

THE JOB OF A CAMP COUNSELOR

The day is long, The day is hard, The rewards are great!

YOU ARE A ROLE MODEL-The most important aspect of your job is that you are a role model for the campers. Campers are watching everything you do and say. It is important that every minute that you are visible to the campers that you demonstrate the qualities for which you were hired. Fairness, sense of humor, no favorites, no obscene language or gestures, a sense of fun and adventure, are all examples of the qualities you should be displaying.

This is probably the only job you will ever have in your life that really is 24 hours a day. It is very demanding. It is important that you pace yourself, that you get adequate sleep, drink fluids on a regular basis, and stay focused on why you here.

THE THREE BASIC ELEMENTS

- A. **Cabin Counselor**
- B. **Activity Counselor**
- C. **Camp Supervision**

- A. Cabin Counselor**-There are 16 cabins in Boy's camp and 16 cabins in Girl's Camp. Each cabin will have two assigned counselors. There will be a primary counselor and a relief counselor for each cabin. This position normally rotates during the summer.
1. **The two most important requirements** of a cabin counselor are to:
 - a. Be a constant advocate on behalf of your campers. Make sure they accomplish everything during their camp visit that you believe they want to. Read all parent forms to assure you know what parents want their campers to accomplish as well. This is very important.
 - b. Build a team. In either the two weeks or four weeks that you have your cabin group spend time every day building them into a team that works and cooperates together. Work to integrate first year campers on day one!
 2. **Daily Routine**
 - a. Reveille-You should be the first one up, helping your campers get ready for the day.
 - b. Dining Hall-All meals at Skylake are very important. Be enthusiastic about the day. Get the campers sharing ideas and stories.
 - c. Cabin Clean up-Each morning the cabin must be cleaned for inspection. This is to set the tone for the entire day.
 - d. Siesta and Shower Hour-These are relaxed times, staff are rotated on and off during this time, if you are on duty you are responsible for supervision.
 - e. Campfire-Counselors are always there with their campers, sitting with cabin groups.
 - f. Taps-Staff are to be in the cabins with their campers. Quiet talk is fun and perfectly o.k.
 3. **Endless Details**-You are the surrogate parent for the time the campers are in your cabins. It is your job to be sure:
 - a. Campers brush their teeth, bathe, change clothes, and perform proper personal hygiene on a daily basis.
 - b. Campers drink enough fluids, put on sunscreen, take their medications, and get enough rest.
 - c. Campers get their laundry out at the appropriate time.
 - d. Campers write home at least once a week.
 - e. Campers eat properly.
 4. **Administrative Responsibilities**-In addition to be the surrogate parent, you must keep the actual parent and the administration informed of the progress of all campers.

- a. Post Cards- You are responsible to write a postcard the day the campers arrive introducing yourself and announcing their camper has arrived safely. A second card must be mailed home on Thursday of week 1 and on Tuesday of each following week. More is even better!
- b. Camp paper work-At end of the session parents receive a report from you regarding how their camper did in camp. It is important that you keep track of these activities on a daily basis.
- c. Phone Calls-You will possibly be speaking to parents. You will definitely be speaking with parents if any of your campers are homesick or having problems.

B. Activity Counselor-Skylake offers approximately 20 different activities. Each staff member is assigned to an activity. There are a number of primary requirements as an activity counselor:

1. Lesson Plan-It is critical that you establish a written lesson plan for what you plan to accomplish and how you plan to accomplish it. The goal of all of our activities is that the campers learn skills and how to enjoy their new activities.
2. Activity Preparation-During staff training and continuously during the camp sessions you are expected to properly maintain the equipment for your activity and to maintain the area of your activity.
3. Timeliness-Activities begin on the hour and end at 50 minutes past the hour. As the leader you are always expected to be there before the campers. Impress upon the campers the need to be on time so that the activity can start on time.
4. Campers being present-It is very important that the campers attend all of their activities. Campers have plenty of flex time to hang out. Activity time requires them to be at their activities.
5. While lifeguarding for campers and while on duty supervising campers at the waterfront, counselors must be in appropriate Lifeguard swim attire. This requirement is both for safety and role modeling. Counselors must have two such swim suits for the summer and Skylake will reimburse \$50 towards the purchase of swim attire. Suits can be purchased at www.thelifeguardstore.com.

C. Camp Supervision-The 24 hour element of your job requires that at all times that you are required to be on site you are a supervisor of the campers. That means not only are you supervising your own cabin group, you are also responsible to be supervising the behavior of all of the campers in camp. It is an unfair burden on other staff if you do not share in the responsibility of monitoring behavior in camp at all times.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND AT ALL TIMES:

YOU ARE NOT ALONE-Remember, parents don't raise children alone. They have each other, they have friends, and they turn to professionals. Do not try to handle all of the problems you will confront by yourself. Share your issues with other counselors and turn to the Head Counselors and Administrative Staff for assistance. It is required that any serious rule violations or issues be communicated with Administrative Staff. We are all here as a group to help each other.

DIRECT REPORT-You will report directly to the Head Counselor. That is the first person you go to when you are having a problem, a question, or just seeking general advice. It is the Head Counselor who will be doing performance reviews during camp. You will experience performance reviews twice during your summer at Skylake. Reviews are nothing more than staff training, one on one, after you have been tested under fire for a while. Their purpose is to continue to keep staff focused on all aspects of their job.