

The Exceptional Counselor's Summer Camp Guide



Mission

Provide every child an opportunity to grow in mind, body, and spirit

Introduction

Congratulations! You are a summer camp counselor. As a staff member, you accept great responsibility as a role model for youth and the community. As your director, I have complete faith in you and your abilities and cannot wait to see what you do with your talents this summer. I expect wonderful things! This guide will orient you with camp, and the expectations that come with your title as counselor. Let’s get started!

Camp Structure

There are four camps divided by age group, each designated by color, and staffed by a director, senior counselor, and junior counselor. Each camp is also limited to a ratio of children per staff. There may be no more than 15 children for every 1 staff. Always monitor your count and be aware of your ratio.

<u>Camps</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Home</u>
Spark	5-6	Yellow	Director / Sr. / Jr.	15:1	Gym 1
Spirit	8-9	Purple	Director / Sr. / Jr.	15:1	Gym 2
Explorer	10-11	Green	Director / Sr. / Jr.	15:1	Teen Center
Teen Adventure	12+	Blue	Director / Sr. / Jr.	15:1	Teen Center

Before & After Camp Schedule

Arrival

One counselor each day will be designated to greet parents and children as they arrive. This counselor is responsible for making sure each parent signs in, and monitors a count of children in camp.

Before Camp (6:30am - 9:00am)

All campers arriving before 8am will be dropped off in the Teen Center. Counselors are expected to provide activity centers and supervise the children. At 8am, camps Spark and Spirit will transition to the gym. Once located in a gym, counselors will decide upon and play gym game(s) until it is time for morning announcements and bathroom breaks. Every camp must go to the bathroom before camp activities begin at 9:00am.

	6 - 6:30am	6:30 - 7am	7 - 7:30am	7:30 - 8am	8 - 8:30am	8:30 - 9am
Spark		Teen Center			Gym 1	
Spirit		Teen Center				Gym 2
Explorer		Teen Center				
Teen Adventure		Teen Center				

After Camp (3:00pm - 5:30pm)

Upon returning from the day’s activities, camps will meet at their designated homes. Counselors have the option of playing organized gym games or providing activity centers. As campers go home, camps will begin to combine. Camps Spark and Spirit will combine in gym 2 around 4:30pm. All camps will combine in the Teen Center by 5pm for pick up. Counselors who close are responsible to make sure the Teen Center is clean and organized before they depart for the day.

Departure

One counselor each day will be designated to greet parents as they pick up their children. This counselor is responsible for checking each parent’s photo ID to verify they are on the pick-up list, and monitors a count of the children remaining in camp. Always verify photo ID before releasing a child to a parent.

Day Camp Schedule

Each camp will have a weekly schedule distributed to parents and counselors via both email and hard copy. The schedule outlines the day’s activities, including their location and time. It is the lead counselor’s responsibility to plan art, science, cooking, and gaming activities. Senior and junior counselors should assist in the planning process. Headlines you will find on the weekly schedule are outlined below:

Field Trips

Every camp will depart for 2 field trips each week. Camps Spark and Spirit will travel and tour together, as will camps Explorer and Adventure. Before you leave, make sure to have your camp’s binder, roster, first aid kit, and ball bag. Remember that when you leave the building, you and your camp become ambassadors of the YMCA. Every camp should strive to be a role model for the community. Remind your camp of the behavior you expect before departure.

Orr’s Farm	Crystal Grottoes	Fort LeTort
Catoctin Zoo	Oakes Museum	Memorial Park
Ship Planetarium	Cosmic Skate	Britton Park
Monkey Joe’s	Leitersburg Cinema	Cowan’s Gap
Hersheypark	Lake Tobias	Caledonia
Mountain Lake Camp	Northside Pool	Fuller Lake

Art, Science, & Cooking Activities

Camp counselors will be expected to plan and execute art, science, and cooking activities throughout the summer. On the weekly camp schedule, you will find 60 minute blocks of time in the Teen Center dedicated to these activities. It is the lead counselor’s responsibility to plan activities. Senior and junior counselors should assist in the planning process. Pinterest typically is a wonderful resource for gathering ideas! It is important to note that each camp will be granted flexibility to get creative with this time. Have a cool idea? Plan it, do it!

Gaming in the Gym

Each camp will have a designated time to play games in the gym. Each camp should select and play a diverse group of games. The lead counselor in each camp should develop a list of games and allow campers to vote on the games they wish to play. Don't forget to experiment with new games, and always try to keep as many players involved as possible. Before each game is played, make sure to thoroughly explain the rules. Even if you've played the game before, someone always seems to have questions or forgets something important. Remember to engage with the children! You are encouraged to join in and play the games. If you are excited, the campers will be too.

Centers

In before and after camp, centers are an effective way to minimize chaos. Even though the camp day is not in session, the children should still be occupied with activities. The Teen Center will have tables, games, books, art supplies, and toys available in the closet. Camps Spark and Spirit will have carts available with all of the same supplies for campers in the gym. Counselors should place 4-5 centers out, and assign campers to each center. Every few minutes, rotate centers.

Parks

Camps will be spending a significant amount of time at local parks. Renfrew and Memorial will be our most popular. Each camp rotates, spending their non-field trip days at these locations. Camps should have at least two 30 minute sessions playing an organized game, and allow for at least 1 hour of free time for campers to relax. Camps are encouraged to be creative! Have a cookout, organize a field day, do something out of the box!

Movie

Fridays are movie days in camp! Camps Spark and Spirit will watch a movie from 2:00-4:00pm, while camps Explorer and Adventure will watch a movie from 12:00-2:00pm. Be aware of movie ratings, and ensure that movies are age appropriate. Keep it PG! You may bring in your own movie, have campers bring in movies, or go to a local Redbox.

Pizza Day

Each camp will have a designated day where we will offer pizza as a lunch option for our campers. Parents may choose to pay \$3.00 instead of packing their child's lunch. In return, the camper will receive 2 slices of pizza, snack, and a drink. One counselor from each camp will collect the money during the morning hours and keep a list of the children's names who have paid. At lunch, we will distribute the pizza.

Swimming

Camps will swim both at the Y, and on field trips. Counselors are responsible for making sure that all campers swim-tested and have the appropriate wrist band. Bands are red, yellow, and green; corresponding with the swimmer's ability. Each camp will have a swim band list in their camp's binder. Once tested, each camper's name should be recorded on the swim band list under the appropriate heading. While at the pool, counselors are not lifeguards. The counselor's job is to monitor behavior and counts, allowing the lifeguards to be fully alert. Counselors are allowed to swim with the campers, but at least 1 counselor must be on deck.

Checklist

The checklist is a parent’s guide to make sure their child is ready for camp. Encourage parents to read and confirm the checklist before dropping their child off each morning.

Sunscreen | Water Bottle | Sneakers | Snack Money | Swimsuit

Camper Behavior

Each camp will have the autonomy to create their own individual behavior system. No matter the system, it is important to make rules that are clear, consistent, and enforceable. Camps that follow those simple guidelines will be successful in managing behavior.

How to Discipline

It’s important to remember that everyone makes mistakes. Your first goal in any behavioral issue should be to investigate. Ask each camper involved what happened. From the stories, piece together a solution that works for each camper. Use examples from your personal life to relate to the situation. Ask the campers to describe how they could have handled the situation better. If appropriate, explain to campers that disciplinary action is needed. Don’t be afraid to take a substantial amount of swim, gym, or gaming time from the camper to establish control. However, yelling at a camper is never a good practice. It is important the counselor be a calm and collected role model for everyone!

Discipline Report

The discipline report is for behaviors that are chronic in nature, destructive, involve theft, or physically harm other campers. When a discipline report is filed, the camper is written up on a form provided in each camp’s binder. Each offense is written, reviewed by the director, and copies are provided to the camper’s parent(s). After a camper’s third offense, he or she will be suspended for 3 days. After a camper’s fourth offense, and thereafter, he or she will be suspended for an indefinite period of time. Counselors should only file discipline reports if the behavior meets the criteria above. All discipline reports must be approved by the director before being formally issued.

Binder Checklist

The binder is each camp’s single most important possession. The binder has important medical, managerial, and disciplinary forms that camps will use daily.

Swim Band | Allergy-Medication | Hurt Alert | Accident Report
Disciplinary Report | Supply Request | Time Sheets | Registrations

Supply Request Form

The supply request form is provided for the purchasing of supplies, food, and equipment for camp. Counselors are not expected to purchase their own supplies, but may within reason request certain items for purchase. The supply request form must be filled out and submitted at least 1 week prior to the date supplies are needed. All supply request forms must be approved by the director before purchase is made. Any purchases made before the director’s approval will not be reimbursed.

Lead Counselor Checklist

Before a camp leaves each day, the lead counselor should always have the following things with them. The lead counselor may choose to delegate items to supporting staff, which is acceptable and encouraged. On field trip days, a check may or may not be involved. If needed, the director will either place the check in the binder prior to the field trip or place it in the lead counselor's hand the morning of the field trip.

- Binder
- First-Aid Kit
- Ball Bag
- Rosters (Sign In-Out)
- Check

Medical

Before we can have fun this summer, safety comes first. Injuries will occur this summer, and we have forms that document what happened and respectfully inform parents.

Hurt Alert

The 'Hurt Alert' is intended to inform parents of minor bumps, bruises, cuts, and other various incidents that happened during camp. The hurt alert is friendly in nature, and provides a simple notification. Parents appreciate the communication. If a camper experiences a minor injury, counselors are expected to fill out the form and provide it to the parent upon pick-up the same day.

Accident Report

Accident reports are filed for significant injuries that require more than just a bandage or an ice pack. If a child suffers a significant injury during camp, follow the proper first-aid procedures. Call the appropriate authorities as needed and report the incident to the director as soon as possible. Once the dust has settled, find and fill out all of the information on the accident report form. Once filled out, submit to the director and follow-up on the incident the next day.

Allergy-Medication

Every camp will be provided with the registration forms for each camper. The registration forms include information about allergies and medications. All counselors from your camp must look through the registrations and fill out the Allergy-Medication form with appropriate information. All counselors need to be aware of the allergies that are in your camp.

Sunscreen

Sunburns are entirely preventable in camp. It is each parent's responsibility to provide sunscreen for their child. It is our responsibility to make sure that it is used! For each hour outside, re-apply! If a child does not have sunscreen, each camp's first-aid kit will be provided with sunscreen to use. If a child is without sunscreen, parents need to be notified at pick-up.

Counselor Behavior

Professionalism

Y counselors are role models for campers and the community. Our staff is expected to hold high moral and ethical standards. Be aware that your actions and conversations do make a difference. Our campers will be looking to you for leadership, be sure to model positive behaviors.

No drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or obscenities are permitted. Texting or connecting with a camper via social media is strictly prohibited. Counselors may not inappropriately touch campers; including campers sitting in counselor’s laps and hugging (give a high five instead!). Counselors are not permitted to offer transportation to campers in their personal vehicles.

Cell Phone Policy

Counselors are permitted to have a personal cell phone with them throughout the day. Cell phones may not be used for social media, games, texting with friends, etc.

Dress Code

Counselors are expected to wear khaki shorts, sneakers, and a summer camp T-shirt. Only one piece swimsuits are allowed for swimming. Failure to meet these expectations will result in the employee being sent home without pay.

Allowed	Prohibited	
Camp T-Shirt	Jeans	Two-Piece Swimsuit
Khaki Shorts	Yoga Pants	Non-Camp Shirt
Sneakers	Sweatpants	Low-Cut Tops
One-Piece Swimsuit (swimming only)	Flip Flops	High Shorts

Staff Schedules

Staff members will be emailed their schedule, along with any important camp announcements, on the Thursday prior to the upcoming work week. The schedule is color coded by camp. The staff schedule will also be posted in my office for your convenience.

Time Off Requests

Everyone gets sick, and everyone needs a vacation at some point. We understand this! We do ask that you follow the protocols listed below:

Illness- You must call the director as soon as possible. If you leave a voice message, the director will call to confirm with you. Text messages are not acceptable! Please call the director’s direct cell phone at (717) 552-6752.

Vacation- Requests are accepted no later than 2 weeks in advance. Requests may be made via email or in person. Although we will do our best to accommodate vacation requests, dates are not guaranteed until you have the director’s approval.

Time Sheets

Counselors are responsible for correctly filling out and signing off on their time sheets each week. Time sheets are provided in each camp’s binder and may remain there until they are due at the end of each pay period. A pay period is 2 weeks. I will collect the time sheets from the binders at 5:30pm at the end of the pay period.

