

## **CAMP LEARNING**

### **HELPING CAMPERS LEARN**

Here are a few ideas you can use to help campers learn:

1. **THE TEACHABLE MOMENT:** The teachable moment occurs when something happens or a question is asked that opens a door for learning. The teachable moment may or may not have anything to do with the immediate task of the group. Regardless, take advantage of the situation and share your expertise and create the opportunity for learning.
2. **QUESTIONS:** There are always curious campers that ask questions about everything. These campers are learning. Answer their questions cheerfully. Don't just tell them the technical answer, but help them to discover the answers themselves. If you don't know the answer, work with the camper to find it. Keep your answers simple. Most often a simple answer will satisfy curious campers.
3. **HANDS ON:** Camping is great place to learn by doing. Encourage campers to try new things. Coach and guide them. Avoid doing everything for the camper, even though it may be easier for you.
4. **BUILD ON SUCCESS:** Learning is enhanced through self-satisfaction, success and personal rewards. These are the little things that often keep us trying.
5. **TRY, TRY AGAIN:** We don't always do everything right the first time, and we can learn from doing things wrong. We just need to keep trying, learning and growing. As a counselor, you can help the campers who can't seem to get it right feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. Not everything has to be perfect.

### **DISCIPLINE**

1. Problems usually stem from ignorance, insecurity, boredom or being ignored.
2. Help camper to know: What is expected. When it is expected. How they can participate. What choices they have.
3. To deal with outbreaks of temper: Separate campers immediately. Walk away with them.
4. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

### **DEALING WITH CAMPERS WHO MISBEHAVE**

Ways to handle misbehaving:

1. Show affection for campers and concern for their happiness.
2. Express an interest in each camper.
3. Recognize and acknowledge better behavior.
4. Ignore misbehavior if it won't do any good to draw attention to it.
5. If these fail, have a heart-to-heart talk with the campers. Remember to be understanding and fair.
6. Sometimes peer pressure will help correct misbehavior.

### **ASKING FOR HELP**

Learn to ask for help. Counselors are not expected to know all the answers all the time. Even camp directors don't have all the answers. A mature counselor who doesn't know how to handle a situation recognizes it is more responsible to ask for help than to blindly proceed on his/her own.

## **LISTENING SKILLS**

Your ear is the most important piece of equipment you have. Good listening is essential to good counseling. If you are not listening, you risk your relationship with the camper. A successful counselor is an active listener. Active listening is learning to recognize what an individual is saying and feeling.

### **GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING**

1. Be interested and show it -- Genuine concern and a lively curiosity encourage others to speak freely. Being interested also sharpens your attention and builds on itself.
2. Avoid jumping to conclusions. Give your response only after you are sure that you have the whole message.
3. Check your own feelings and point of view. Our convictions and emotions filter, even distort, what we hear. Be aware of your attitudes, prejudices, beliefs and emotional reaction to the message.
4. Notice non-verbal language - A shrug, a smile, a nervous laugh, gestures, facial expressions and body positions speak volumes.
5. Pick appropriate places to listen. The middle of the dining hall is a poor place for counseling. Go where you do not have to fight distractions or noise.
6. Don't take comments personally.
7. Don't let your mind wander, look at the camper and pay attention.
8. Repeat what you think you've heard. For example, "What I think you are telling me is . . ."

### **TIPS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION**

1. Send 'I' messages: "I feel...." "I want...." "I believe..." "I think...."
2. Be honest with yourself and others. Although the truth may often be painful, deception or half-truth destroys trust. Without trust human relationships break down.
3. Be responsible for your own feelings and ideas, don't blame others. "I feel hurt when you don't listen." "I am happy when you smile at me."
4. Respect the right others have to their own feelings and ideas.
5. Remember the art of compromise.
6. Watch for nonverbal cues.

### THREE APPROACHES AND WHEN TO USE

Each of the approaches below works differently and with each you have a different look about you. Children see this difference. In addition, each approach requires certain skills. Not everyone can use all the approaches well. You may know people who seem to take one of the approaches most of the time. You may know people who use all three approaches depending on the situation.

There are no hard and fast rules for working with children. These three approaches are suggestions that you might try as you work with your campers. REMEMBER each camper is a unique individual and each situation is different.

The chart below will help you identify what an approach looks like to children, when it might be most effective and the abilities needed to use each.

<b>APPROACH</b>	<b>WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE</b>	<b>WHEN TO USE</b>	<b>ABILITIES NEEDED</b>
TAKE CHARGE	Clear message of what to do. Serious. Knows what to do, has mind made up. Assertive.	Danger of physical injury. Destruction of property. Child's behavior violates rules.	Able to give directions well. Be firm. Speak clearly. Be serious. Be sincere.
WORK TOGETHER	Friendly. Enthusiastic. Cooperative. Curious. Interested. Concerned.	Child is angry or upset. Child has trouble making friends. Child is afraid of trying something new. Child needs help completing a task.	Be a good listener. Be patient. Respect children's opinions. Enjoy cooperation.
HANDS OFF	Relaxed. Supportive. Calm. Undisturbed. Confident.	Mild disagreement between two children. Two or more children are working together to solve a problem. Child seems to always want your attention.	Able to avoid interfering. Have good self - control. Let others be the center of attention. Have faith in others abilities. Know it is OK to make mistakes.