Positive Youth Development Guide

• Positive Youth Development • Characteristics of Youth • Youth Development in the Camp setting • Experiential Learning Process • Teaching Life Skills • Lesson Planning • Creating Camp Culture

Day Camp Guide

• Day Camp Logistical Planning • Timelines and Task Lists • Day Camp Planning Worksheets • Day Camp Program Planning • Themes • Schedules • Example Day Camp Materials

Day Camp

Day camps are one the easiest camping program to implement. Typically held at Youth Programs facilities, day camps offer day-long programming for youth during the summer and other school year breaks (such as Thanksgiving and Spring Break). Day camps are usually targeted towards younger youth (ages 5-12) and serve one or two meals each day. In addition to activities that are held at Youth Programs facilities, day camps can take advantage of area attractions and resources through field trips and other off-installation excursions.

Specialty Camp Guide

SPECIALTY CAMP GUIDE

• Specialty Camp Logistical Planning • Timelines and Task Lists • Specialty Camp Planning Worksheets • Specialty Camp Program Planning • Themes • Schedules • Example Specialty Camp Materials

Specialty Camps

Specialty camps are programs that focus on a particular subject or area and extend beyond a simple camp theme. These camps offer in-depth instruction in an individual activity or subject, rather than a variety of general events that make up a typical day camp. Specialty programs are designed to increase youths' understanding and knowledge in a specific subject area. Since these camps differ somewhat from traditional day camps, the planning process must determine the specific staffing, facility, and equipment needs for specialty camps.

Examples of specialty camps include:

- Sports (*soccer, cheerleading, tennis, basketball, football, baseball, softball, swimming*)
- Science/technology (*computers, robotics, physical science, biological science, environmental science*)
- Healthy living (*importance of proper nutrition and exercise*)
- Arts (*studio arts, photography, performing arts – ballet, music, drama; creative arts for younger youth*)
- Leadership/teamwork
- Teens
- Youth resiliency/understanding military deployment

Specialty camps differ from other types of camps in that many are designed to teach a specific skill or information about an academic area. Because of this, some classes may require instruction methods rather than facilitation. This includes demonstrating new skills, supervising sports drills, providing one-on-one feedback, and assigning and evaluating group and individual work. If using contract staff for specific sessions, staff members should be familiar with best practices and teaching techniques for specific subject matter.

Residential Camp Guide

• Residential Camp Logistical Planning • Timelines and Task Lists • Residential Camp Planning Worksheets • Residential Camp Program Planning • Themes • Schedules • Example Residential Camp Materials

Residential Camps

Residential camps are weekend or week-long camp experiences that include an overnight or residential experience for older elementary, middle, and high school age youth. Residential camps can be more difficult to implement as residential facilities may not be readily available on-installation. However with proper planning and preparation, residential camps located at rented camp facilities can be as successful and effective as other camping programs held at Youth Programs facilities.

Adventure Camp and Training Responsible Adolescents In Leadership (T.R.A.I.L.) Guide

• Incorporating Leadership Lessons into Adventure Camps • Adventure Camp Logistical Planning • Collaborations • Timelines and Task Lists • Adventure Camp Planning Worksheets • Adventure Camp Program Planning • Themes • Schedules • Example Adventure Camp Materials • Adventure Camp Essential Information

Adventure Based Programming

Adventure camps are youth development programs that take place predominantly out-of-doors and combine physical challenges with traditional camp programming to promote leadership and teamwork. Adventure camps give youth the opportunity to participate in special activities (such as caving, kayaking, white water rafting, snorkeling, etc.) that are typically not available through other programs. Not only do these physical challenges introduce youth to new leisure or recreation pursuits, but they also provide a unique setting to teach life-lessons. The adventure-based experience is an ideal place to develop leadership qualities, trust and trust worthiness, empathy, enhance self-esteem, and focus on each individual's diverse strengths. These experiences also give participants the opportunity to learn about equipment selection and care, safety and risk management, outdoor skills, and gain an appreciation for our natural resources(Schmillen, et al.).

While using the out-of-doors as a classroom, it is often possible to take advantage of "teachable moments" and incorporate other valuable, principle-centered lessons into the curriculum. Outdoor adventure activities are also an excellent forum for teaching life skills such as communication, problem solving, conflict resolution and more. With proper guidance and utilization of youth development methodologies by staff members, these skills can be fostered to expand the sense of responsibility our young adults so desperately need in today's world (Schmillen, et al.).

Through cooperative effort, personal responsibility and active participation, adventure camps provide an avenue for leadership development. Adventure camps are a fun, innovative format that allows youth the opportunity to test the boundaries and limits on their perception of "risk." It calls for proper training, dedication and patience of facilitators, support by adults, and an overall willingness to give youth a chance to participate in lifelong adventure activities (Schmillen, et al.).

Adventure camps are structured to provide challenging experiences for youth. For this reason, most adventure camps are targeted at teens and older adolescents. Because of the inherent risk involved in many outdoor activities, youth need to have reached a certain level of maturity in order to safely complete most challenges. The material in this unit has been designed for teen camps, although it can be adapted to provide adventure experiences for younger adolescents.

In addition to adventure camps, the following information and materials can be used in the development of T.R.A.I.L. Air Force Youth Programs. T.R.A.I.L. (Teaching Responsible Adolescents in Leadership) programs promote leadership development while introducing youth to exciting recreation and leisure pursuits. The T.R.A.I.L. program promotes communication and leadership skills in teens as youth are responsible for planning, scheduling, and conducting outdoor adventure programs under the guidance of experienced adult leaders.

Adult Leader Guide

ADULT LEADER GUIDE

• Youth Development • Working with Youth • Safety • Enthusiasm • Managing Behavior • Camp as a Classroom • Facilitation

Youth Development

Ages and Stages

One of the most important considerations of PYD programming is designing programs and activities for youth that are appropriate for their stage of development.

Researchers have identified and labeled many stages of human development spanning from infancy to senior. Instead of defining a specific stage of development, our focus is the development of youth from age five to eighteen (the most common ages of participants in Air Force Youth Programs). Although this age span includes several distinct and different phases of human development, the manual will only attempt to cover broad generalizations on the development of individuals in these stages, keeping in mind that individuals develop physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually at unique rates.

Many youth participating in camp programs are adolescents. Broadly defined, adolescence is the stage of development between childhood and adulthood during which the body undergoes many changes – physical, emotional, intellectual, and social. Often the beginning and end of this stage of development are ambiguous and different for each individual. Many associate puberty with adolescence, as this is the stage of growth when an individual's primary sex characteristics fully mature and secondary sex characteristics emerge. The following section will provide an overview of developmental characteristics of youth ages 5 through 18.

Additional Resources

- Information regarding the development and needs of adolescents is available from the Adolescent Health working group at www.ahwg.net.
- Purdue offers a comprehensive review of Ages and Stages. For more information visit www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/NCR/NCR-292.html.
- The American Psychological Association has an extensive guide on adolescent development at www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/develop.pdf.
- Visit the American Medical Association for a comprehensive Parent Package that offers information about living and working with teens at www.ama-assn.org/ama/upload/mm/39/parentinfo.pdf.
- Michigan 4-H has information regarding Ages and Stages along with information on how to incorporate this knowledge into youth activities at web1.msue.msu.edu/4h/ageapp.html.
- Virginia Cooperative Extension offers information regarding adolescent growth and development online at www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/350/350-850/350-850.html.

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