



## 4-H Camp Counselor Training—Walworth County

# Keys to a Positive 4-H Camping Experience

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>KEYS: <i>OPPORTUNITY FOR MASTERY/ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING</i></b>
<p>Counselors will develop an understanding of the ages and stages of youth development (know their audience) enabling them to plan and implement age and developmentally appropriate activities at camp</p> <p>Counselors will become familiar with their role as cabin counselors.</p>	<b>BACKGROUND:</b> <p>Camp counselors are key to the success of any 4-H camping program. They serve as role models for campers and provide leadership to camp planning and camp activities. Their impact on the campers is a lasting one, and it's essential that they understand and work to employ the eight essential elements of positive youth development in the camp environment.</p> <p>Youth need opportunities to achieve physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Counselors need to learn and appreciate the "ages and stages" of development of the campers with whom they work, in order to plan and implement age and developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences for campers.</p> <p>An engaged camp counselor is one who is not only mindful of specific subject area, but one who is building relationships and connections in order to develop understanding. Through self-reflection, the counselor has the ability to learn from experience. The engaged counselor has a higher degree of self-motivation and an inexhaustible capacity to create. This creativity and self-motivation will benefit the camp and can be shared with campers.</p>
<b>Life Skills:</b>	<b>WHAT TO DO:</b>
Learning to learn Problem Solving Leadership	<u>Activities</u>
<b>Suggested Grade Levels:</b>	<p>Activity 1: Play "Fox and Squirrel" from John de Montmollin's publication, <i>It's in the Bag</i>. Process the activity as suggested in the game directions, making the point that all camp will be most successful if staff works together as a team and shares the same goals. (10 min)</p>
9th and 10th graders	<p>Activity 2: Ask teens to picture their ideal camper. Have them write the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social characteristics of that camper on stickie notes, at least one characteristic for each category; only 1 idea per note. Have them post their notes on the appropriate easel sheet, which has been taped on the walls in advance. Ask teens to stand. Go from sheet to sheet, asking them to sit down if they don't measure up to a particular characteristic of the ideal camper, i.e. sit down if you're not "athletic," or sit down if you don't always think "creatively." Continue in this manner until all are seated. Process—none of us are "ideal," and it's unlikely that any of our campers will measure up to the standards of an "ideal camper" that you have set. (15 min)</p>
<b>Time:</b>	<p>Activity 3: Divide teens into groups of four or five per group, using playing cards (prepared ahead of time by suit--ask everyone to draw a card. Split into four groups by having those who drew a particular suit be a group or split into more groups by having those who drew particular numbers be a group – all who drew a 6 form a group, etc.)</p>
90 minutes	<p>Introduce the activity by saying that now it's time for us to think about what our campers are really like, since probably none of them is "ideal." Campers come in different ages, sizes, shapes, and genders. Should we treat them all the same? Program the same for</p>
<b>Supplies needed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Game equipment (2 similar balls, 1 smaller or different ball)</li> <li>- Easel pad, markers</li> <li>- Handouts</li> <li>- Stickie note paper</li> <li>- Pencils</li> <li>- Deck of playing cards (for splitting teens into small groups)</li> <li>- Situation cards</li> </ul>	
<b>Do Ahead:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare copies of handouts</li> <li>- Prepare four easel sheets with words "Physical," "Emotional," "Social," and "Intellectual." Tape these sheets to the meeting room walls prior to the meeting.</li> <li>- Prepare playing cards ahead of time for size of group you anticipate.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Prepared by:</b></p>	<p>each age group or gender? Assign each group a particular age and gender of camper to "draw," depicting the group's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics: 10 year old girl, 10 year old boy, 13 year old girl, 13 year old boy. Have each group tape its drawing to the wall and report on its particular characteristics. Using handout on "ages and stages" compare their "camper" with what the experts say. Process activity using questions that challenge counselors to think about the differences and similarities among the campers and about ways that they need to program at camp to meet the needs of all campers. (30 min)</p> <p>Activity 4: Introduce "Role of the Cabin Counselor" using handout. Ask counselors to rank tasks on job description; discuss rankings. Brainstorm list of items cabin counselors should bring with them to camp so that they can "be prepared." Brainstorm list of items they should leave at home. Note that some things may appear on both lists! (i.e. CD player or CD's, snacks, etc.) (15 min)</p> <p>Activity 5: This activity provides counselors with the opportunity to apply what they've learned in the previous activities. Distribute "situation cards," one per small group. Allow time for group members to discuss options and select best solution to the situation. Ask each group to report back, reading their situation and reporting on their solution. Discuss. (15 min)</p> <p>Wrap Up: Remind youth of schedule of upcoming session; etc. (5 min)</p>
	<p><b>TALK IT OVER:</b></p>
	<p><i>Reflect:</i></p> <p>See processing information included with activities. Challenge counselors to think about the differences and similarities among the campers and about ways that they need to program at camp to meet the needs of all campers.</p> <p>How will planning ahead and bringing the supplies you need make you a more prepared and effective cabin counselor?</p>
	<p><i>Apply:</i></p> <p>How will what we've learned about the various ages and stages of campers help you prepare for your role as a cabin counselor at camp?</p>
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