



Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International Equine-Assisted Learning Guidelines 5/1/2015

I. About Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL)

- A. Equine-assisted learning (EAL) is an experiential learning approach that promotes the development of life skills applicable to educational, professional or personal goals through equine-assisted activities.
- B. This experiential approach integrates horse-human interaction that is guided by a planned learning experience to meet the identified goals or desires of the participant(s).
- C. EAL follows a process of assessment, planning and documentation.
- D. EAL can incorporate a variety of equine services such as mounted activities, unmounted activities or driving. It can involve other aspects of the equine center/facility environment.
- E. In addition to the guidelines specific to EAL, all PATH Intl. Core and Activity Standards apply to EAL.

II. The EAL Participant

- A. It is required that new participants of EAL go through an assessment or survey process to determine the goals and suitability of the group or individual. The assessment process may include input from parents/legal guardians, caregivers, teachers, organization representatives and the participant's own desired learning outcomes. The type of assessment is determined by the facilitator.
- B. All participants will have administrative documentation consistent with PATH Intl. Standards. For all EAL participants the following documentation is maintained:
 - a. The participant's assessment
 - b. Written goals
 - c. Documentation will be maintained in the participant's file that demonstrates that the participant, parent/legal guardian, caregiver and referring agency/organization is informed of the scope of EAL work.

- d. Ongoing documentation is kept in the participants file according to the policy and/or procedures of the program.
- C. Each group or individual should have a general plan that includes goals and objectives and session documentation.
- D. There should be written evidence of on-going communication between the instructor/facilitator and participants, participant's parent/legal guardian, caregiver, referring agency/organization to ensure that goals are continually updated.
- E. There is a written policy in place for dismissing or terminating a professional relationship with a participant.

III. The Equine In EAL, Equines are viewed as partners in the EAL session.

- A. Respect and consideration is given to the equine's physical, mental and emotional well-being, stress levels and safety at all times.
- B. The center/facility has implemented procedures that are specifically related to EAL for the selection, assessment and training of equines for an EAL program.
 - a. Equines are evaluated for suitability within the context of the activity(s) each day.
 - b. The center/facility has implemented procedures to periodically re-evaluate the suitability of each equine's continued involvement in an EAL program.
- C. An active EAL session, as defined in the EAL Definitions, counts toward the workday limit for an equine per the PATH Intl. Standards. A passive session does not. **Passive participation** is defined as non-contact interaction from an observational point of view where the human presence does not have a direct effect on the equine.

IV. EAL Credentialed Professionals

- A. There are three types of professionals that come to the EAL certification (See EAL Definitions document):
 - a. Equine Professional- An equine professional is defined as a professional who satisfies the equine knowledge and skills as outlined in UNIT Two of the EAL competencies. This can include a PATH certified professional in another area other than EAL.
 - b. Learning Professional- A Learning professional is defined as a professional who satisfies the knowledge and skills as outlined in UNIT One of the EAL competencies that relate to skills other than equine.
 - c. Dually-qualified- A dually qualified professional is defined as a professional who satisfies the competencies in both UNIT One and Two.
 - d. An EAL session is facilitated by an equine professional and learning professional as a team or by a dually qualified professional.
- B. EAL professionals integrate the equine sessions into a participant's broader life goals by utilizing the input of the horse and its interaction with humans as a foundation of the learning process.
- C. There is written documentation verifying that the professional has the skillsets and knowledge to meet the competencies.

- D. There is documentation demonstration the professional's ability to make appropriate decisions for both their participants and their equine partners as defined in the PATH EAL competencies.
- E. A professional may choose to specialize in one of three areas in addition to the basic certification: Education, Corporate/Professional Development or Coaching/Personal Development. It will be required to have documented training related to the area of specialty from an approved source.
 - a. Each area of concentration will have specific competencies outlined in the next phase of development.
 - b. If the EAL professional does not have the expertise for the given specialty, there is written documentation that they have partnered with a trained expert in that specialty.

VI. Equipment

- A. Equipment in EAL activities is used to enhance learning outcomes.
- B. Facilitators have an understanding of the equipment used in EAL activities to create a learning experience in which the safety and welfare of both equines and humans is ensured.

VII. Center/Facility

- A. There is a written policy that defines the appropriate number of participants and the number of equines to the size of the activity area.
- B. The center/facility is able to provide an environment suitable to the various learning needs of the participants. An EAL session should consider safety, confidentiality and freedom from distractions.
- C. Center/facility has implemented procedures for activities that include working with equines at liberty to be conducted in a safe and appropriate space.

VIII. Personnel

- A. Paid and unpaid personnel involved with EAL sessions should go through orientation training specific for the EAL program including the following:
 - 1. Confidentiality
 - 2. The responsibilities with assigned roles (listed below).
 - 3. Discussion opportunities pre- and post-session.
 - 4. Awareness of goals and special considerations for the needs of each participant or group.
 - 5. The scope of work of an EAL session.
- B. Potential Roles in an EAL Session:
 - a. Facilitators:
 - Follow all PATH Intl. EAL Guidelines and competencies
 - b. Horse Handlers:
 - All horse handlers are trained and proficient in skills related to their role in an equine-assisted session as it pertains to the equine.

c. Volunteers or other support staff:

- All volunteers or other support staff have received training specific to EAL.