



Camp Counseling

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Background

Do you like working with children and playing games? Do you love nature and being outdoors? You can combine all of these interests into one experience. 4-H Camps look for teens who are willing to learn about children, leadership, camping, games, crafts, and personal development. Eventually, we would like you to share your experiences by volunteering to become a camp counselor in your local program. A camp is a cooperative group of kids or adults learning and living new experiences, solving problems, and making their own decisions. The outdoor environment at camp provides kids with opportunities to learn how to live, work, and play through hands-on activities in the natural world. Each youth is provided opportunities to experience success and achievement through physical and mental activities and crafts. Many of these activities cannot be duplicated in a home setting such as tennis, archery, canoeing, and team building/challenge courses. Campers learn to make their own decisions and to live away from home. The counselor role is to guide the campers through this wide variety of experiences, to make it fun, and to have fun.

Objectives of 4-H Camping

1. To have educational, recreational, and social experiences in outdoor living away from home.
2. To provide opportunities to meet and learn to get along with other people by living together and participating together in a camping experience.
3. To provide opportunities for youth to learn to take responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
4. To provide new experiences for youth by exploring new interests, or by exposing them to new approaches to old interests, such as nature, aquatics, music, and other life skills that cannot be provided as effectively outside of camp.
5. To teach youth about citizenship and the importance of being a responsible citizen.

6. To discover and provide opportunities for developing leadership skills.
7. To discover special talents among campers and teen leaders and provide opportunities for developing these talents.
8. To learn to meet individual and group responsibilities.
9. To enrich the on-going 4-H club program and to involve youth in unit 4-H clubs.
10. To have fun.
11. To be inspired to practice better 4-H club membership.

Every Self Determined Project can be broken down into areas of interest. These are the specific things members wish to address during their project adventure. Using your Self Determined Project Guide 4-H 365, identify at least three areas of interest with at least three activities per area to explore. Take your ideas from the list below or make up your own. Use 4-H 997 4-H Camp Counselor's Handbook as a project reference. This may be obtained for \$5.00 at your local OSU Extension Office. Use in conjunction with your 4-H 365, Self Determined Project Guide, free at www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~idea or at your local Extension office. Be sure to register your Self Determined Project.

Planning Your Adventure (Reference: 4-H Camp Counselor's Handbook #997) Complete 3 activities.

Activity 1: Develop and write your own 4-H Camp philosophy.

Activity 2: Make arrangements with Extension Educator to observe one day at camp.

Activity 3: Volunteer two hours at Extension Office to help with 4-H camp preparations.

Activity 4: Make a list of ten questions from pages 6-7, The 3 R's of Camp Counseling, and use to interview a counselor with two or more years of experience.

Activity 5: Create a portfolio or binder to keep your counseling information and activities.

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Understand the ages and stages of children from 8 to 15 years old. (Complete 3 activities)

Activity 1: Enroll and complete a babysitting class.

Activity 2: Enroll and complete a basic First Aid class.

Activity 3: Observe third-graders on a playground for half an hour and summarize your observations of the characteristics of 9 to 10-year-olds.

Activity 4: Volunteer or observe at a daycare center, day camp, vacation bible school, or church day care to gain experience with younger children.

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Enhance counseling skills and personal qualities. (Complete 3 activities)

Activity 1: Start a binder or file for camp games, crafts, activities, and resources.

Activity 2: Find and teach to your 4-H club, five get-acquainted, name games, or ice breaker activities.

Activity 3: Go to the OSU Extension Office and watch the video “Catching Kids Being Good” by Dennis Elliot, PhD.

Activity 4: Choose three group game activities, skills, or crafts to teach and make with your 4-H club or to another youth group.

Activity 5: Complete counselor self-rating scale on pages 17-19 to assess where you are before your camp experience.

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Camper Behavior Management (Complete 3 activities)

Activity 1: Write your goals for you and your campers to achieve at 4-H camp.

Activity 2: Make arrangements to visit, shadow, and observe an experienced counselor for one day at another 4-H camp.

Activity 3: Write your thoughts on what it means to “Live by Words and Deed.”

Activity 4: Go to the OSU Extension Office and watch the video “Camper Behavior Management” by Dennis Elliott, PhD.

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Leadership/Citizenship Activities (Complete 3 activities)

- Assist in setting up and/or cleaning up for camp.
- Help someone with their Childcare, First Aid, Creative Arts, or Leadership project.

- Encourage a friend to join 4-H and take a self determined camp counselor project.
- Teach someone something you learned about 4-H or your topic.
- Invite someone to talk to your club about being a counselor or going to camp.
- Arrange a tour of 4-H Camp for members of your club.
- Prepare and exhibit a display promoting 4-H, 4-H camp, or your topic.
- Use county camp flier to promote 4-H Camp to your 4-H Club or at the Local Library.
- Interview the County Extension Educator about counselor opportunities and requirements.

Related References and Web Pages

Ohio State University Extension 4-H staff camping information

- <http://www.ohio4h.org/staff>

American Camp Association

- <http://www.americancampassociation.com>

Northern Virginia 4-H Youth Educational Center

- <http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4h/northern/youth.html>

The Future of Children

- <http://www.futureofchildren.org>

National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

- <http://www.naeyc.org>

JoAnn Fabric and Crafts

- <http://www.joann.com>

- www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~idea

Visit this site for more project idea starters along with additional information about exhibiting your Self Determined Project at the Ohio State Fair.

- <http://www.findarticles.com>

Here you will be able to find these articles about educational camping.

Making the Most of Year-round Training—bringing training an education programs to camp activity

Rethinking character education: challenging the conventional wisdom about camp and kids: a substantial number of people believe that camps can do more.

Bullying prevention taken to new heights at Camp Sewataro
Evolution of locally-based diabetes education for healthcare workers

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