

Traditional Day Camp – KEY NOTES

Preparing for and operating a Traditional Games and Activities Camp is a big and serious undertaking. The key component for making decisions are VARIABLES. The variables to consider include:

1. **Space/Facility** (programming areas: High Intensity, Low Intensity, Breaks/Lunch, Bathrooms, etc.)
 - All decisions regarding agendas begin with an understanding of the programming areas. Plan around the features available to you.
2. **Dates and Times** (number of days and number of hours camp operates)
 - Finding the “flow” of camp can be dictated by the logistics of days and hours. Planning accordingly allows for the CUSTOMIZATION of the camp experience to create the best fit for these variables.
3. **Enrollment** (not only number of kids, but age groups as well)
 - Traditional Day Camps attract the broadest types of kids as it relates to what they are interested in doing. This will have its own set of challenges when it comes to creating an agenda. Therefore, over preparing is so important so changes or adjustments can be made very quickly to the plan.
4. **Equipment/Gear/Supplies** (what are the tools available to you)
 - Planning camp will come down to the resources you have at your disposal.
5. **Communication** (with Partnership/Facility Contacts, with Parents, with Campers)
 - Whether it be “Welcome Emails” prior to camp for families, or pre-camp meetings with Facility Staff, be sure to communicate clearly and regularly.
6. **Paperwork** (Registration Forms, Health Logs, Permission Slips, etc.)
 - Organization and Record Keeping are primary goals for Camps. Be sure to have printouts of Emergency Contact Info, Health Information, and any other document recognized in regulations for operating camps.
7. **Staff** (and Staff Training)
 - Be sure that each member of the team understands expectations and roles. Prior to camp kicking off, training sessions should include opportunities for Staff to ask questions about camp and their responsibilities. Camp Prep should always include safety training, agenda planning, walk through and set up of the camp space, as well as curriculum prep.
8. **Adjustments and Improvement** (Camps evolution during a summer session)
 - Traditional Day Camps should have variety and flavor. Improvements should be made from week to week. The goal should always be to get better!

On-Site/Partnership Communication:

The type of space or facility camp is being operated at should dictate the communication with On-Site or Partnership Contacts. For Example:

Host Site – School (communicate with...)

- Principal
- School Secretary
- PTA Coordinator
- Custodian

Host Site – Private Sports Facility (communicate with...)

- Owner
- General Manager
- Front Desk/Info Desk/Guest Services Team
- Maintenance Director/Staff

Host Site – Parks and Rec, YMCA (communicate with...)

- Sports/Activities/Youth Director
- Buildings and Grounds Staff
- Communications Office

Sharing Space:

Know beforehand! Make sure conversations are had with Partnership or Facility Contacts about whether any other group, organization, or camp will be operating during OTA Camp Operations. Will any space or areas be shared? Will any transitional segments overlap (lunch, dismissal, etc.)? This is vital to planning and should be a conversation that is had again and updated throughout the course of the camp session.

Strategy Considerations:

- High Energy, Fun, Fitness, Teamwork, Sportsmanship, Skill Development
- Headquarters Desk (OTA Display)
- Greeter
- Staff Heads Up / Wrap Up
- Music Upon Arrival (Snack Time, Demonstrations, Dismissal)
- Organized “Free Play”
- Camp Meeting Spot - Attendance Lines
- Warm Up In Lines If Big Group / Circle If Small Group
- Daily Talk or Demonstration or Guest Speaker
- Team Names / Group Names
- Prizes At End Of Day (Schedule of Awards, All Campers Prize)
- Shirts Given Out Second To Last Day
- Prepared Flyers To Go Home As Reminders

- Daily Challenge Or Contest
- First Activity Of Day Or After Lunch Should Be Set Up For When Campers Arrive
- OTA Materials At Head Quarters Desk
- Merchandise At Head Quarters Desk
- Itinerary For Week
- Pictures Taken Every Week

Logistical Notes:

AM's –

- Be sure to greet every parent and child upon arrival
- Clean Up after Sign In/Walk Up Stations/Free Play
- Meeting Spot – Attendance/Announcements/Preview – use trivia
- Must review OTA and CAMP Rules every morning

PM's –

- Consider Popsicle Break at end of Day (15-20min before Sign Out)
- Bring everything from Registration Desk and Marketing Desk back to Camp Storage
- Bring all equipment back to Camp Storage Area
- Equipment should be bagged together with same equipment
- Cones and Mats should not be bagged

Points of Interest:

- Be careful about splitting up campers based on age group and athletic ability
- Always bring Attendance Clipboard to Swim Activity
- Do not leave snack out at Meeting Spot. Clean up and return leftovers to camp office
- In case of 'bathroom accident', have extra pair of shorts on hand
- Do not let children share lunches
- Keep locker room behavior to an appropriate level
- Head Counts beginning, middle, end of every camp segment
- Help kids at vending machine and café (where applicable)
- Bathroom and water breaks must use the 'buddy system'
- Be sure to use trivia
- Be sure to demonstrate and TEACH athletic skills
- Make sure teams are fair
- Use team names and handing out points as tactic for maintaining discipline

Daily Segments:

Create fun daily themes or segments to keep camp fresh, energetic, fun, and interesting

- Examples include:
 - Monday Meetings: Guest speakers such as a fireman, athletes, magicians and more.
 - Tuesday Task: Lego challenges, create your own jersey, or make up your own tag game.
 - Whatever Wednesday: Let campers choose their activity. Board Game, art, sport.
 - Thinking Thursday: Campers will be given a mystery to solve, a puzzle to complete, or show and tell.
 - Fantastic Friday: End each week with a BIG event. May include a field day, carnival games, water games, etc.

Outside Vendor Participation:

Traditional Day Camps should always explore whether outside groups, organizations, or companies might have something to offer by visiting or partnering with camps for Special Events or Special Activities. Considering schedule, age-appropriate participation, cost, and how to incorporate into the Weekly Agenda will determine whether an idea is feasible.

- Magician
- Musician
- Animal Handler
- Science Demonstration
- Inflatables / Bounce Houses
- Appearance of a local sports team Mascot
- Athlete (college or pro)
- Special Skills Teacher
- Soldier/Fireman/Police Officer
- Pilot
- Doctor/Dentist/Nutritionist/Trainer
- Boy Scout Troop Leader
- Martial Arts Demonstration
- Gymnastics Demonstration

Field Trips:

- If you and the facility decide to offer field trips as a part of your camp, there are several things to research:
 - Possible Field Trips: Putt-Putt Golf, Laser Tag, Water Park, Sports Game, Hiking Trip, Pool, Museum
 - Transportation: How will the kids get there?
 - What is your supervision plan?
 - Cost: What is the cost of admission? Is there a group discount?
 - Additional Forms: Make sure parents are aware of the field trip and specify what the trip involves. They must give their child permission to participate in the trip.
 - Registration: Is the cost of the field trip included in the registration price?

Specialty Segments:

- Use segments to split up the week of camp and to highlight new activities for kids and parents.
Some examples include:
 - “Center Stage” (Demonstration, Talent Show)
 - “Project Inc” (Campers work together to complete a task, build something)
 - “Pick’m” (Campers choose between activities: arts and crafts, sports, cards, etc.)
 - “Think Tank” (Brain Teaser, Scavenger Hunts, Reading Assignment)
 - “Big Event” (Goofy Golf, Bingo, Field Day, Water Day, etc.)
 - “Movie Madness” (watch movie)