

CAMPER GOALS & OUTCOMES

OSC's Mission is as follows:

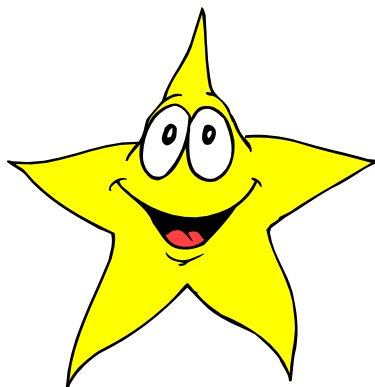
Outpost Summer Camps provides group-centered, outdoor-based, traditional camp experience for children and young adults, designed to enrich and develop each participants social, emotional, and physical skills.

To achieve this mission, the following goals are adopted each summer

1. Each camper knows the name of the campers in his or her group.
2. Each camper has a story where he or she got a chance to "shine."
3. Campers feel that their accomplishments are noticed.
4. Campers and their families feel connected to the camp community.

To achieve these goals, the following outcomes are essential.

1. To ensure each camper knows each others name, staff use name games and other exercises to teach and reinforce names. They also use campers' names when addressing them to role model and demonstrate the importance of knowing names to the campers.
2. To ensure that each camper feels they got a chance to shine, staff are encouraged to keep a list of campers' names and check in with each one on what they'd like to accomplish during their summer. They provide successful opportunities for each camper and react with pride to enforce this success. Afternoon campfires are key opportunities for campers and staff to boast about their accomplishments.
3. Staff are also encouraged to keep a list of campers' names and notice their daily achievements. They make sure to pay each camper a sincere compliment each day.
4. OSC establishes a "community feel" through several means.
 - Photos of the camp day are shared with families
 - Families are invited to a Family Picnic hosted by OSC
 - Newsletters and emails are sent home throughout the session!



GUIDELINES FOR CAMPER-COUNSELOR CONTACT

CONCERN FOR YOUR WELL-BEING

- 1) This is a stressful job. It has “occupational hazards.”
- 2) Children can be fun, but also demanding.
- 3) Take care of yourself. Pace yourself. Ask for help. Rest up!
- 4) Take care not to do something that results in a misunderstanding.

BE DIRECT WITH CHILDREN:

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS • CLEAR GUIDELINES • CLEAR LANGUAGE

A) GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN

- 1) Counselors need to be aware of the tendency of children to be impulsive and to become over-stimulated.
- 2) Counselors need to be aware of the impact their actions may have on the campers.
- 3) Campers can be made to feel unsafe if they become over-stimulated because, in such a state, they are threatened with the loss of self-control. It should be pointed out that loss of self-control is one of the things that children fear most. (The other two are being rejected and being humiliated.)
- 4) Counselors should also know certain other typical characteristics of children; including, but not limited to, their tendency to do the following:
 - become tired and hungry more quickly than adults
 - “fall apart” (become irritated, cranky, etc) when tired and hungry
 - have different energy levels than adults
 - not always know what is in their best interest
 - argue relentlessly for the very things that might harm or frighten them
 - become restless when idle and therefore prone to becoming impulsive
 - assume adults can intuit or “divine” what is bothering them

B) GUIDELINES FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN:

- 1) Counselors may, under no circumstances, hit a child including spanking.
- 1) Counselors may not use abusive or derogatory language with campers.
- 2) Counselors should calmly discuss any behavioral incidents with the camper(s) involved, to help resolve the issue and reduce the chances for similar outbursts.
- 3) Counselors should ask for help.
- 4) A staff member who encounters a particularly difficult child will seek the assistance of supervisory or administrative staff.
- 5) In all dealings with campers, counselors should strive to respond as opposed to react to children.

C) GUIDELINES FOR CAMPER-COUNSELOR CONTACT: *(Guidelines for touching campers)*

- On the hand, shoulder or upper back;
- Never against a child’s will (unless in the case of clear and present danger to the child);
- Never against a child’s verbally or non-verbally expressed discomfort;
- Contact should be made when at least one other adult is present;
- Never when it would have the effect of over-stimulating a child;
- Never in a place on the child’s body that is normally covered by a bathing suit.

⇒Remember, in reference to the privacy needs of campers (changing, conversations about personal matters, personal belongings and so on); the following behaviors may be intrusive or invasive:

- embarrassing a child about his or her body;
- drawing attention to a child while he or she is changing or showering;
- tickling, wrestling with or otherwise touching a camper in a way that is over-stimulating or invasive to his or her privacy;
- sharing personal information about one's romantic or sexual life;
- sitting on a camper's lap, or having campers sit on your lap;
- telling stories or engaging in conversation that is lurid or over-stimulating.

D) COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITY:

- 1) Counselors are care-takers of children.
- 2) There is a clear power difference between counselors and campers (money, mobility, authority, experience, knowledge, different sets of rules, etc).
- 3) Inappropriate sexual contact with or physical abuse of a campers can have severe emotional and psychological effects on that camper and that can last a lifetime. These reactions can be so severe they require intensive professional intervention, which can be disruptive to the victim's life as well as being time consuming and expensive.

Created by Bob Ditter, M.Ed., LCSW

OSC IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- ◆ Use Common Sense!
- ◆ Avoid situations that may be misinterpreted
- ◆ Bathroom rule—**MORE than 2** (that means at least 3 persons including at least one staff); Staff member should also walk through public bathrooms first before campers go in
- ◆ "Knees, not laps."
- ◆ Safe touches-as stated above and be aware that personal spaces vary/observe responses
- ◆ If you have a question, doubt or hunch that something is not appropriate, trust your "gut".
- ◆ If you are not sure—stop and think. Ask yourself "if a parent were here watching right now, would they be okay with whatever is going on?" Seek guidance.
- ◆ Watch for signs of stress in yourself and each other as a way of maintaining a safe environment.
- ◆ It is a sign of strength to ask for help-our Directors and your peers are here to support you!

CAMPER'S NEEDS

Children of all ages strive for many things at camp (and in life!). These things include, but are not limited to: 1) SECURITY, 2) RECOGNITION, 3) FRIENDSHIP, 4) ADVENTURE, and 5) ACHIEVEMENT. In fact, many behavior patterns can be traced to a striving for one of these needs. Day camp is an ideal place to help children deal with these needs in a positive way. **Camp is a new enough experience that campers will be open to trying more productive behavior patterns than they might use at home or school for satisfying their needs.** The more YOU can skillfully meet these needs, the more enjoyable the camp day can be. The following are some suggestions as to how you can work successfully with each type of need.

SECURITY (PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SAFETY)

1. Explain upcoming activities in detail and be attuned to signs of fear.
2. Set limits on behavior so that campers will not fear their own actions or those of others.
3. Be aware of physical dangers and work to remove or avoid them.
4. Do not force campers to participate in activities. Gently encourage campers who are afraid. Get them to participate at a minimum level, i.e., sitting on the side of the pool with their feet in the water.
5. Talk to campers about strangers in the preserve. Explain to them that if anyone approaches them that does not belong at OSC, to walk away and immediately tell their counselor.

RECOGNITION

1. Learn each camper's name the first day. There is no sweeter music to a person's ears than his/her own name. Make a game of it, make creative name tags, etc.
2. Recognize positive contributions immediately, or campers will most likely begin to do negative things to get your attention.
3. Accept the individual strengths and weaknesses in each camper and work from there.
4. Talk to campers with respect.
5. Help campers learn other camper's names. This is very important.

FRIENDSHIP

1. Show a personal interest in each camper.
2. Encourage friendships among campers. Again, teach them each other's names.

ADVENTURE

1. Make routine activities exciting. Going into the preserve to "collect natural items" may not sound like much fun, but entering "Sherwood Forest for supplies" does!
2. Help campers find excitement in things around them. Clouds are just clouds until you lay on your back in a big field and let your imagination dictate the strange and wonderful shapes.
3. End each day with some anticipation for the next day's activities (remember MWF and TTH!).

ACHIEVEMENT

1. Plan activities so that each camper can have some success each day.
2. Make your expectations realistic, but challenging. Expecting too much of someone can be just as damaging as expecting too little.
3. Allow campers to control as much of their own destiny as is safe and productive. Campers should have a major role in planning, carrying out and evaluating activities.

The first few days at camp will be a period of testing. **Campers will try to determine if the behavior patterns which work at home and at school are applicable to this new setting.** They will look for your reactions to their behavior and use your behavior as models for their own. Using the suggestions above, you will be able to create a positive environment in your group, and build a foundation for success for the rest of the session (and summer)!

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The list below provides some suggestions for guiding your group in a positive way, and responding to opportunities for guidance like a pro!

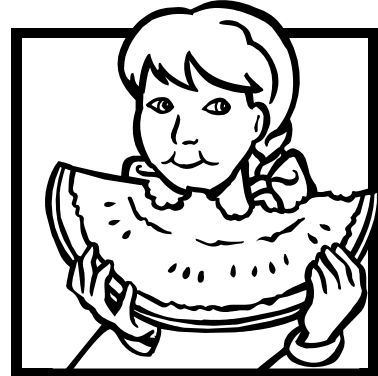
1. "You are good at..." Children are often best encouraged when they do not expect it! It is possible to point out some useful act or contribution in each child. Even a comment about something small and insignificant to us may have great importance to a child.
2. "You have really improved in..." Growth and improvement is something we should expect from all children. They may not be where we would like them to be, but if there is progress, there is less chance for discouragement. Children will usually continue to try if they can see improvement.
3. "You can help me (us, others, etc.) by..." To feel useful and helpful is important to everyone. Children want to be helpful; so we can always give them the opportunity!
4. "Let's try it together." Children who think they have to do things perfectly are often afraid to attempt something new for fear of making a mistake or failing.
5. "You would like me to think you can't do it, but I think you can." This approach could be used when the child says or conveys that something is too difficult for him/her, and s/he hesitates to even so much as try it. If s/he tries and fails, s/he has at least had the courage to try. Our expectations should be consistent with the child's ability and maturity.
6. "I'm sure you can straighten this out, (solve this problem, etc.) but if you need any help, you can always come get me." Adults need to express confidence that children are able and will resolve their own conflicts if given a chance.
7. "That's sharing [or other observed behavior]." "Labeling" behavior rather than simply saying "good job" is a particularly effective respect building skill. It creates a situation in which the child has to figure out if the observed behavior is good, or not!

AGE CHARACTERISTICS

It is important to know the age characteristics of children to keep your own expectations in line with the child's level of maturity.

THE VERY YOUNG (3 THROUGH 7 YEARS)

- Strongly attached to home and family
- Short interest span
- Aware mainly of self and own desires
- Prefer imaginative, make-believe play
- Like to explore their expanding world
- Desire repetition of enjoyable experiences
- Easily upset by change in routines or environment
- Learning to get along with one another, and to work and play in small groups
- Very dependent on adults for meeting physical and emotional needs
- Need patient understanding and close supervision



BEGINNING TO PLAY TOGETHER (7 THROUGH 10 YEARS)

- Ready for an adventure experience
- Lengthening interest span
- Aware of others and their wants
- Willing to share
- Desire acceptance from own age group
- Need close friendship with playmate
- Interested in competition related to one's standing in the group
- Desire better skills performance
- Interest in group games and activities
- Want everyone to obey stated rules and regulations

GROUP STAGE (10 THROUGH 12 YEARS)

- Strong desire for adventure experience
- Want to be together in groups, teams
- Have longer interest span, patience to work toward short-term goals
- Form cliques and friendships
- Seek status through excellence in skills and knowledge of grown-up things
- Fairly competitive in team and individual activities
- Growing concern with physical size and appearance
- Girls and boys develop interest in each other and "relationships"
- Enjoy being mischievous and daring

DRIVE FOR INDEPENDENCE (12 THROUGH 14 YEARS)

- Still want reassurance of adult supervision and attention to daily needs
- Strong drive for conformity with own age group
- Intense feelings and emotions; Increased risk taking
- Greatly influenced by popular adults and teenage idols - hero worship and crush stage
- Rapidly changing interests and ambitions
- Long interest span and increasing capacity for self-discipline
- Prefer competition with outside groups over competition with friends
- Concerned with personal appearance, frequently self-conscious and inhibited
- Puberty

ADHD AND CAMP

There are more and more children coming to camp with the diagnosis of “ADD/ADHD” (attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactive disorder) or with a similar diagnosis. It is currently estimated that about 3-5% of American school children have an attention deficit disorder of some type.

ADHD AND CHILDREN

Many children can, from time to time, behave in a highly active manner. What was referred to for a long time as “hyperactivity” can be caused by many factors—excitement about being at camp or at a favorite activity; anxiety about being away from home or in the company of people who are not quite friends yet; or nervousness about performing in a new arena.

There are “clinical” reasons for a child’s overactive behavior. These include:

1. Having ADHD that is organic; based in the brain.
2. Having had a trauma (death of a parent or divorce, etc.), from which a child has not yet recovered
3. Being stimulated by highly charged material or information that is producing a lot of anxiety (which may or may not be sexual in nature-like having seen an “X” rated video, etc.)

AN IMPORTANT “PARTNERSHIP”

It is important for you as a counselor to know whether a camper has a true attention deficit disorder, since children with ADHD often exhibit behavior that is not willful. These behaviors include not listening, “messing up” on rules that were just stated, or going ahead without permission of the staff. Campers with ADHD, then, need a different kind of *partnership* with you, since most children with ADHD have trouble paying attention, keeping track of the rules, knowing what is expected of them and so on.

STRATEGIES

- The good news is that, at camp, most of the same approaches and strategies that work with campers who have ADD/ADHD can be used successfully with all campers who are highly active. For example, most campers with ADHD need more frequent and more immediate feedback from counselors than other children. They need to know when they are doing well and when they are about to go astray or do something not so well. On the other hand, all campers can benefit from that kind of feedback.
- Once you are clear that being firm is not being mean, you can take a look at some other strategies that help with children who are highly active. Many of these are outlined on the following page. For example, in the bus or with the group, state the rules clearly. Keep the rules simple. Have campers repeat them back to you so you can confirm that they understand what is expected. Put your commands and rules in positive terms. Break tasks down into smaller steps so they are easier to follow.

With care, planning and a thoughtful approach, counselors can have success with ADD/ADHD campers that will allow them to gain more from their camp experience. **Use the following page to learn other strategies we want you to use with our highly active campers.**

ADD/ADHD SUMMARY

1. ADHD Kids

- This behavior is not willful and can be variable (in other words, children with ADHD can concentrate or pay attention sometimes and not others)
- Focus on problem areas-such as activity clean-up, transition times, free play
- Go over ABCs of behavior:
 - **A - Antecedent** (what's going on just before unwanted behavior occurs)
 - **B – Behavior** (what the child did, how the child reacted)
 - **C – Consequences** (response of peers, other staff, primary counselor, etc.)

2. What ADHD Kids Need:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More frequent, immediate feedback• Frequent changes in reinforcers or rewards• High motivation incentives• More praise and more positive feedback• Better Eye Contact• Tasks presented one at a time | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructions simplified, repeated• Repeating back instructions• Lessons/instructions in smaller units• Daily reports in activity areas• Light physical touch for focusing• Positive commands (what you want as opposed to what you want stopped) |
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3. Group Environment

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group rules must be simple, clearly stated, and posted (if possible)• Group rules should be stated in Positive terms• Group rules need repeating and active rehearsing (“So what do we do when...”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompting in a positive, “hands on” way helps• Tasks should be broken down into smaller pieces• Anticipation is the key...the need for immediate gratification outweighs what ADHD children know. |
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4. Counselor-Centered Interventions

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transitions: 1) Allow 3-5 minute warnings-do countdowns; 2) Allow or build in extra time (prompt these children to start earlier.)• Make your routine consistent. Use the same phrase and order of events, for clean-up and similar kinds of activities.• Ask them to repeat back to you what you said or asked for or just instructed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the ADHD child closer to you - close physical proximity helps.• Give immediate feedback.• Use touch when talking to them or instructing them. Hand on shoulder, upper arm, upper back, even holding a younger child's hand.• Prompt them to do something – don't expect they will on their own.• Make your feedback positive. |
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5. General Camp Environment

- Seat ADHD children close to you on the logs or in a circle.
- Observe which times are more stressful for the ADHD child (e.g., at Campfire, getting ready for pool, etc.) and assign extra help during those times (like a JC who can be a special friend/helper.)

‘This section, ADHD and Camp has been developed using, and with permission from, Lifelines and Safety Nets, by Bob Ditter, 1994.