

YMCA Camp Willson

Cabin Leader Guide

Responsibilities:

- To provide cabin/group supervision during your stay
- To be an active member of the adult team (camp staff, teachers, chaperones) responsible for providing a safe environment for the students
- To ensure that each student's personal needs are met (dressed properly for weather, are eating, staying clean, restroom breaks, etc.)
- To make sure your group arrives to classes/meals on time
- To assist Naturalists as needed in class/evening programs
- To provide a positive role model for students
- To have fun!

Equipment needed:

Same items as the students plus:

Flashlight

Alarm clock

Insect repellent, sunscreen (spring, fall)

Money (small amount for soda, camp store if interested)

A desire to learn with and from the students

Special Notes:

Camp is a smoke free environment. However, there are designated smoking areas. Please remember students are everywhere and we are trying to provide them with an atmosphere that promotes healthy living.

In case of weather or fire related emergencies, please contact a Willson staff member immediately. The Willson staff will inform you and the rest of the school group of further instructions. Your job is to keep the students calm until everything has subsided.

Feel free to ask for help when you need it. Our staff is experienced in working with groups of children in this type of environment. We are more than willing to help you if the need arises.

Once again, thank you for sharing your time, energy, and yourselves with these students. We hope you have a wonderful experience at camp!

YMCA Willson Outdoor Center

Practical Suggestions for Discipline

1. Avoid making threats. You may not be willing or able to act or carry it out.
2. To quiet a group try:
Talking even more softly to those around you, and then to the whole group.
3. If a child is behaving in a way that is disruptive to you or others, take him/her aside for a one on one talk, while ensuring the rest of the group is being supervised by another adult. Let the child express his/her feelings. Tell the child how his/her behavior is making you feel and then listen to what he/she wants to tell you.
4. It's ok to admit you were wrong about something. We don't expect you to have all the answers, so do not be afraid to ask us!
5. Laugh WITH, not AT the members of your cabin/group. Feelings are easily hurt, and yours can be when they laugh AT you.
6. Most kids do not "get" sarcasm, and can end up feeling like the butt of a joke.
7. Be aware of your words. Please "keep it clean", and take into account the age of your students.
8. A few often repeated words of encouragement when jobs are genuinely well done will help children develop morale and self-confidence.
9. Make what rules you want/need early in the group life, and then relax them. The reverse is difficult to achieve.
10. Show a sense of humor often.
11. Play no favorites. Respect variations in feelings of children toward you. Some children must challenge authorities, they are acting out their needs, and it is not an attack on you or your personality.
12. Participation with children in activities builds rapport.
13. Accept your own anger as something you are capable of absorbing and dissolving. Seek the help of a teacher or staff member before the situation escalates.