

YMCA CAMP WILLSON

Cabin Leader Guide



Thank you for volunteering as an adult chaperone at the YMCA Camp Willson. Your decision to be a chaperone has allowed the students the chance for a great experience at camp. Not only do you get to enjoy camp, but you also have the opportunity to provide a positive role model for tomorrow's leaders. To make your experience easier, we have provided you with a simple survival guide.

As natural as trees and sunshine, insects are a part of our environment. Any dead insects you may see do not reflect a lack of cleanliness, rather your cabin's proximity to the woods. Our cabins are cleaned prior to your visit and are treated regularly by a pest control professional. Enjoy your stay in the woods.

***YMCA Willson Outdoor Education Behavior Guidelines and Rules
are based on the following 4 values of the YMCA: Respect,
Responsibility, Honesty, and Caring***

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 students 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 Character Development

<u>Core Value</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Mnemonic</u>
Caring	Red	Heart
Honesty	Blue	True Blue
Respect	Gold	Golden Rule
Responsibility	Green	Environment

"The time is always right for doing what is right." Martin Luther King Jr.

Definitions

- Caring:** To love others. To be sensitive to the well-being of others
- Honesty:** To tell the truth. To act in such a way that I am worthy of trust. To have integrity; making sure my actions match my values.
- Respect:** To treat others as you would have them treat you. To value the worth of every person, including yourself.
- Responsibility:** To do what you ought to do. To be accountable for your behavior and obligations.

What can I do to challenge the youth in my programs to accept and demonstrate a positive value?

In a consistent fashion:

- I must teach it to them so they will know what it means.
- I must consistently model it with my behavior so they can see what it looks like.
- I must celebrate this value and hold it up to young people as what is right in order to help them strengthen their internal compasses.
- I must ask them to practice it over and over.
- I must consistently affirm, reinforce, and reward behaviors that support this value, and I must use the specific value word when I do so.
- When a child chooses behavior that is inconsistent with this value, I must consistently confront that behavior in a productive way - that does not devalue the child.

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.

<i>When Students:</i>	<i>Cabin Leaders:</i>
Are at Meals	Leaders go into the dining hall first and at least one adult sits at every table. Help control the students, encourage manners. Keep people seated unless it is necessary they get up. Set the example. Assign jobs and supervise dining hall clean up.
Are in Class	Check with the staff where you can assist or lead. Make sure all students are present, on time to class and dressed properly. Let students answer questions. If they can't answer them, be supportive in the class. Be sure to check for lost and found at the end of each class.
Have time between classes	Make sure everyone goes to the bathroom and gets a drink of water. If the next class location is close, plan an activity to keep them occupied. Also see Fun Time-Filler in cabin booklet for suggestions. Please arrive to class at the scheduled start time to allow the 15 minute prep time for the class.
Are at recreation	Attend a meeting with other adults, teachers, and director to discuss any problems, good points that have been happening; find out what is happening with evening program and other topics.
Are showering at the shower house	Provide supervision so they will not cause damage. Supervise that they shower and change clothes. If using showers in the shower house as discussed in afternoon meeting with teacher permission, supervise them also. Check for lost and found items before leaving. Walk back to the cabin as a group.
Are getting ready for bed	Begin to slow them down, talking softer, and hurry them into bed. Warn them before turning out the light. Talk softly and tell them a story. Do not tell ghost stories, some kids may have nightmares!
Having behavior problems	Never use physical punishment such as hitting or make them do pushups. Reason with the child. Separate the poor behavior child and talk to him/her individually. Ask the teachers or staff for suggestions. Give compliments for good behavior.
Are ill	Contact staff member or teacher for further help. Keep in mind your safety as well as the child's safety. Ice packs are located in Conference Center freezer. First Aid Kits are in the Conference Center kitchenette under the sink and in the Dining Hall Alcove in the tall brown cabinet with double doors.
Are injured	If serious, do not try to move them. Stay with the student and send another adult or two students to either the director or teacher housing. If during the day, send someone to get any staff or teachers. If minor, take students to the dining hall and find a staff member or teacher.

<i>When Students:</i>	<i>Cabin Leaders:</i>
Are homesick	Talk to them. Get them involved. Have their friends cheer them up. Keep them busy. Don't let them mope around too long. Ask the director or teachers to help.
Wets the bed	Keep the situation very low key. The entire cabin will not become aware unless it is announced. Quietly ask the student if he/she needs awakened during the night, so he/she does not repeat. You can get him/her new sheets, etc. from the director. You may also bring the student's soiled sheets in a garbage bag to the dining hall to a staff member, if needed.
Are asleep	Children must have adult supervision, especially at night. Do not leave the cabin. Keep the cabin quiet and calm so everyone gets a good nights sleep. In the morning, wake students at the proper time and motivate them to clean the cabin and prepare for the day.
Are at evening program	Set the example for the group and participate. Get to know the students from all cabin groups. Help quiet the students when necessary.
Sing	Participate and set the example for the students. The songs might be silly songs, but students will follow your example.
Clean the cabin	Help the students and delegate responsibilities. Don't do all tasks for the students, but make them fun and exciting for the students. Make the director aware if the supplies are low.
Cookout	Make sure everyone is dressed properly. Be supportive of the staff. Promote concern for safety around the fire. You can assist in the "kitchen area" and switch with another adult during the meal. Keep students seated and socializing within their study groups.
Pack to leave	Help them, making sure all items in the cabin are claimed. Turn mattresses on the side to make sure nothing is caught underneath. Check the bathrooms thoroughly. Supervise the sweeping and bathroom cleaning jobs. Help them move luggage.
Confuse you or are causing problems	ASK TEACHERS AND STAFF FOR HELP.

Thank you for your help. We love our jobs at camp and we cannot do this without your assistance. You as the cabin leaders set a good example by having fun, following the rules, and getting excited about education. Enjoy.