

Behavior Management



Otherwise known as “discipline”, behavior management refers to the skills and techniques involved in addressing undesired camper behavior consistently and effectively.

Below are the building blocks of behavior management. This subject is addressed in depth at OSC training and your notes should supplement this section.

- Be PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE
 - Praise the campers who are doing what you want
 - Set up clear expectations and remind the campers of them constantly
 - Recognize when campers are about to “pop” or lose control in advance
 - Keep your campers busy and engaged – smooth and active transitions
- Teach what TO do, instead of *punishing* for what NOT TO do
- Challenge yourself: an undesired behavior is an opportunity for YOU to be a teacher in a child’s life – for you to help make a significant difference in how a child handles something that’s hard for him/her.
- Have the child do the “work” (avoid the “lecture”)
 - Ask questions
 - Why did I pull you aside? What happened just now?
 - Why was that not OK?
 - How else do you know how to handle that? What could you have done instead?
 - Is that hard for you?
 - Next time, what can you do differently?
- Compliment the child on his/her ability to answer the questions and “work with you”
- Follow up soon
 - Notice improvement in behavior(s)
 - Label the new behaviors immediately
 - “Brag” to another staff member about the child’s “newfound abilities”
- BE PATIENT
 - Undesired behavior is often created by months or years of reinforcement/all behavior continues for a reason. Children will not be able to “throw a switch” and change immediately – keep your own expectations reasonable
- Get guidance IMMEDIATELY from an OSC Director. We’ve done this – a LOT!
- With particularly challenging campers – develop a plan with a director and be consistent
- Work as a team – there are two or three of you with each group for a reason. JCs should consult with their SC before making any behavior management decisions.

GREAT COUNSELORS AT CAMP look like they’re always in control, their kids are always engaged in an organized activity, they know each camper’s limitations and abilities. Their kids know the rules, know their expectations and come quickly when called. They communicate with their directors on a daily basis and realize that working with children is a lifelong commitment to learning and personal growth. They are patient, creative, resourceful and open to feedback – they are....reading this right now!