

WORKING WITH KIDS



GLASTONBURY
PARKS & RECREATION

MODULE



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1. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN

Staff should be aware of the following typical characteristics of kids and their tendency to do the following:

- Become tired and hungry more quickly than adults
- Fall apart (i.e. become irritated, cranky etc.)
- Become restless when idle and therefore prone to becoming impulsive
- Focus on being first rather than doing things more thoroughly
- Lose track of the big picture and get stuck on the details
- Interpret the use of the word maybe by adults to mean yes
- Fear loss of self-control, abandonment, and being humiliated

Age Related Characteristics

Being able to avoid unreasonable behavior with kids depends on you're having expectations that fit with their level of maturity. It is important to understand the typical characteristics of kids at different ages.

AGES 5-7

- Short attention span and easily distracted
- Require prompting if they are to be on time, not stray or finish things
- Extremely impressionable
- May struggle with separation and become homesick
- Some kids in this age group obey authority simply to stay out of trouble
- Other kids this age obey authority when there is something to be gained by doing so

AGES 8-11

- Respond extremely well to interested and fair adults
- Peer and social pressure builds within this age group
- More social, and tend to gravitate to being in groups

AGES 12-14

- Strive for independence from adults, but often need more guidance than they can admit
- Can be insecure regarding their appearance and crave belonging to a peer group
- Tend to want to be nice to people who are nice to them

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Parents are asked to notify us in advance regarding any special needs their child may have. Read the paperwork (rosters and/or forms) you receive on children carefully as parents may have included helpful information and/or comments about working with their child. Camp Sunrise staff should read through the individual Camper Applications.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities and protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in the services, programs, or activities of all State and local governments. We are required to make programs accessible to individuals with disabilities. Often times that will require some kind of reasonable accommodation (modification or adjustment) to an activity, environment, or way in which something is customarily done that permits a child with a disability to participate along with children without disabilities.

Children with ADD/ADHD

Children with ADD/ADHD often exhibit behavior that is not willful, such as not listening, messing up on rules that were just stated or going ahead without permission of the Staff. Since most of these children have trouble paying attention, keeping track of the rules and knowing what is expected of them, they will require a special partnership with you as a leader. The following information is provided to help you work more effectively with children with ADD/ADHD or who may simply be very active for other reasons.

KIDS WITH ADHD TEND TO:

- Show signs of high anxiety (tics, fidgeting, restlessness, etc.)
- React poorly to surprise and unscheduled changes
- Need high dose of positive feedback and reinforcement
- Respond well to frequent prompts, count downs, reminders, etc.

WHAT CAN STAFF DO?

- Keep ADD/ADHD children closer to you.
- Make your routines consistent. Use the same phrases and order of events.
- Give frequent and immediate positive feedback.
- When transitioning, give warnings, do countdowns, and/or allow extra time for these kids.

Children with Intellectual Disabilities

An individual is considered to have an intellectual disability based on the following three criteria: intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75; significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas; and the condition is present from childhood.

One type of Intellectual Disabilities that is very common is Down syndrome. Down syndrome is a genetic variation which usually causes delays in physical, intellectual and language development. There is a wide variation in cognitive abilities, behavior, and physical development in individuals with Down syndrome. Each individual has his/her own unique personality, capabilities and talents.

KIDS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES TEND TO:

- Learn and develop more slowly than average.
- Have delays in speech and self-care skills like feeding, dressing, and toilet teaching
- Wander/Run off
- Exhibit Stubborn/Oppositional Behavior
- Have difficulty focusing/paying attention for long periods of time
- Exhibit Obsessive/Compulsive Behaviors
- Kids with IDs can and do learn, and are capable of developing skills throughout their lives.

WHAT CAN STAFF DO?

- Instructions simplified, repeated.
- Provide frequent reinforcement/praise and consistent positive feedback.
- Have high expectations – be enthusiastic and encouraging, but flexible
- Minimize distractions in the environment
- Model the task and provide opportunities to perform it
- Provide immediate corrective feedback for negative behaviors
- Give clear signals and use picture cues when needed

Children with Cerebral Palsy (CP)

CP is a group of disorders characterized by loss of movement or loss of other nerve functions. These disorders are caused by injuries to the brain that occur during fetal development or near the time of birth.

KIDS WITH CP TEND TO:

- Have trouble or are unable to control or move their muscles in the normal way
- Mild CP may mean the child is clumsy.
- Moderate CP may cause the child to walk with a limp.
- Severe CP can impact all of the child's abilities including learning, sensory problems, speech difficulties, bladder and bowel trouble and eating problems.
- As children with CP progress through life, they may use a walker or be confined to a wheelchair.
- Some children with cerebral palsy cannot suck and swallow and chew easily, so eating may be messy.

WHAT CAN STAFF DO?

- Incorporate outdoor activities into the daily routine since it becomes increasingly important to stimulate the child's sensory system.
- Do **with** the child not **to** the child – remember all activities are also learning experiences.
- Encourage hand/eye coordination – ask children to reach for things; don't just give things to them.
- Always give more time to achieve any physical task.
- Encourage eye contact and speak clearly.

Children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a general term for a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors.

KIDS WITH AN ASD TEND TO:

- Avoid eye contact
- Not be able to express what they're thinking through language
- Find it hard to keep up a conversation
- Have trouble controlling emotions
- Perform repetitive behaviors like hand-flapping, rocking, jumping, etc.

WHAT CAN STAFF DO?

- Keep the environment predictable and familiar, and prepare the child for changes.
- Provide structure and routine.
- Pay attention to sensory input from the environment, like noise, temperature, smells, lots of people around, etc.
- Be logical, organized, clear, concise and concrete.
- Avoid sarcasm, nicknames, and teasing.
- Explain abstract concepts in concrete terms.

Children with Oppositional Defiance Disorder

Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD) is a persistent behavioral pattern of angry or irritable mood; argumentative, defiant behavior towards authority figures and vindictiveness. In some children with ODD, these behaviors are only evident in one setting, usually at home. In more severe cases they occur in multiple settings.

KIDS WITH ODD TEND TO:

- Be easily aggravated and annoyed
- Irritate others intentionally
- Exhibit sudden, unprovoked anger
- Blame others for their mistakes or for their misbehavior
- Refuse to comply with adult requests
- Brag about being mean and never truly being sorry
- Lie and be vengeful without provocation
- Provoke conflict among peers

WHAT CAN STAFF DO?

- Set a few non-negotiable rules and enforce them with consequences. For example, "We don't hurt ourselves, others or property". "We use kind language and don't raise our voices". Decide ahead of time on consequences for breaking a rule so kids know what to expect if they do. Once the child completes the consequence, move on from the incident.
- State your directions in simple, straight forward language. Be as clear, immediate and as consistent as possible.
- Use a calm voice when dealing with behavior. Explain in as few words as possible what you want and don't continue to discuss the issue. Do not exchange in a back and forth discussion.
- Recognize when a child is successful managing their behavior. Let them know you notice and appreciate their effort.
- Create a Structured Environment. Changes in routine may be upsetting to children with ODD. Provide the child with a schedule or briefing of the day's activities.
- Discover what activities the child truly enjoys doing

****For an additional resource on inclusion training, please [CLICK HERE](#).****

2. SUPERVISING KIDS

Different situations require different supervision strategies. Supervision may be direct and constant, intermittent, focused on an area of play space or related to a specific group of children.

The system of supervision will vary according to:

- The type of activity.
- The location of the activity.
- The age and skill of the kids involved in the activity.

Supervision requires a staff member to:

- Regularly scan the area and note movement of the children.
- Position their body to face the kids they are supervising.
- Be “one step ahead” of the action by
 - Looking for patterns of behavior
 - Anticipating behaviors before they occur
 - Being aware of each child’s needs
- Be “with it” at all times by knowing
 - What has happened
 - What is happening
 - What is likely to happen next

SUPERVISION SKILLS

Being totally aware of what is happening around and beyond a specific activity requires the development of specific supervision skills. These skills include scanning, positioning, listening and being “with-it”.

- **SCANNING:** Involves regularly glancing around the whole area to see what is happening. If you are assisting a child in an activity with a group of children (i.e. a game of kickball), you must still be aware of the other children in your vicinity. By continually scanning the area you will be able to quickly intervene in a dispute or situation where children could be placed at risk. As you scan the area note the number of children present, what they are doing and the movement of children within the area.
- **POSITIONING:** The physical position you take will determine how well you are able to supervise the children in your vicinity. Always position your body to be able to observe the maximum area possible. Never sit or stand with your back to the children. Observe the movement of children to determine favorite and popular areas of play (i.e. on playscape). Position your body so that you can monitor these areas closely. If you are responsible for managing a higher risk activity, it is important you do not leave the activity. However you can still glance around the area, listen and call for assistance if you notice an incident requiring attention.
- **LISTENING:** As well as positioning and scanning your area, you will need to listen carefully to what is happening. As you listen to children at play you will learn the sounds that indicate “all is well” or sounds that say “something is not right”. A sudden bang, swearing and abusive language, yell, cry, silence and running feet are indications something may need your attention.
- **BEING “WITH-IT”:** Being “with-it” requires you to know the children in your care and monitor what they are doing. This includes knowing the child’s range of skills, interests, ability to interact with others and developmental stage. With this knowledge you can assess the situation at any time and determine whether intervention is or will be required. You can track children as they move through the activity and be one step ahead of their actions. By being alert, you will see the highlights of a child’s day. You will notice children engaged in cooperation, kindness, sharing, leadership, perseverance and caring. Acknowledging these qualities will further enhance behavior that assists in maintaining a safe and secure environment.

SUPERVISION SYSTEMS

An assessment of the situation will determine the most appropriate supervision system to ensure the safety of children. All of the following systems may be used in various situations during a day's program.

- 1. DIRECT AND CONSTANT SUPERVISION:** Some activities will require direct and constant supervision from a staff member to ensure kids safety. They include activities involving high risk materials and equipment. While children are participating in these activities, a staff member should never leave the activity area or be expected to supervise children in nearby areas. To determine whether direct and constant supervision is required, an assessment must be made on the level of risk involved in the activity against the skills and developmental stages of the children participating in the activity. An older child who is experienced at using scissors during a craft project may not require direct supervision however; a five year would need close and constant supervision.
- 2. INTERMITTENT SUPERVISION:** Intermittent supervision is an appropriate form of supervision for more mature and responsible children participating in low risk activities (i.e. older children playing board games). Children are permitted to play in a designated area without the fulltime presence of a staff member. Through this form of supervision, children experience opportunities to take greater responsibility for their behavior. As kids age and mature, it is important that the supervision system reflects the growing independence and increased skill of older kids. Intermittent supervision must be well planned. The expectations of the children should be clearly stated; the level of responsibility, maturity and self-control of the children known; play areas defined; and, the children must be checked regularly. This form of supervision does not work if the staff member gets involved with an activity and forgets to check on the children.
- 3. AREA SUPERVISION:** Area supervision requires a staff member to take responsibility for a particular play area (i.e. gym, café, outdoor area). The staff member is accountable for any child in the designated area. A watchful eye and sharp ear are used to observe proceedings and intervene when required. Area supervision allows children to move freely between play areas and is easy to manage and plan. One staff member may have responsibility for the outdoor play space and another indoor play space. A disadvantage of areas supervision lies in the limited contact between staff of the various areas. Children are less accountable to a staff person in this system. A child who intends to misbehave can exploit the "unsupervised seams" between the supervised zones.
- 4. GROUP SUPERVISION:** Group supervision relates to the supervision of a group of children regardless of the play area they are in. In its purest form the staff member and a group of children would do all activities together (i.e. field trips). In more flexible forms of this system children may be scattered throughout the different play areas but one specific staff member would have responsibility for them. The responsible staff member would handle any major issue or misbehavior. Group supervision is useful on field trips where it is difficult to supervise a large group of children or to allow children to be grouped according to age or skill level.
- 5. FLOATER SUPERVISION:** Floater supervision refers to a system where a staff member moves among all the play areas supporting and encouraging other staff and children. The "floater" keeps track of the "big picture" and does not monitor a specific activity or area. This person is aware of the children's movements and is available to step in and help when required. Floater supervision works well in large service areas where it is possible to dedicate a staff member to this role.

3. LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Fundamental leadership skills are essential to ensuring a safe environment for both the kids and staff. As a staff member you are expected to understand the following:

- Your interactions with EACH kid are witnessed by ALL kids. They will watch to see how you behave.
- You need to be aware of your own stress level when interacting with kids.
- There are predictable stressful times during your duties (i.e. lunch, dismissal).
- You need to RESPOND to kids rather than REACT to them.
 - Responding involves: Thoughtful action, working together with other staff. It involves clear separation between your personal feelings and what is called for, procedures that are not brought on by anger.
 - Reaction involves: Impulsive behavior. Acting alone or without consulting others, actions based on personal feelings, actions that arise out of intemperate gut feelings.

Staff is responsible for establishing a safe atmosphere that encourages kids to approach them about conflicts or issues that might be bothering them. Taking kids aside whenever possible during times of confrontation allows them to save face.

Creating a healthy and safe environment for kids involves:

Trust: Establishing a sense of trust early is essential to communication, cooperation and creating a safe environment.

Interest: Taking an interest in all kids. Being mindful of playing favorites and being fair are keys to creating healthy relationships with children.

Listening: Listening to kids and discerning their needs is crucial to preventing difficulties.

Enthusiasm: Kids generally reflect the attitude of the staff. It is, therefore, imperative that all staff participate enthusiastically in all activities and aspects of the program!

Cooperation: By working together, staff will become effective, positive role models for the kids. Constructive input following an activity will help ensure that a positive atmosphere exists for future activities.

Encouragement: Staff should encourage kids to be creative and imaginative. They want to know that you are interested in what they are doing! Show them that the point to participating in an activity is to have fun and learn. Enjoyment of the activity should not be affected by the kid's success or failure.

Creativity: Staff should consider their group's skills, capabilities and desires when selecting activities. Two-way communication will help to identify activities that the kids prefer and will make for a more enjoyable activity.

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

- Know kids by name. Poorly chosen nicknames may have undesirable effects and should be avoided.
- Take initiative. Be friendly. Show interest in what kids are doing and how they are progressing.
- Greet kids personally. A friendly attitude will create in children a desire to play, learn new skills, and take part.
- Stimulate the active participation of everyone in one form or another.
- Try involving trouble makers in tasks that require responsibilities. This gives them needed recognition.
- "To have fun" is not enough. Strive for the deeper results like teaching kids how to get along with one another, to learn new skills, to understand the ideals of fair play and good sportsmanship and enhancing self-esteem.
- Give everyone equal opportunity to take part. Pay special attention to children on the fringe, but not obviously so.
- Don't allow vulgar language, negative talk or stories. Positively reinforce appropriate behavior.
- Avoid snapping at kids
- Control your temper. A loss of temper involves a loss of self-respect, as well as the respect of others.

LEADING ACTIVITIES

Choosing Activities

- Think carefully about the types of activities you will use with your particular group.
- Consider the activities which are generally appropriate for the AGE of the kids.
- Consider their PHYSICAL SKILLS in doing the activity. There may be gender differences.
- Consider the MENTAL ABILITY to grasp and follow the rules.
- Consider the physiological condition of the children. Alternate strenuous activities with semi-active and quiet activities. It's not an ENDURANCE contest.

Explaining Activities

- The staff should be in a position where he/she can be SEEN and HEARD by the entire group.
- The staff should show ENTHUSIASM in both manner and voice in order to motivate the group.
- Keep instructions CLEAR AND BRIEF. Give them slowly so that all can understand the first time.
- A simple DEMONSTRATION of the game by one or more enthusiastic children is helpful.
- Give kids a chance to ask questions if there is any doubt about rules or directions. Avoid long explanations.
- Start the activity, minor matters can be worked out as the activity progresses.

Conducting the Activity

- It may be necessary for the staff to take part in the game to get it going. If so, play a minor role so you are able to eliminate yourself and work with another group if necessary.
- When working with more than one group, do not forget the activities that are underway. Stay in the area and watch the progress of each activity.
- End the activity while interest is still high. Do not overdue the activity until kids are sick of it. Have another activity ready to go. If kids like the activity, they will want to play again in the future.

Adapting Activities

- Adaptations are made according to the functioning level and skills of the participants. Assess the situation, participant's abilities and skill level. Gear activities towards the ages and abilities of the participants.
- Consider activities that don't require specialized skills, promote cooperation instead of competition, participation instead of elimination.
- Modifications to activities and activities may include things like reducing the size of the playing space, number of points needed, number of players needed etc.

WORKING WITH GROUPS

Staff, as role models, has a unique opportunity to have a positive impact on the lives of children in your program. Although there will be times that you work with children on a one to one basis, most of the time you will be working with groups of children. This section will describe groups, how they operate and your relationship with them as a Staff Member.

Developing Groups:

- On day one, have kids start by learning more about each other. Develop ice breaker activities.
- Review all there is to know about the program. Explain your role, the purpose of the program and their part in it.
- **POST THE RULES AND DISCUSS THEM!** Explain why they were created. Include acceptable behavior and how to handle conflicts and disagreements.
- Remember the group is made up of individuals. Include everyone in the process in some way.
- Do not allow one child to control or dominate the group. Help kids feel they are equal members in the group.
- Keep the atmosphere upbeat and positive. Watch out for boredom and conflict.
- Provide praise and positive reinforcement on a regular basis.
- Be aware of group interaction and dynamics. Practice activities that help the group work better as a team.

4. DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Staff may, under no circumstances, hit a child.
- Staff may not use abusive or derogatory language with children.
- Staff should follow guidelines that create a safe environment for all children.
- Staff should take time to get to know kids. Having a relationship with and taking an interest in a child is the most effective tool any staff member can use with children.
- Staff should use activities to help children channel aggression, stay active or buy time when there is a conflict.
- When kids are engaged in a conflict, staff should insure that physical fighting does not occur and that children have the opportunity to cool off when necessary to maintain self-control.
- Staff should help kids arrive at a *win-win solution* to conflicts.
- Staff should make use of each other, finding someone who may have a better rapport with a particular child than he/she.
- When dealing with individual children, staff should consider what motivates that particular child to obey authority.
- Staff might consider raising the status of a child by making him/her a special helper.
- When a child is particularly resistant or aggressive, Staff can employ time outs. Time outs are most effective when a staff member:
 - Identifies clearly the undesired behavior
 - Asks a child first whether he or she needs a time out, giving a choice (cooperation versus timeout)
 - Assigns a time out when a child persists in undesired behavior
 - Keeps track of the time out and end it when the child can demonstrate compliance with desired behavior. Children who complete a time out should also be given credit for doing so.
- A staff member who encounters a particularly resistant, difficult or aggressive child is to seek the assistance and input of supervisory or administrative staff.
- Staff trained in PMT Management may employ those techniques only when ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!

BEHAVIOR POLICY

One of the biggest obstacles staff will face is maintaining a well-behaved group. Your experience can be awesome or miserable based solely on your group of children and how well they listen and behave. How well your group behaves is often a reflection of the approach you use with them. A good approach is to **start friendly and be firm**. Children need structure and consistency.

Have kids agree to rules of conduct that clearly states the expectations we have for children and what the consequences will be should they break a rule. Each group may add certain things to the rules based on the specific program. The wording may also need to be geared up or down depending on the age. Customize this to your group and go over it with the children on the first day:

Rules of Conduct:

- Have respect for self, others, and property.
- Work together as a group.
- Adhere to all camp safety and behavior guidelines.
- Exhibit good sportsmanship.

Consequences:

1. Verbal warning
2. Time Out
3. Make the child responsible for their actions. Child calls their parents and/or send home a Behavior Form

Handling Behavior Problems

Be Clear - Be Consistent - Be Calm - Be Fair

When a problem arises:

- Intervene right away
- Find Out the problem - What is going on?
- What should the child be doing?
- What are the child's choices/consequences?
- **MOVE ON....**

CONFLICT RESOLUTION & PROBLEM SOLVING

Conflict is a natural part of a child's life and there can be many ways they choose to handle it. They may respond by fighting, screaming and yelling, or by ignoring the situation. Always encourage children to settle things by talking it out. As staff you can do a lot to teach children constructive ways to handle disagreements and conflicts:

- Cool off
- Move away from the larger group
- Listen carefully
- Be strong, not mean
- Benefit of the doubt
- Acknowledge feelings
- See conflict as a problem to be solved
- Ask for help if you don't seem to be getting results

In working with children, you will learn that dealing with problems and conflicts are part of everyday life. When problems are anticipated, we feel in control, when unexpected, we feel we are losing control and ineffective. Realistically, it is not possible to have the answers to any situation that may arise, however the positive handling of them may represent a significant opportunity for children to learn and grow.

The Problem Solving Process:

There are techniques you can use to resolve some problems when they occur. Generally, there are several steps in the problem solving process:

- Identify the problem. What is really going on?
- Get the facts. Explore both sides of the picture.
- Communicate. Talk with the group or child involved and discuss what happened.
- Have the group or child come up with possible solutions, not you. Enable, guide and suggest. Don't dictate
- Examine the ideas. Discuss the pros and cons.
- Select a solution. Implement it. Check and see how it went.

BULLYING BEHAVIOR

Do not tolerate bullying behavior. Every child has the right to feel safe. Bullying behavior is more than misconduct. It is any overt act(s) by a child or group of children directed against another child with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate.

- Bullying behavior is usually not an isolated incident. Pay attention! Consider the words chosen, actions taken, if the conduct occurred in front of others or was communicated to others, how the person doing the bullying interacted with the victim, and their motivation, either admitted or appropriately inferred.
- Bullying can take many forms and include different behaviors. Examples of conduct that could constitute bullying: Physical violence or attack, verbal taunts, name-calling and put downs, including taunts based on ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation and other protected and/or individual characteristics; Threats and intimidation (though words and/or gestures); extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions.

Staff members who become aware of an act of bullying will take immediate steps to intervene. If you believe the intervention taken has not resolved the matter, or if bullying persists, report the bullying to your Supervisor for further investigation.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

These are situations where danger is present to the child or others around him/her. The two priorities during these times are to protect the people (children, staff etc.) in close proximity to harm and to lower the activity of the child who is losing control. In addressing a child who is exhibiting violent or aggressive behavior, staff should be aware of the following guidelines:

- Every opportunity should be provided for the child to control his/her own behavior before physical management is used. Never grab or touch an acting out or violent child unless he/she is causing harm to his/herself, others or property.
- Send for assistance. If possible, always wait for help if you perceive there may be physical involvement.
- Always ensure the child is supervised.
- Keep your voice tone normal. Repeat any instructions until the child complies. Try to remain calm. If the child is violent or about to hurt another, yell **STOP** and the child's name, then lower your voice. Screaming many words or threatening only confuses or further elevates the child's activity level.
- Ensure any instructions or commands given to the child are brief and action oriented (e.g., "Please take a seat" or "You need to keep your body still.")
- Staff should keep their bodies angled in a position so they have full line of site of the child (e.g., do not put your back to the child)
- Immediately try to get the aggressive child to an isolated area where he/she can calm down. Talk to him/her in a low, calm voice or remain silent.
- Discuss his/her behavior and the consequences of the behavior only after he/she has become calm.
- Report incident to Director/Recreation Supervisor; debrief the rest of your staff; describe the incident in writing, notify the Parent/Guardian. Be sure to describe what lead up to the behaviors, the actual behaviors, and the consequences in detail (e.g., The child was told it was not time for snack yet, he screamed at staff for 15 minutes and punched the wall for 5 minutes, parents were called to pick him up)
- Staff must provide a written report of any PMT (Physical Management Techniques) used.

G. DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE/VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

There is to be a zero tolerance of behavior that is harmful to the safety of other children and/or staff!

- Contact the Director/Recreation Supervisor **IMMEDIATELY** regarding any talk or threat of violence or harm directed toward any child or staff member by anyone involved in the program.
- If any kind of weapon or dangerous object is brought to Camp, contact the Glastonbury Police Department at 633-8301 or Dial 911 if necessary.
- You can help prevent anger and violent behavior from taking place in your program by:
 - Maintaining clear standards of safety at your camp.
 - Having fair and **CONSISTENTLY ENFORCED** rules & policies.
 - Ensuring the environment at your program is **SAFE AND COMFORTABLE FOR EVERY CHILD.**
 - Communicating behavior problems to the Parent/Guardian - immediately!
 - Not hesitating to seek assistance and/or advice from the Director/Recreation Supervisor.

Be Aware of the following Indicators of Violent Behavior:

MOOD

Apathetic (indifferent, uninterested)
Chronically Angry
Sullen (brooding, moody)
Given To Violent Outbursts
Emotional Flatness to You
Quick to Anger

NON-VERBAL AND BODY LANGUAGE

Clenched Fists
Red-faced
Pessimistic
Stares Back
Space Violation
Breathing heavily
Sweating
Shaking

Be Aware of the following Do's & Don'ts in an aggressive situation:

DO

Keep a Distance
Try to get the child to say he/she won't hurt you
Get Help (Send another staff person/child)
Listen
Use open ended questions (who, what, where etc.)
Be passive, cooperative
Allow child to vent
Allow child to save face
Isolate the incident (keep it from spreading)
Provide redirection

DON'T

Confront
Antagonize
Negotiate
Ask "why"
Invade Their Space
Tell the child to relax or calm down
Sympathize
Force the Issue
Lie

Should you need to respond to break up a fight/conflict with an aggressive child, remember the following guidelines:

- Most fights can be stopped using a strong, stern voice. Give specific commands
- Evaluate the situation. How many children are involved? How big are they? Is there anyone around who can assist you? Are there any weapons present?
- Identify yourself, and call the children by name
- Utilize team support from staff
- Defer to rules, not personal authority
- Avoid physical force, if possible
- Separate the aggressor and the victim
- Remove those involved to a neutral location; dismiss any audience that has gathered
- Send another staff member/child for help
- Get medical attention if necessary
- Provide protection and support for victims
- Report incident to Director/Recreation Supervisor; debrief the rest of your staff; describe the incident in writing, notify the Parent/Guardian.

5. STAFF-CHILD CONTACT

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR TOUCHING & PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN:

So that nothing you do can be misinterpreted the following guidelines have been developed with regard to physical contact with a child:

- Only on the hand, shoulder or upper back, unless for a clear medical necessity, and then only in the presence of another adult.
- Never against a child's will (unless in the case of clear and present danger of the child and/or staff).
- Staff who have PMT Management training may employ those techniques only when ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!
- Never against a child's verbally or non-verbally expressed discomfort.
- Only in the company of other adults.
- Never when it would have the effect of over-stimulating the child.
- Younger children should be encouraged to change their own clothes as much as possible.
- All children should apply their own sunscreen.
- Leaders will set limits with children who cling or hang on them.
- Reinforce personal space rules (e.g., personal space bubble)

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE SHOULD A STAFF MEMBER

- Embarrass a child about his or her body.
- Draw undue attention to a child while he or she is changing clothes.
- Tickle, wrestle with or otherwise touch a camper in a way that is over-stimulating or invasive of his or her privacy.
- Share personal information about his or her romantic or sexual life.
- Sit on a camper's lap.
- Tell stories or engage in conversation that is lurid or over-stimulating.

CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can take many forms. Abusive behaviors towards children are unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the Town. Although not all inclusive, the behaviors listed below are not acceptable and will not be tolerated:

- Sexual assault
- Physical abuse including; hitting, punching, scratching, slapping, pushing, grabbing, dragging, tripping.
- Verbal abuse including; name calling, belittling, demeaning
- Inappropriate physical contact such as kissing, touching private parts.
- Providing special treatment/attention in a form that is too close and personal.
- Discussing inappropriate subject content with or in the presence of children.

This is a brief outline of what could constitute abuse of a child. It does not begin to cover or exhaust the possibilities for the abuse or legal ramifications of such acts. It is not intended to deter staff from being friendly and caring of the children in their care. It is set out to assist staff in evaluating their intentions, judgements and behaviors toward children. If you have any concerns or suspect that abuse from a staff member may be occurring it is your responsibility to speak with a supervisor immediately without delay.

ANY CRIMINAL CONDUCT INVOLVING STAFF WILL BE REPORTED TO THE AUTHORITIES – ESPECIALLY ANY CONDUCT IN WHICH THE HEALTH AND/OR SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN MAY BE THREATENED.

POTENTIAL FOR MISTREATMENT OF CHILDREN BY STAFF

Working with kids can be stressful. They are inherently and naturally noisy, messy, dependent, impulsive, curious, and imperfect. The only way they grow out of these tendencies is through the patient, firm, non-punitive experiences with adults and with each other.

Since kids do not have the experience, perspective or judgment that you are expected to have, your expectations of them (regarding messes, noise, the speed with which they comply, general use of language, etc.) needs to be different than those you have for yourself and other adults.

As a Staff Member you must be aware that:

- Misbehavior is often a result of the kid's lack of maturity and not a deliberate attempt to frustrate you.
- Staff need to be able to detach from children they are working with to keep from taking control battles or growing up challenges personally.

For a successful experience working with kids, a staff member must:

- Be able to enter a kid's world without giving up their own maturity (to become child-like and not childish) even though kids may directly or indirectly encourage childishness.
- Understand that kids develop a greater sense of self-esteem through positive, meaningful interaction with others.
- Use only practices that ensure the physical safety of each kid as well as interactions that protect their emotional well-being by accounting for their age and maturity level (i.e. not humiliating a child or abusing a child in any emotional or physical way)
- Understand that children will not thrive as well, try new things, share concerns, be as cooperative or grow as much unless they feel safe both emotionally or physically.

5. MANDATED REPORTER

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REQUIREMENTS

One of the hardest things for us to accept and understand is the fact that there are people who abuse and/or neglect children. Given the number of children attending our programs, we cannot deny the existence of abuse or our responsibility to report it.

- As Parks & Recreation Department staff working with children, we are mandated by the State of Connecticut to report suspected child abuse-neglect. A person required to report who fails to do so shall be fined not more than \$500. Any person, institution, or agency reporting in good faith is immune from any liability, civil or criminal.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

- Any situation you encounter involving suspected child abuse/neglect requires your immediate attention and action.
- Verbally notify your Supervisor. If the situation does not allow you to talk comfortably with your Supervisor you may report the incident to the person above your Supervisor.
- As mandated, an oral or written report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect will be made to the Department of Children and Youth Services.

RECOGNIZING CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

The most common way to identify Child Abuse & Neglect is through the Child and Parent/Guardian's behavior. Below is a list of physical and behavioral indicators. A combination or pattern of indicators should alert you to the possibility of a problem.

Physical Abuse: Unexpected bruises, welts, abrasions, burns, broken bones etc.

Child's Behavior: Reports an injury or threat of an injury by Parent/Guardian; afraid to go home; shrinks from adults; withdrawn or aggressive; complains of soreness, moves uncomfortably, wears clothing inappropriate for the weather, reluctant to change clothes.

Parent/Guardian's Behavior: Offers vague, illogical, contradictory or no explanations of a child's injury; uses harsh discipline inappropriate to the child's age and transgression, has unrealistic expectations of the child, significantly misperceives the child (sees them as bad, stupid, etc.); misuses alcohol or drugs.

Sexual Abuse: Torn, stained or bloody underwear; difficulty walking; pain or itching in genital area; bruises or bleeding in external genitalia; frequent urinary or genital infections, venereal disease

Child's Behavior: Reports sexual assault by a Parent/Guardian; reluctant to change clothes; withdrawn; fantasy or infantile behavior; bizarre, sexual behavior or detailed sexual knowledge especially in young children; poor peer relations.

Parent/Guardian's Behavior: Extremely protective or jealous of the child; sexually abused as a child; misuses alcohol or drugs; non-abusing caretaker/spouse frequently absent from the home.

Emotional Abuse: Speech disorders, lags in physical development, failure to thrive.

Child's Behavior: Sucking, biting, rocking in older children; antisocial; destructive and self-destructive; passive/aggressive; demanding; inappropriately adult or infantile; attempts suicide.

Parent/Guardian's Behavior: Excessively blames or belittles; repeatedly ignores or rejects the child; treats siblings unequally; seems unconcerned about the child's problem, unreasonable demands or impossible expectations with regard to the child's developmental capacity.