

# **Camp Grizzly**

## Ten Tips for Summer Camp Counselors

Being a summer camp counselor is incredibly rewarding. On top of being selected for this unique position, you can inspire children to pursue a healthy body and a healthy mind. Whether you're teaching golf at a sports camp or becoming a counselor at Camp Grizzly sleepaway summer camp, you will develop valuable skills and make memories to last a lifetime. At the same time, it isn't a walk in the park. Before you pack your bag, you should know these ten things:

### 1. NO SUMMER CAMP COUNSELOR GETS ENOUGH SLEEP

Summer camp schedules every minute of the day to be very busy and active, that may not be your everyday normal, which can be exhausting. You may probably only get 6-7 hours of sleep each night at best, but it all depends on how you spend your time. Be ready to be tired in a good way and embrace it as part of the camp counselor's summer camp experience. An adventure of a lifetime.

### 2. PREPARE ICE BREAKERS FOR CAMPERS

Sleepaway camp can be scary for children. One of the most intimidating parts of it is requiring some children to be away from home for the first time, forcing them to make new friends. We know making friends at Camp can last a lifetime. But if the ice is never broken, they won't even last a day. So, make sure that you prepare icebreakers for the kids: it can go a long way towards helping them make new lifetime friends.

### 3. MEMORIZE YOUR CAMPERS' NAMES

Adults don't like to have their names forgotten. When children have their names forgotten by an authority figure, it can be heartbreaking. That's why it's absolutely vital for you to memorize the names and faces of your campers. If you aren't good with names, you just need to put twice as much effort into it. A failure to memorize can make your cabin group feel unimportant. Speak to your campers with kindness, so they know they matter.

### 4. BREAK UP CAMPER CLIQUES

As a summer camp counselor, you want the kids to make friends. But you also want them to broaden their horizons. When cliques form at camp, it could make others feel excluded by the same groups to dominate every event. So, we need to create opportunities for them to make new friends. Mix up the groupings at camp events. In the long run, people will make a lot of awesome new friends.

### 5. REMEMBER THE PLAN

Flexibility is an important part of being a summer camp counselor. You should be able to cancel an outdoor event because it rains, for instance. But while you shouldn't want to be rigid, you should want to function from a place of order. Knowing the schedule and plan will actually help you adjust to any potential deviations that happen. Camp counselors have a lot to deal with. Don't make it worse by spending a day wondering what comes next. Review the camp schedule daily and any changes from the Camp Director to share that information with your campers.

## 6. ENFORCE DISCIPLINE TO KEEP YOUR CAMPERS SAFE AND HEALTHY

Discipline is an important part of summer camp. While camp is supposed to be a fun event, if you fail to have a disciplined group, things can get dangerous. Have rules and stick to them. This is particularly true if your campers are doing something unsafe. Children often make the wrong choices. As a counselor, it's your job to be the adult in the room and make sure things don't get out of hand. It may not be easy, but enforcing discipline is a part of keeping the children as safe as they can be. Review Camp Group Agreement (Want Circle) and Camp/Cabin rules and refer to them as needed.

## 7. MEMORIZE THE HEALTH NEEDS OF YOUR CAMPERS

Some campers may have medical conditions. Some may take medications to keep them healthy and needs to be taken as prescribed. You will need to be sure to take them to the Camp Nurse as scheduled. Also, knowing what if any allergies they may have can have different consequences. If somebody has a minor allergy that just causes bloating, it's still important to prevent it. But some of them can be far worse. If you have a camper with a bee sting allergy, for instance, you need to memorize this information. If this person comes into contact and gets stung by a bee, they can go into anaphylactic shock and may need an epi-pen and need a trip to the hospital. Make sure you care for each child's special needs if you want to keep them safe. Additionally, everyone needs sustenance and fluids to maintain energy levels and hydration

during a warm busy active schedule. Ensure you observe that every child in your care is healthy overall.

#### 8. BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT

Camp Counselors do not sit on the sidelines or allow themselves to be distracted from the group. Counselors participate with their campers in all activities to have fun, to build relationships, to mentor, guide and lead activities and group communication, problem solve and most importantly to listen.

#### 9. BE A ROLE MODEL

The most important thing that you can do as a summer camp counselor is to be a positive and safe role model. For a period of one week, you will be the primary adult these kids interact with. This puts your role somewhere between that of parent, teacher, and referee/coach! If you want to use it wisely, you should act with respect, honor, integrity, and dignity. Being a counselor is important. Treat it that way when you're with your campers and everyone at camp.

#### 10. BE FRIENDS WITH OTHER COUNSELORS

Everybody needs friends. As a summer camp counselor, it can be easy to get burnt out. Luckily, there will be plenty of others at the camp in the same boat as you to lean on to support one another. Make friends with the other counselors on your trip. In the long run, this will help you become a better counselor and person. Plus, these friendships will last a lifetime.