

# CAMP ADMINISTRATION 101

## MANAGING PARENTS





For many camp professionals, managing your parents is the least exciting part of your job, but is necessary. Parents are your decision makers so to ensure the growth and success of your program, parents need to be happy campers as well. The vast majority of your parents will be great, but there will always be some that need more of your attention than others. They are entrusting you with the care of their child so it's important that you start a dialogue with them early in the process and make sure they have everything they need in regards to your program. Here are six tips to effectively manage your camp parents:

## COMMUNICATE

The best thing you can do at a bare minimum for your parents is be a great communicator. Great communication will make sure parents are always in the loop and have all the information they need for their child to participate in your camp program. It will also significantly reduce questions and complaints. The main reason a parent would ask a question or complain was they were surprised by decision or not expecting something. If you find you get a ton of the same types of questions from parents and regularly get complaints during camp, then chances are you are not communicating effectively.

## PROVIDE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Have all your activity schedules, policies and procedures, field trip and event details, etc. readily available, easily accessible, and out to parents as early as possible at the point of registration or very soon after. If you are very structured and organized as well as communicate, you will not only give a great first impression but greatly reduce any parent issues during camp.

## LISTEN AND BE RESPONSIVE

If an incident, concern, or complaint does come up address it immediately. Do not ignore it or let it sit. If that happens, chances are it will build up and be much worse by the time you get to it. Listen to what they have to say, address the issue immediately and provide resolution as soon as possible. If the result of the issue is an opportunity to improve your operation, take the initiative to do so to avoid it happening again.

## BUILD TRUST

If parents trust you and your staff, they are much less likely to complain or cause issues. Along with being organized and a great communicator, meet and talk to each parent, get to know their names, and start dialogues with them as early as registration so by the time camp starts they are comfortable, trust you, and start off on a high note right off the bat.

## BE POSITIVE

Staying positive at all times around your campers and camp parents, will go a long way in creating a great culture at camp. Your parents will be able to feel if there is a good vibe at camp from the moment they walk in if everyone is nice and positive at all times. Negativity is a virus that will spread throughout camp and if it radiates to kids and parents, they are more likely to complain or not enjoy your program as much as they could.

## CHECK IN AND GET FEEDBACK

As you are taking to parents throughout the course of summer, make sure to check in with them to see how their kids are enjoying camp as well as if they need anything from you or want to give any feedback. Parents appreciate when they can give their opinion or feedback on things that may be able to be improved from their point of view. At the end of camp always send out a survey as you conduct your post camp evaluation.

If you are able to accomplish everything above, you will greatly reduce questions, complaints, and those that tend to get overly involved. Throughout and after camp, there will undoubtedly be tons of positive feedback. From there, the positive word of mouth you will receive from those parents to others will be invaluable in growing your program moving forward.



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