



THERAPEUTIC RIDING ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Freedom in Strides Inc. therapeutic riding program is based on an individual's ability to participate safely. As a PATH Intl. Member Center, we follow the Precautions and Contraindications as recommended by the Professional Standards. Our professional staff will provide initial and ongoing evaluations for all prospective and active participants. Freedom In Strides reserves the right to decline service to an applicant due to unavailable resources and/or safety concerns including PATH Intl. guidelines relating to contraindications for participation.

New Rider Assessments: All riders new to Freedom In Strides must have an assessment before being scheduled in a lesson slot. The assessment will help us identify the best lesson placement (including horse, instructor, and other riders' abilities) for the participant. After the application has been processed, we will call to schedule an assessment.

Minimum Age: The minimum age for therapeutic riding is 4 years old.
There is no maximum age limit.

Weight Maximums: Freedom In Strides implements weight limits based on the advice of our veterinarians and staff members according to the safest instructor/horse/rider combination. Each therapeutic riding horse has an assigned maximum weight limit. In addition to weight, a rider's other characteristics (such as skill level, muscle tone, balance, or behavior) are considered when making horse/rider matches. Our weight limits are in place to ensure the safety of riders, volunteers, and instructors especially during mounting, dismounting, and emergency situations. These limits also support the health and fitness of our horses, allowing them to perform their roles effectively. Participants may be weighted during their initial assessment or periodically for reassessment to ensure safe and suitable horse/rider pairing. If a participant exceeds the weight limit for the available horses, we may suggest alternative equine activities that offer safer and more effective ways to experience the therapeutic benefits of working with horses.

Scheduling: Priority will be given to current Freedom In Strides participants when scheduling. We will schedule new clients when appropriate spots become available. If we are unable to schedule your rider, he/she will be put on a waiting list. When a suitable spot becomes open, you will be contacted.

Absences: It is very important to make sure that riders attend their assigned riding times. This ensures that the rider maintains their progress, we serve as many riders as we can, and we do not waste our volunteers' valuable time. We understand that illnesses, doctor's appointments, work, traffic or other situations arise, but ask that you contact Freedom In Strides at kownby@freedominstrides.org as soon as you are aware that a rider is going to miss or be late for a lesson.

- Group classes: There are no make-ups or refunds for non-weather-related absences.

- Private lessons: Make-ups may be scheduled depending on volunteer, arena, horse and instructor availability.
- Arrival time: Riders need to arrive 10 minutes prior to the lessons scheduled starting time. Repeated tardiness will result in consideration for being dropped from the program. This is for the safety of all. If a rider arrives after everyone is mounted and gates are closed, they are not allowed to ride.
- 24-hour notification: If a rider cannot attend a scheduled lesson, please notify Freedom In Strides 24 hours in advance if at all possible.
- No shows: Riders who have three instances of no-shows or no-notifications within a 6-week session will be informed of removal from the therapeutic riding program.
- Repeated cancellations with notification: Riders who continually cancel attendance will be considered for dismissal from the program. Rider's circumstances will be considered in the decision.
- Extended absences: Freedom In Strides requires advance notification of absences longer than two weeks. Depending on a rider's circumstances, Freedom In Strides reserve the right to permanently remove the rider from the schedule with adding them to the wait list. The participant can pay in full to hold their spot. We can fill the spot with a temporary rider.

Attire and Equipment: Appropriate clothes for riding are long pants and hard soled boots with a low heel. We do use safety stirrups, meaning sneakers are allowed. Dress for comfort and according to the weather. Undergarments that provide adequate support and comfort are necessary. Wear close-fitting clothing for safety as well as comfort. Loose or baggy clothing can get caught and tangled in equipment. No dangling jewelry is permitted. All riders are required to wear an ASTM/SEI approved equestrian helmet.

Fee Schedule and Policies: Freedom In Strides has five six week sessions throughout the year.

- Group lessons: \$250 per 6-week session
- Private lessons: \$350 per 6-week session

If riders are added to the schedule after the session has begun, the fee will be pro-rated. Session invoices will be sent the after each session. Prior payment balances must be received in full prior to the first lesson of each session. If financial assistance is needed, please contact us at kownby@freedominstrides.org.

Volunteers: Freedom In Strides' main form of providing excellent lessons are through our amazing volunteer team. They assist with grooming, tacking, mounting, dismounting, and during lessons. Volunteers help with everything from facility maintenance to office work, lessons, to horse care, and fundraising. Please make sure you show your appreciation for our organization's backbone. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please visit our website under the volunteer tab, freedominstrides.org.