

4-H CAMP COUNSELOR HANDBOOK

4-H CAMP PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Camp should strive to be a creative, educational experience in cooperative living in the out-of-doors.

Camp is a place—the green woods, the meadow, the campfire, the mess area, the mountains, and the squirrels—that is camp.

Camp is you—you help make camp by the philosophy you have of camp and the philosophy that you develop with your campers.

What the camper takes home is really what camp is. Several will use the skills learned at camp many times throughout their lives, others not as often. Of most importance is that doing things at camp gives 4-H members a sense of accomplishment and self-reliance and that doing things with other campers gives the members a sense of community and fellowship.

COUNTY 4-H CAMPING OBJECTIVES

1. To have recreational and educational experiences in outdoor living focused on natural resources and environmental education (the out of doors).
2. To meet and learn to get along with other young people through the camp program.
3. To learn to be away from the protection of the family.
4. To enrich the club program and the camper's background by exploring new interests or new angles of old interests, such as nature, games, and camping activities that cannot be as well provided through local clubs.
5. To discover and provide opportunities for developing leadership abilities, as well as intelligent fellowship.

6. To further develop special talents and capabilities among campers and counselors.
7. To learn to meet individual and group responsibilities, and how to get along with each other.
8. To enhance the enjoyment of 4-H Club membership.

ROLE OF THE CAMP COUNSELOR

Planning the camp program—Counselors should know the needs and interests of campers. Counselors should know the campsite, its facilities, program and staff. Program planning is accomplished by the Camp Committee with input from all levels of 4-H.

Conducting the camp program—Carrying out the planned camp program is the combined effort of counselors, camp staff, extension agents, and program staff. Counselors provide inspiration and leadership to campers. Counselors should be close to campers, know their likes and dislikes about camp and suggest changes, if needed.

You, the counselor, will perform many roles at different times. Among them will be:

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|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. A Planner | 9. An Example Setter |
| 2. A Leader | 10. An Organizer |
| 3. A Participant | 11. A Good Worker |
| 4. A Friend | 12. A Person That Likes People |
| 5. An Analyzer | 13. A Reliable Person |
| 6. A Tent Leader | 14. An Alert Person |
| 7. A Group Leader | 15. A Good Listener |
| 8. A Resource Person | 16. A Teacher |

HIKES AND PROGRAMS:

1. Counselors are expected to assist person in charge of program and keep order in-group.
2. Counselors are to keep track of their campers during all activities.
3. While on hikes, counselors will be expected to spread out among the campers and encourage them to keep together.

****COUNSELORS WILL BE EXPECTED TO REMAIN WITH CAMPERS AT ALL TIMES AND ARE ONLY TO BE IN COUNSELOR GROUPS DURING RAP SESSIONS****

CAMPFIRES:

1. Counselors will prepare ARRIVAL day campfire.
2. Individual groups will prepare the evening campfire.
3. Counselors will lead the campfire songs while encouraging the campers to take part.
4. Counselors will maintain order of campers during campfire and vespers.

TENTS:

1. Counselors are responsible for campers assigned to their tents.
2. Counselors will not leave campers alone in tents during designated tent times.
3. Counselors will inspect facilities for any unsafe conditions.
4. Counselors WILL SHARE facilities with campers.
5. In case of accident or emergency situations, counselor will stay with camper, and send TWO RESPONSIBLE campers to retrieve the adult staff members.

MORNING ACTIVITIES:

1. Make sure all campers are up, ready, and on time for morning activities.
2. Counselors are to have groups prepared for their morning activities.
3. Counselors will know how to fold the flag and recite the pledges.

RESPONSIBILITY OF COUNSELOR:

You, as a Counselor, have a responsibility to help each 4-H member gain the most possible from camping. To a very large degree, the effectiveness of the camp program will be determined by your interest, activity, and appreciation of the camp program and its values.

You will have responsibilities to:

1. Develop skills in handling camper activities—to understand their action and behavior.
2. Develop skills in planning and teaching one or two program phases.
3. Develop the ability to give leadership and plan with a group or committee and carry out a particular program activity.
4. Be alert to the health, safety, and needs of campers.
5. Work as a team member with other counselors and adult staff.

Your job as a counselor will bring you into contact with all sorts of people involved in a 4-H camping program. Our expectation of counselors is very high and a satisfactory relationship is necessary for a successful camp. Your relationship to:

1. **CAMPERS** - Take a real interest in campers. Help them with problems. Talk to them. Be friendly. Be a good example. Try to get each camper involved.
2. **OTHER COUNSELORS** - Respect them and their ideas. Discuss ways to improve camp. Be willing to assist them in their program needs.

3. **ADULT STAFF** - Assist in planning. Carry out program activities planned. Carry out your responsibilities. Offer suggestions at counselor meetings. Report problems or emergencies immediately. Be loyal and respectful.
4. **PARENTS** - Be ready to meet parents as campers arrive. Introduce yourself to parents and campers. Show them the tents and other facilities. Take an interest in their child.

UNDERSTANDING CAMPERS

All boys and girls have certain needs and desires as they live and grow up with other people. We call these “basic needs” because we all have them. You will be a more effective counselor with campers if you know these needs.

BELONGING - Everybody needs to feel they are one of the group. This makes them feel safe and secure. You can help this happen at camp, in the cabin, in the group, or at free time.

INDEPENDENCE - Campers want to stand on their own feet—do things for themselves—but they need the reassurance of a helping hand close-by. Encourage campers to volunteer to build the campfire, develop a talent skit, or conduct a vesper program, but follow-through and be available to help when they need you.

NEW EXPERIENCES - Campers grow rapidly and learn as they grow. New experiences must be enjoyed and understood, and new skills must be mastered. Be alert to help campers gain from the many new experiences available in a camp setting—sleeping away from home, shooting a rifle, or eating a new food.

13. Leave the campgrounds without permission of both the Camp Director and the Program Directors.
14. Use liquor, tobacco, or any illegal substance.
15. Use foul language, tell ethnic jokes, tell dirty jokes, sing dirty songs, use sexist or otherwise derogatory language, gestures, or actions, or allow others, whether camper, counselor, or adult, to do so.

ARRIVAL:

1. Greet campers and their parents, answer their questions and give them a brief tour if requested.
2. Make campers feel WELCOME!
3. Counselors are to be at the sign-up table and be prepared to escort campers to their designated tents.

WELCOME DINNER:

1. Counselors will do KP for this evening.

COLOR GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Recognize each camper by name.
2. Gain respect and control of campers.
3. Establish group lines, shortest to tallest.
4. Keep order in lines (quiet and straight).
5. Teach group songs.

EVENING RECREATION:

1. Specified counselors will carry out the evening recreation.

6. Encourage good eating habits.
7. Observe and carry out the camp program.
8. Make flag ceremonies and vespers vital and meaningful experiences.
9. Build camp spirit by saying, let's do" rather than "you do."
10. Avoid counselor cliques.
11. Sleep by the door of your tent.

A CAMP COUNSELOR WILL NOT:

1. USE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON ANY CAMPER AT ANYTIME FOR ANY REASON.
2. Be a special-privileged class, but will remember that camp is for the camper.
3. Ask campers to do something he or she would not do.
4. Embarrass anyone, especially the bashful camper.
5. Try to run campers' lives, but will encourage individual initiative, independence and responsibility.
6. Show irritation when under tension.
7. Allow his/her campers to injure or destroy property or the forest.
8. Risk losing the respect and confidence of the campers.
9. Allow campers to leave sight of the camp area unaccompanied by an adult or counselor.
10. Talk about other counselors, campers, or camp policy in an unkind way.
11. Provide any prescription or Over-the-counter drugs (for example, Alka Seltzer, Roloids, aspirin, cough drops, throat lozenges, etc.) to anyone. Instead, the counselor will inform the adult staff of any health problems.
12. Bring to camp, pets, radio (except clock-type), cassette players, liquor, tobacco products, any illegal substances, any dirty books or magazines, visitors, or guns.

ACHIEVEMENT - Campers need to feel their efforts are worthwhile and appreciated. They need help in setting goals in line with their abilities and seeing progress in relation to goals.

RECOGNITION - Everybody needs to feel liked and wanted. Campers need to know you believe they are worthwhile, even though they are not perfect. Your smile, word of approval, or pat on the back makes them feel accepted and encouraged. Everyone is good at something. A good counselor is able to find out what that something is and encourage it.

These basic needs are true for all people, counselors and camp staff as well as campers. Let's be aware of those needs and apply them as we work together.

COUNSELING SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

A counselor is, as the name implies, "one who counsels." He or she must be a parent, teacher, friend, guide, and companion. He/she must have a love for children that will help him/her be appreciative of and patient with the ungifted and maladjusted, as well as the talented child. Every counselor must inspire, as well as lead his/her campers.

Camp is more than a place and a plan. It is what happens to campers. This section is devoted to those personal qualities and counseling skills that will help you see that positive things happen to campers.

Your consideration and selection as a 4-H Camp Counselor was based on certain skills and abilities that you possess. All counselors should have some knowledge of the following:

1. How to get along with people and attempt to understand their actions.

2. How to help boys and girls accomplish the objectives and goals of camp.
3. How to maintain conditions of good sanitation, health, and safety.

In addition to the above, basic skills are also needed in some of the program phases of 4-H camp.

1. **INSPIRATION** - vespers, candle lighting ceremonies, thought for the day.
2. **CITIZENSHIP** - flag ceremonies; local, state and national heritage; camp beautification projects; democratic processes.
3. **OUTDOOR EDUCATION** - nature study, conservation of natural resources, ecology, outdoor living, and appreciation.
4. **CREATIVE ARTS** - development of campers' special skills in nature and creative appropriate to the camp setting.
5. **CAMPFIRE** - program and theme ideas, legends, fire building, fire lighting ceremonies.
6. **4-H EDUCATION AND AWARENESS** - teaching 4-H camp, exploring 4-H projects and activities, use of 4-H symbols.
7. **SPORTS AND RECREATION** - outdoor sports, evening recreation, small games and leisure time activities.
8. **SONGS AND SONG LEADING** - leading singing at camp, selection of desirable camp songs, teaching campers to sing and lead songs.

All Counselors should:

1. Be understanding and a good listener.
2. Be enthusiastic and full of fun.
3. Be patient, helpful, and courteous.
4. Be modest and dependable.
5. Feel free to discuss problems with any of the adults at any time.

A GOOD CAMP COUNSELOR CAN EXPECT:

1. To gain a new insight into the needs of others.
2. To grow personally and make lasting friendships through a job well done. Personal growth, wider interests, new skills and a new appreciation of friendship and leadership will be yours.

A CAMP COUNSELOR WILL:

1. Make sure the camper feels welcome and part of the group from the moment of arrival at camp by acquainting his/her tent group with the campgrounds as soon as they arrive and learning each camper's name as quickly as possible – not only those in his/her own tent, but all of the campers.
2. Report any illness or injury to the adult staff immediately. Avoid making too much “fuss” about it. Don't embarrass the camper, and don't send a young camper to the adult staff, go with him/her.
3. Try to see things from the camper's view, meet his/her own level. Don't talk down to him or her.
4. Watch out for the homesick, lonely child. For the homesick, keep him/her busy; for the lonely, draw him/her into group activities.
5. Promote safety at all times.