



SPECTACULAR SCIENCE CLUB

HOW TO MANUAL

The materials presented in this How To Manual are designed to help your organization efficiently and effectively implement a successful Mad Science Spectacular Science Club. Most, if not all, of your questions should be answered in this manual. Please feel free to contact the Mad Science office at any time should you have additional questions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Mad Science?

Founded in Montreal, Canada in 1985, Mad Science has grown to over 150 locations in over 25 countries. We are the world's leader in fun science for children. Mad Science conducts educational, entertaining and hands-on science activities for elementary age children throughout Central Virginia. Our unique brand of exciting, interactive activities instills a clearer understanding of how science affects the world around them. Through Mad Science, your students will be able to touch, see, hear, smell and taste what science is really all about.

Is this a stand-alone enrichment program?

Mad Science takes all the hassle and frustration out of running an enrichment program as we do all the work for you. We are typically sponsored by the PTA or school administration and run our science clubs separate of any other programs at your school. Should your school offer one, we will be very happy to work within an existing enrichment program. However, due to the demand for our programming, we have to schedule the beginning of all our programs within a small window of time in order to best serve all our partner schools. Please see the "Program Benefits" for a complete list of what we offer.

What is our time commitment to your program?

If you elect the turn-key approach, other schools have told us they have implemented a Mad Science program with only 2 to 4 hours of time investment. Your commitment typically occurs before the registration period as schools work with our Science Club Specialists to finalize the program details and coordinate with the school administration to secure the classrooms.

How long are your programs (weeks and hours)?

Our standard program is 8 weeks, 1 hour per week and held immediately before or after school. Because of the flexibility of our programming, Mad Science can accommodate program requests of 4 to 10 weeks. See "What are Your Suggested Program Start Dates?" below for how your school can offer science enrichment throughout the school year.

What is the cost?

There is never any cost to your school or PTA/PTO to sponsor a Mad Science Spectacular Science Club. There is never a registration fee, deposit or cancellation fee associated with our programs. The cost for a standard 8-week session is \$96 per student. This is an all-inclusive, one-time fee for the participants. Mad Science provides all equipment and materials. Costs for other length sessions are as follows: 4 weeks = \$49, 6 weeks = \$72 and 10 weeks = \$119. See "What topics are covered?" below for sessions less than 8 weeks.

What are your suggested program start dates?

With the amount of programming we offer, the ease of implementation, the popularity and variety of our instruction and the no obligation nature of our programs, most schools elect to offer Mad Science multiple times throughout the school year. To accommodate the widest range of student schedules while taking into consideration school holidays, both 8 week and 6 week courses are very popular. A 6-week course allows for an extra series to be offered during the year and reduces the waiting time for students who were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts with other activities. A 6-week course is also more affordable for more families.

Sample Program Dates:

8 Week Program

3rd week of September through 1st week of November

3rd week of January through 2nd week of March

1st week of April through 4th week of May

6 Week Program

3rd week of September through 4th week of October

1st week of November through 3rd week of December

3rd week of January through 4th week of February

2nd week of March through 3rd week of April

What if our schedule does not correspond with the dates above?

Due to the number of schools we work with, the number of concurrent programs we run and the amount of equipment scheduling necessary to support these programs, Mad Science has a small window of time to start our programs. We typically have a week's leeway on either side of the above Sample Program Dates. Please check with your Science Club Specialist to determine what can be done outside of these dates.

Mad Science Spectacular Science Clubs can start at any time during your school year. Although, the above dates will provide your students with the greatest availability of these popular classes, you do not have to offer a Mad Science class during each of the periods outlined above. Combinations of 6-week and 8-week series (or other durations) can be offered during your school year.

How long does it take to implement a program? How much lead time is necessary?

The most important part of the process is to register your interest in having a Mad Science Spectacular Science Club. To do this, simply fill out the attached registration form and fax it to our office. **It is critical that you do this as soon as possible because our programs sell out.** There is no cost to register as there is never any financial obligation to your school or organization. A Science Club Specialist will contact you to finalize the program details [day(s) of the week, number of weeks, start and end dates, date of the assembly, etc].

The entire program implementation process takes about 2 hours spread over 3 weeks:

3 weeks before class begins –

- Your free, all school assembly is conducted
- Marketing materials are displayed
- Registration materials are delivered and sent home with your students
 - Students typically have 7 days to return their registration forms

2 weeks before class begins –

- Registration ends and Mad Science processes enrollments

1 week before class begins –

- Student confirmations and class rosters are delivered to your organization

Do you have a minimum class size? A maximum class size?

Our classes require a minimum enrollment of 15 paid students. To ensure the hands-on, interactive nature of our instruction, class size will be capped at 24. Registrations for numbers 25 through 29 will go on a wait list. With the 30th registration, Mad Science will create 2 classes of 15. The ability to offer additional classes may be subject to instructor availability. Predicting enrollment is crucial to the proper planning necessary to ensure all your interested students can participate. See "How can we predict enrollment?" below. Mad Science may elect to offer a program even if the class minimum is not met. This decision is at the sole discretion of Mad Science.

What ages/grades can register?

Mad Science offers instruction in an age and grade appropriate manner using a variety of teaching methods and environments to ensure each participant benefits from the instruction. Therefore students in grades K through 5 are offered the opportunity to participate in our programs. Should registration allow we will divide classes by grades (exm. K – 2 and 3 – 5). Larger enrollment may allow even greater segregation by grade level.

How can we predict enrollment?

A good rule of thumb is to **assume 10% of your student body will be interested** in the Mad Science Spectacular Science Club. Response may be affected by many factors including day of week, season of year and transportation needs. However, it is best to plan for a 10% response and reserve the necessary rooms in order to accommodate as many students as possible. Because there is no financial obligation to your organization, final enrollment that does not utilize all the reserved rooms will not result in a penalty of any kind.

A great way to gauge your students' interest is to send home a Student Survey sheet provided free of charge by Mad Science. This survey does not obligate nor reserve space for the respondent. Ask your assigned Science Club Specialist about this option.

When should we schedule our class(es)?

Mad Science has the flexibility in scheduling and instructor availability to conduct classes on any day of the week and on multiple days during the week at one location. Availability on some days may be limited so it is best to confirm your dates with Mad Science as early as possible.

When scheduling your Mad Science program, think of the “normal” extracurricular schedule of your students. We find that most children’s activities are scheduled on either Monday-Wednesday-Friday or on Tuesday-Thursday. Therefore, to provide the maximum flexibility for your students, you should offer Mad Science classes on two consecutive days during the week (ex. Monday-Tuesday, Tuesday-Wednesday) or on one “odd” day and one “even” day (ex. Monday and Thursday). Using the enrollment rule of thumb from above, planning for one class of K – 2 and one class for 3 – 5 on each of the scheduled days should be sufficient for most situations. For a variety of reasons, even with this schedule all students who wish to take Mad Science during any program will not be able to participate. Therefore, Mad Science should be offered in each of the three “seasons” of the year – fall, winter and spring. We strongly suggest that you run Mad Science on the same day(s) of the week all year long. Classes should start within 15 minutes from the dismissal of school. This allows the teacher in the room time to “close up shop” and the instructor time to prepare the room and equipment for the day’s instruction. For schools that offer After Care programs and have school dismissal times in the early afternoon, we can run consecutive classes (exm: 2:30 – 3:30 and 3:45 to 4:45). Please ask your Science Club Specialist about this possibility.

What topics are offered?

Rockets, lasers, slime, bubbling potions and chemical reactions are just a few of the class topics Mad Science offers in our after-school programs. Currently, we offer three 8-week sessions (24 different 1 hour classes) called System 1, System 2 and System 3. See sample registration materials for a complete listing of available classes. The classes in these systems are not interchangeable. As an organization, Mad Science has 48 hours of instruction (Systems 1 through 6) available. Mad Science commits to our partner schools that we will grow our class offerings to ensure no student will “max out” on their Mad Science experience. **To that end, The Academy of Future Space Explores (in conjunction with NASA) will be available to select schools in the fall of 2006.**

Should your program run less than 8 weeks, scheduling of specific classes for your program cannot be determined until immediately before classes are to begin. In these cases, Mad Science will still assign a particular System to your program and include all 8 class topics within that System in our marketing and registration pieces. We will add a disclosure that X number of these 8 classes will be offered. Although we will do all in our power to ensure each student in your program receives instruction in the same topics, we cannot guarantee that will be the case.

Mad Science reserves the right to change class topics with no advance notice to students, parents or your organization. Changes of this sort are typically in response to an emergency situation to ensure scheduled instruction of a class is performed.

How is registration handled?

There are three ways to handle registration:

- 1) All materials and payments are submitted directly to Mad Science. This turn-key method is usually the easiest and most efficient for your organization.
- 2) Materials and payments are returned to your organization. They are picked up by or shipped to Mad Science and we process the paperwork and payments.
- 3) Your organization receives and processes all the paperwork. Mad Science will invoice you for the number of participants.

Should you process your own registration, participant information and class rosters will need to be provided on Mad Science supplied forms.

What participant information is required?

In order to ensure the safety of all participants in a Mad Science *Spectacular Science Club* both during the demonstrations and after the class, the following information must be provided on each participant:

- *Child's name*
- *Child's grade*
- *Child's teacher*
- *Child's date of birth*
- *Child's address*
- *Child's health concerns*
- *Name of parent or guardian*
- *Home phone number*
- *Work/cell phone number*
- *Signature of parent or guardian*
- *Names of those allowed to pick up child after class including after school daycare options*
- *Payment information (check number or credit card number, expiration date and signature)*

When is payment required?

From parents: Payment is required at the time of registration. Mad Science can accept checks or credit cards (over the phone, on the registration form or through our on-line registration system).

From your organization: Should you elect to process registration and payments, Mad Science will invoice you for the number of participants during the second week of class. This allows students to “test drive” our program the first week and receive a full refund if it is not to their liking. Also, late comers are more easily accommodated through this schedule. Payment on invoices is expected within one week of receipt.

What does Mad Science need from our organization?

Each participant will need a desk/table and chair. The instructor will need a small table for the equipment. Therefore classrooms work best and classrooms in grades 3 and above are preferred. We will also need access to electricity, nearby water and the ability to darken the room. Room volunteers are not necessary with our program; however they are welcomed. See “Do you offer scholarships” for information on free enrollment for the children of volunteers. We have found that a brief period between the end of school and the beginning of the Mad Science class is beneficial to the students. Therefore, please plan to have all Mad Science participants gather in the gym or cafeteria for approximately 10 – 15 minutes to facilitate a bathroom break and/or a snack. Your organization will need to provide someone to monitor this period between the end of school and the beginning of the Mad Science program and to escort the students to the Mad Science classroom(s).

What is your refund policy?

A full refund will be made to any parent who withdraws his child prior to the second week of the program and informs Mad Science in writing. Withdrawal after the second week is not subject to a refund; however consideration will be given these students for future Mad Science programs.

Do you have a quality guarantee?

The Mad Science guarantee is simple – your organization, your students and parents will be satisfied with the Mad Science experience or we will do what it takes to make it right.

Who are your instructors?

We recruit former teachers and current college students with an education major who have experience in classrooms or with groups of elementary aged children. All our instructors must pass a series of state and national criminal background checks and be certified through our training process. Instructors are assigned for the entire length of the program. This encourages a rapport between instructor and student and facilitates the learning process.

Do you offer scholarships?

Our mission is to bring fun science to all children in Central Virginia. To this end Mad Science offers several scholarship opportunities to our classes. **All scholarships are awarded after the paid class minimum is met.** Administration of scholarships is left to your organization. Please inform Mad Science of the recipient(s) to ensure proper record keeping and invoicing.

- One scholarship is awarded to the Program Coordinator at your school.
- One scholarship is awarded to the parent or guardian who commits to serve as a room volunteer for the entire length of the program.
- One scholarship per class is awarded should your organization process all registrations and payments.

NOTE: Mad Science cannot exceed the class maximum of 24. If all scheduled classes are filled through paid registrants, it is the responsibility of your organization to determine which students (paid vs. scholarship) are granted admission. Scholarships that are not awarded due to this situation will be evaluated for the next offering of Mad Science.

Do you offer incentives for the use of teacher's classrooms?

As a reward for teachers who allow Mad Science to use their classrooms, Mad Science will donate one free In-Class Workshop for their class (retail value \$129). Workshops are an hour long, SOL correlated instructional period where students learn fun and hands-on science. This workshop must be used during that school year and is subject to scheduling and workshop availability.

What are the expectations of the students? The parents?

Mad Science strives at all times to provide fun and safe science activities for all children participating in our classes. To fulfill this commitment, we ask that all children enrolled adhere to basic behavioral guidelines. Our instructors set clear boundaries and expectations as to appropriate conduct and we will hold all students to these expectations. In addition, Mad Science will follow all of your school's rules and policies regarding student behavioral expectations. We stress at the beginning of each class that the school rules are still in effect. We ask your cooperation should any parent be notified of discipline problems. It is our intention to provide children with, not deprive them of, exciting and fun science. It is only when a child interrupts this positive learning environment that we would take any such action. Mad Science also has expectations of the parents whose children are enrolled. Only children with a sincere interest in our programs and the necessary maturity to handle an extension of the school day should be allowed to enroll. An approved guardian must pick up each child *at the classroom* promptly at the dismissal of class. Parents are welcome to observe any class and to participate where appropriate. All parents should support the learning process after class is dismissed.

What is your inclement weather/class cancellation policy?

Mad Science will follow the inclement weather and school closure policy of the school district in which we are instructing. Each program should have a minimum of one week before the start of the next program to accommodate a possible make-up day. Mad Science will attempt to reschedule weather-related class cancellations or other events beyond our control or planning, but with no guarantees. No refunds or credits will be given in the event a class cannot be made up under these circumstances. Cancellations due to school-related issues such as improper planning or scheduling regarding early dismissal *may* be rescheduled at the sole discretion of Mad Science. No refund or credit will be given under these circumstances regardless if the class is rescheduled or not.

Are we guaranteed a Mad Science program at our school?

The demand for our programming is tremendous. As a result we must limit the number of classes we offer in any instruction period. We schedule programs on a first come, first served basis. **Each of the instruction periods last year were completely sold out.** Because of the popularity of our programs and of the challenges sometimes associated with securing qualified staff, it is imperative that you adhere to the planning timelines when requesting and implementing a Mad Science Spectacular Science Club. We have always met our staffing obligations but should the enrollment for your organization exceed the norm, we cannot guarantee that an additional instructor will be available. Should Mad Science have to cancel a program because we could not supply a qualified instructor we will make every effort to reschedule the program as quickly as possible. We realize the great inconvenience and disappointment a program cancellation would cause. Should this occur, any funds collected by Mad Science for a canceled program will be promptly returned.