Information) and submit the following original documentation to Parks within 60 days of the field trip:
1. Completed Connect Kids Transportation Grants Program Application
2. Proof of payment or invoice from a private bus contractor or fee for use of school-owned bus
3. Receipt(s) for any tolls, additional transportation, bus entry fee, program fee, or pavilion rental receipt

Submit to:
Ms. Susan Carver
NYS OPRHP, EMB, 2nd Floor
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207

Once the documentation is reviewed and approved, a direct deposit refund of up to $1,000* will be made directly to the school district, after-school program or youth bureau through the Statewide Financial Systems (SFS.)

Questions?
Contact Susan Carver at 518-474-6736 or susan.carver@parks.ny.gov.

Apply online at parks.ny.gov

* Additional funding available for overnight trips on a case-by-case basis