



Participant Expectations

Program Rules

On the first day of the program, leaders will review the program rules and guidelines with participants, which includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. Stay within set boundaries
2. Come back when called
3. Listen when a leader is speaking
4. Keep feet, sticks, and rocks on the ground
5. Respect the environment, respect each other, and respect yourself

With older age groups, we work with participants to create community standards – a set of rules and guidelines describing how we would like to interact with each other. This goes above the general safety guidelines to ensure that everyone can feel comfortable and safe to be their best self at the program.

Participation

Participants are to participate in all scheduled events and activities. Due to the need to fulfill staff-to-child ratio requirements, we are unable to provide alternate arrangements for non-participating children. We ask that participants try an activity for 5 minutes, and if after the 5 minutes they still do not want to participate, they can sit out. Non-participating children are expected to stay with the group and can observe the activities or (if possible) play/colour beside the group. Please note that while we encourage participants to try all new activities, we will not force anyone to participate if they are scared or uncomfortable.

Group Leadership Guidelines

- 1. Provide warmth, acceptance & caring to each participant.**
 - a. Reach out to each child at a personal level, find out who they are, and what they need and enjoy.
 - b. Do positive things with each child. Be present!
- 2. Use positive means and incentives to get children to participate or follow the rules.**
 - a. Tell them how much fun something will be if they do it. Make following the rules fun and exciting.
 - b. Use positive language when setting rules and guidelines (i.e., instead of saying “Don’t climb that tree”, say “Please keep your feet on the ground until we do our climbing activity”)
- 3. Build positive team and peer relationships.**
 - a. Encourage cooperative endeavours and teamwork. Create a team spirit and identity!

- b. Encourage positive gender roles and interactions.
 - c. Find positive roles and rewards for each kid.
 - d. Stop name-calling, disrespect, and aggression, early and effectively.
 - e. Solve relationship problems in the group whenever appropriate.
 - f. Encourage empathy for the situations of others.
- 4. Define and communicate clear expectations, limits, and rules at the start.**
- a. Recognize, reinforce, and reward positive behaviour.
 - b. Minimize rules and demands to only those that are necessary and enforce these quickly and effectively.
 - c. Enforce limits with confidence & authority.

Intervention (Discipline)

- 1. Does a behaviour break a serious rule, is the start of an unwelcome trend or puts anyone at risk?**
 - a. If yes, intervene clearly, early, and firmly, regardless of whether it is a "major" behaviour.
 - b. If no, ignore it or redirect the child. Many things can be ignored or dealt with by redirection.
- 2. If you intervene, give a clear, firm but polite command.**
 - a. Do not plead or ask the child to stop. You are in control—tell the child.
 - b. For example, say "Please walk on the sidewalk" not "Can you get out of the road?"
- 3. If the child does not change their behaviour, tell the child again and specify a consequence that will occur.** Use a firm and strong tone but do not shout. The consequence should be:
 - a. ***As closely and logically connected to the behaviour as possible:*** (i.e., a child who is disrupting an activity should sit off to the side where they will not disrupt for three minutes; a child who is throwing food would have to clean it up).
 - b. ***As clear, specific, and immediate as possible:*** "If you insult another person, you will sit out during the next activity." (not hours later or at the end of the program)
 - c. ***Appropriate in severity to the behaviour.*** Being physical with someone else (i.e., hitting, kicking etc.) would result in immediate steps to stop the behaviour, name-calling might result in a short discussion with a staff off to the side as soon as possible.
 - d. ***Something you can and will follow through with:*** Never threaten something you do not intend or have the authority to carry out, for example, avoid: "If you do not behave, you are going to leave the program immediately." Restricting food, water, and other basic needs is not permitted.

- e. ***Give the child a time-out if there are no other clear and logical consequences:***
 - i. Inform the child that they will be taking a break from the current activity to discuss the situation or issue.
 - ii. Guide the child out of the way so that they do not attract attention from other children (but still within sight of the group).
 - iii. Ask the child if they would like some alone time before discussing the situation. Give them alone time for no more than five minutes and then go talk to the child and get them to explain what happened and share their emotions. Help the child come up with a plan to resolve the situation and so that the behaviour will not occur again. This may include apologizing or acknowledging that the behaviour was inappropriate before returning to the group.
 - iv. If the same child repeats the same behaviour, re-institute time out. This time, at the end, again ask the child to come up with a plan so that the behaviour does not happen again. The plan they came up with last time is no longer acceptable as it did not work. The child must come up with a new plan.
4. **Implement the consequence if the child does not follow your command.** Only warn the child once. Do what you say and be consistent. If you intervene early with the start of a serious behaviour, you will get the respect of the children and you will have very few problems with them.
5. **If there is an ongoing or serious problem, staff will consult the appropriate authority figure (e.g., parents/guardians).**

The following forms of punishment are not permitted under any circumstances:

- use corporal punishment, including but not limited to
 - striking a child directly or with any physical object, and
 - shaking, shoving, spanking and other forms of aggressive physical conduct;
- require or force a child to repeat physical movements;
- use harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, whether verbal, emotional or physical;
- confine or isolate a child;
- deprive a child of basic needs, including food, shelter, and clothing.

Consequences and Dismissal from the Program

Consequences will be relevant to the infraction (e.g., if a participant wanders too far away, they will need to stay beside a leader during free time; if a participant doesn't listen when a leader is explaining a game, they will sit out during the game). If possible, we ask for the participant's input about what an appropriate consequence would be and discuss ways to prevent the issue from happening again.

Additionally, we have a 3-strike policy for more serious infractions (when there is actual or potential harm to the participant or others, if an issue is persistent with no improvement, or if they are overly disruptive to the program). Parents/guardians will be informed at pick-up time if a participant received a strike and sent a follow-up email. After 3 strikes, participants will not be permitted to remain in the program. Parents/guardians will be asked to pick up the participant immediately. If they are a threat to the safety of themselves or others, we reserve the right to remove a child from the program at any time (with less than 3 strikes).