

OTA (SUMMER) Landmines – Watch Out!

What follows are very real examples of CONCERNS, ISSUES and COMPLAINTS from Parents and Summer Camp Partners. The success of our summer programs is vital to avoiding these mistakes and sidestepping the situations that cause them.

**Below are specific complaints from Summer Partners or forwarded Parent Emails that demonstrate the impact these problems can have on our business.*

1. Instructors Not Welcoming Parents and Campers at Drop Off:

"I think the staff was different this year, and NOT in a good way. I could see the difference alone at drop off. Last summer the staff would greet the kids and myself by name when I dropped them off every morning. They would have organized areas to play already set up and interact with the kids more. This summer I think I got maybe one hello and same with the kids! Overall the staff seemed to be annoyed to be there. No one even seemed to care when I dropped my daughter off."

2. Instructors Using Their Cell Phones During Camp Hours:

"All I hear from my children and their friends when I pick them up is that the Counselors are always on their phones. Texting, making calls, taking pictures, and surfing the internet does not promote a good environment for supervision. Hearing that this is also going on while children are at the pool is especially concerning."

3. Lack of Fair Play and Sportsmanship:

"My son attended this week's flag football camp. This is his third summer taking part in the camp and he looks forward to it every year. Today though, it ended badly and I thought you should know. It was the championship game and it sounds like things got out of hand. Boys wanted to win, coaches wanted to win. There was some punching, shoving, and kicking. Several boys got hurt and coaches just brushed it off. I am thoroughly disappointed in how things were handled and I hope that the coaches will be more mindful in future sessions. "

4. Lack of Supervision During Camp Segments and Activities:

"I expressed my concerns about the program and I'm not sending my children back because I believe it is unsupervised and unsafe. There is a real problem of older kids bullying the younger kids. These age groups should never be combined for athletic activities and it is happening all of the time. The Counselors in charge are clueless and lack the control of the group that is needed. Some were rude to the little ones and spent more time chatting with their co-workers than attending to the campers in their care."

5. Child (Camper) Safety:

"My 7 year old daughter tripped and hurt her ankle. We did not receive a call or notification that she had been injured. I had to take her to the urgent care the next day."

"Colin had a great time and enjoyed his day, so that is not an issue. However he apparently forgot to drink enough water, not sure if the staff gives them regular water breaks or if it is up to the children to decide when to go and get a drink. When I picked Colin up he was complaining of a bad headache and did not seem like himself. I noticed his water bottle was practically full and encouraged him to drink some water. After drinking some water, a few minutes later he began vomiting. His color was not good and I was concerned with the symptoms that he might have been dehydrated. I took him to the doctor and they tested his urine and said that it was "as concentrated as it can get." The conclusion was that he was in fact dehydrated. I wanted to make you aware of what happened today in hopes that it won't happen again."

6. Instructors Lack of Involvement and Enthusiasm:

"I'm really disappointed and I feel like I wasted my money. It is really just a day care, and the Counselors working are oblivious to what is going on. No enthusiasm, no involvement, no creativity, no effort."

7. Instructors Poor Professionalism:

"The Staff running the camp needs to grow up. Paying for our children to attend a camp where they are exposed to the type of behavior we are seeing from your Counselors is unacceptable. Counselors are flirting with one another, showing pictures on their phones to kids at camp, fights breaking out and no one doing anything about it, and kid's roughhousing and getting hurt at the pool while the Counselors lounge about and showing no concern. All of this and inappropriate language and conversation in ear shot of children has left me very upset with your program."

8. Dismissal Procedure Complaints:

"The sign IN and OUT policies are not thorough. The instructors aren't attentive to the kid's needs and what they are doing at the end of the day. I've seen children just walk out of the area to leave without any adult picking them up. You really must monitor the exits much better than what is happening now."

9. Agenda Complaints:

"We were told there would be arts and crafts projects. We were told there would be contests. We were told there would be special activities. All it seems to really be is dodgeball and way too many movies!"

10. Not a FUN Camp (Instructors Mean, Yelling all the Time):

"Today at camp I witnessed one of your coaches having issues with two kids & blew a whistle in their face & grabbed them by the arms to put them against the wall, while still yelling at them. Not a scenario that should ever happen at camp! Later when I picked up my child, he said that the coaches yelled most of the time & it just wasn't fun. The yelling really bothered him so much that he didn't want to go back the next day."