

## GUIDELINES FOR CAMPER COUNSELOR CONTACT

As campers build relationships with their counselors, they may begin to feel more comfortable with physical interaction, such as sitting in laps, climbing on counselors, piggybacks, holding hands, roughhousing, etc. It's important for you and the camper to be aware of limitations and proper context of these interactions. Here are some guidelines to help you understand what is or is not appropriate.

**Please keep in mind that each camp will have more detailed training and their own specific policies regarding camper counselor contact. The guidelines below are basic and any questions should be addressed with your supervisor directly.**

When touching campers, the following guidelines should be followed:

- If using physical touch when interacting with a camper, the hand, head, shoulder, or upper back- a side hug or pat on the head/shoulder is often considered appropriate.
- A counselor should not touch a child against their will, unless in the case of clear and present danger of the camper.
- Counselors should never touch a child if discomfort is expressed (verbally or non-verbally)
- Camper counselor contact should only be made in the company of other adults.
- Campers should not be touched in a place on the camper's body that is typically covered by a bathing suit unless for a clear medical necessity and with the supervision of another adult staff member.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

- Campers are expected to bathe themselves and change their own clothes while at camp, and to do so in a private setting. It is not appropriate for counselors to bathe or change campers' clothes unless camp has specific policies regarding campers who are too young and/or physically unable to perform these actions themselves.
  - Counselors should absolutely never be unclothed in front of campers.
  - It is never appropriate to compare a camper's body with another camper or staff member.
  - Counselors should never be in or on a camper's bed, day or night.
  - If a child discovers a tick, cut, rash, etc. in a private part of their body, immediately take them to the camp nurse or doctor to be professionally examined.
  - It is important for counselors to model good behavior and to be mindful of the way they interact with co-workers in front of the children.
  - Counselors should avoid being alone with a child at any time; this is not only to ensure the camper feels comfortable and safe, but to protect the counselor from any interaction that may be misinterpreted by a camper.
  - When counselors need to have a 1:1 conversation with a camper, they may seek a private setting away from others, but should always ensure they are visible to other adults while alone with a camper, like in a field or on a front step.
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