Counselor/Staff Training Manual

“PREPARING YOURSELF FOR CAMP”
Dear Big People,

Thanks for being a camp volunteer. You probably have other things to do today but you have to be at training instead.

I’m a little scared about going to camp, maybe you are too.

I hope you can learn some stuff and figure out how to help kids like me.

Kids like me, we really need some big people like you to keep us safe and help us with things we don’t know.

What you learn in training may just help save my life.

Who knows, maybe you’re the answer to my prayers.

Thanks… Future Camper

P.S. See you at camp!
Special appreciation is extended to the following contributors who have so willingly shared their expertise and time in creating this material.

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Special acknowledgement is extended to the staffs of the many camps who have shared their experiences through the years and helped us fine-tune this material.
COUNSELOR/STAFF PREPARING FOR CAMP MANUAL
Royal Family KIDS®, Inc.

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It is the desire of Royal Family KIDS, Inc. to assist others to provide quality camps which will accomplish the goals expressed in this manual and to learn from the experiences of others.

Royal Family KIDS, Inc. assumes no responsibility to or for churches, organizations or others who operate camps or otherwise use these materials. The authors have attempted to describe many areas of concern in training camp personnel; however, these materials are not exhaustive and laws, rules, and regulations which apply to you must be consulted before undertaking a camp. You should consult other professionals in their fields of expertise to assist you in properly establishing and operating your camp.
Thank you for volunteering this year and welcome!

You are a part of a world-wide Royal Family KIDS movement to significantly impact innocent victims of childhood abuse with the love and care of Christ. Your camp may be a first time for campers to experience positive examples of hope for their future. The importance of our task compels each of us to reach deeply within to give every bit of ourselves to our week at camp. Your effectiveness as a volunteer is in large measure proportionate to how much of yourself you are willing to invest in a child.

Jesus’ method for helping others was always grounded in His love for them. It is this type of love and acceptance that campers crave. Campers receive 24-hour access to wonderful role models who reflect Christ’s care for them.

This manual is entitled ‘Preparing you for Camp’. RFK is not a soft and cuddly kind of camp; rather, it is purposely designed to be challenging, impactful and celebratory for both campers and volunteers. Many first year volunteers, as well as many camp veterans find the materials in this manual quite daunting, and the prospect of relating to our campers more challenging than they anticipated. The good news is that you are not alone. You will find many supportive like-minded Christians at camp who are positive, affirming, reassuring and focused on the cause of being a part of God’s plan to bring hope to these young lives.

Every year at Royal Family KIDS brings new adventures. None of us have any idea what we are capable of until we come to the end of our comfort zone and find that God is there with us. The difficult things in life are often the ones that provide us with the most gratification. For our campers, we fervently desire to let them know that the challenging experiences of their lives are very different from the meaning of their lives. You have joined an “army of compassion” Confronting Abuse • Changing Lives!

For the children,

Wayne and Diane Tesch

Co-Founders
COMMITMENT FORM

Every counselor and staff person must sign this commitment form. The original copy of this form is to be kept in the local camp files.

I have received a copy of the Royal Family KIDS Camp Counselor / Staff Manual. I agree to read it and abide by all the procedures and policies therein.

I understand that my attendance at the required counselor and staff training sessions is a condition of my service to RFK Camp.

__________________________________
Print Name

__________________________________
Signature

__________________________________
Date

__________________________________
Camp Director

__________________________________
Location and date of camp
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    -Maximizing the Impact of Your Week with Campers
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X. Bibliography and Glossary

Website Supplemental Resource Section
   Available on the Website in the Training Library (user name & password protected)
   Each of the eight Sections of this manual have supplemental resources in the Training Library, in addition to a document with the following items:
   1. A Spiritual Understanding of Working with Abused Children
      by Roger Heuser & Sam Southard
   2. Graduate in Training
      GIT Program for campers attending last year of camp
   3. Reading/Resource List (Extensive) Recommended for staff and counselors
   4. Royal Family KIDS Training Options
   5. Gideon’s Story – A Camp Devotional
I. INTRODUCTION TO ROYAL FAMILY KIDS CAMPS

Royal Family KIDS has a great foundation and history. There is so much to be done and many volunteers are needed for a camp’s success. Knowing the basics about the history, the team around you, and the spiritual foundation is vital for YOU to be part of a great team that will create life-changing moments at camp for kids of abuse.

A. Overview

1. RFK Camp Beginnings
The first question we are all interested in, is the one about how and why RFK started. The answer is in this brief description by the founder, Rev. Wayne Tesch, which is called “Sounding the Call” on Behalf of Children of Abuse in Orange County (CA).

“It was Thursday, December 13, 1984, when a luncheon appointment was set with Rev. Fred Cottrell and Rev. Leonard Nipper, two officials of the Assemblies of God, Southern California District. During the meeting they shared with me the dream of Camp Pinecrest.

“Camp Pinecrest is nestled in the San Bernardino mountains at the 5,000 foot level. The camp is 160 acres, consisting of 16 newly built condominiums, with an additional 20 on the drawing board. There are 3 chateaus that will house 300 campers. There is a small lake that the Forest Service will stock with trout.

“During our luncheon conversation, they posed this question:

“‘Would you be interested in being a Camp Director for one week with a theme camp of your choice?’

“What an opportunity! I went back to my office to seek guidance and direction from the Lord for a camp. As I walked into the office, I shared with Jill Anderson the opportunity that was presented to me. She suggested a camp for children of abuse. It was as though God spoke directly. I knew in my heart at that moment God was opening a door for the children of abuse and abandonment in Orange County, California.

“Details were formulated to set down a timeline of accomplishments to form a ‘camp.’ First, a meeting was called with individuals who are trained in the specific needs of abandoned and foster
children. The objective was to determine if we could: (1) secure 60 children, and (2) secure 20 counselors.

“Their excitement and prayers were encouraging and uplifting — their involvement a MUST. The date of July 11-18 was targeted to launch the first week of camp. Research was begun on children of abuse in Orange County.

“Statistics of abused children in the county were shocking. In 1983, there were 7,811 mandated reports of child abuse. Mandated — a doctor, teacher, or psychologist calls or reports to the authorities the finding of such a child. In 1984, 10,592 mandated calls were projected. I was shocked and, at the same time, stirred, as I realized that we, the people of God, could impact those statistics in our community.

“In addition, in 50% of the 3,905 cases, the victim was under five years of age. Thirty-four percent of that group, or 1,328, were under two years of age. To compound the problem, there were only 650 foster homes in the county to harbor these children if and when, they are discovered, and this number was decreasing at 9% per year. I cried out, “Dear Lord, these are kids who are wounded and need Your love.”

“Sunday morning, January 6th, Rev. Bob Rogers, Director of Teen Challenge of Southern California, ministered in the morning services. He spoke on the topic of “Anointed to Minister to the Poor.” As I listened, my mind drifted to Camp Pinecrest with 60 children running, playing, and singing through the mountain terrain. I saw kids in rooms with a trained counselor sharing Biblical principles of life. I envisioned counselors hugging children, allowing them to realize that hands not only abuse, but hands can love. I prayed silently that morning that the people of Newport Mesa Christian Center would provide “healing hands” to ease the hurt of these children. In addition to providing healing, loving hands to these children, I saw people on their knees praying for the ministry of the camp — prayer support is critical and vital in this type of ministry. I also saw homes of love being opened to ease the pain of children.”

Wayne also says, “I see now how God had planted in my heart a dream to reach out to help children whose lives had been devastated by abuse and neglect. I can still remember a vision God gave me in a camp setting when I was only twelve years old. The vision showed a sea of faces of children from all nationalities and races. That vision became reality during the first RFKC in 1985.¹

“During that first week of camp, the needs of the children touched the hearts of all of us who worked at camp. We realized that if other churches got behind a program like RFKC, we could reach hundreds of abused children every year. So we began to challenge other churches to follow this simple model: organize a one-week summer camp for children of abuse in their own area. Child Protective agencies and foster families are eager to send children because there children miss out on many typical childhood experiences.”

Note: The RFK website will have the latest statistics available for the Camp and Club growth.

2. Introduction to the Training Schedule and Mission Statement

This pre-camp training is imperative for three reasons:
1. To acquaint and sensitize you, the staff and counselors, to the background and needs of the abused and neglected child.
2. To build specific counseling and leadership skills so that the counselor-camper relationships will be positive.
3. To build team unity and comradery.

During this first session, we will look at the spiritual basis for RFK, our mission statement, objectives, and brief job descriptions. We will also have other sessions to talk about you, the counselors and staff, detailed sessions about the campers, abuse and neglect, the week at camp, behavior management, and so on. We will give you lots of details and recommendations so you will know what to do.

Why are you here?
The Sears Catalog used to advertise many of its products as good, better, and best – such as Sears' good, better, and best dishwashers. Here are some good, better, and best reasons for volunteering for the RFK ministry.

GOOD reasons for volunteering to be a counselor/staff member at RFKC: curious; good for my resume; good place to meet a responsible, caring spouse; confront personal issues from my childhood
BETTER reasons for volunteering to be a counselor/staff member at RFKC: personal growth; learn more about the nature and needs of abused and neglected kids; try being a Foster Parent for a week; fine tune my ability to work with children.

BEST reason for volunteering to be a counselor/staff member at RFKC: to provide safety, fun, life-changing, positive memories, and a positive role model for children of abuse and neglect within the context of Christian values; to press into service the skills that I have, and see God provide for skills I do not have; to listen; to express genuine empathy and to love unconditionally without requiring anything in return for my investment.

The RFK Mission Statement which includes the Counselor/Staff Code of Conduct (adapted from Deuteronomy 6:4-9) lends support to the best reason for volunteering stated above:

We the people of Royal Family KIDS, Inc., believe in God’s Word that develops within us an obedience and trust in our Creator. We believe in His sovereignty and firmly accept the task, which now lies before us to reach out to the children of abuse and neglect of America. Our commitment to this group of children represents a new endeavor that the Church will undertake. With the assistance of our Lord, we will provide a warm and friendly atmosphere for each child. We will create life-changing moments and extend loving hands to these children.

We will model the Counselor Code of Conduct adapted from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 which says:

‘Hear, O Lord: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your campers, and shall TALK of them when you SIT in your cabin, and when you HIKE by the way and when you LIE down, and when you RISE. And you shall bind them, as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the door posts of your house (cabin) and on your gates.’ (As interpreted by Wayne Tesch)
The **PURPOSE** of the RFK, Inc. organization is:

* Mobilize the faith community to confront child abuse*

Our **MISSION** is to:

* Create life-changing moments for children of abuse*

The **VISION** of the organization is:

* Every foster child, age 6 – 12, experiences a life-changing camp, club and mentor*

Royal Family KIDS **Values**:

- Treat People Royally
- Make Moments Matter
- Keep Moving Forward
3. Who’s Who at RFKC

The RFKC team includes a large number of people and 20-25 different roles or areas of responsibility. Here’s a brief introduction to the kinds of jobs and the people involved in this week.

**Camper**  
I probably don’t know how to pray for myself or for the camp, so I’m very thankful all of you are doing it!

**Counselor** - the thing I do most is  
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.  
2. Know whereabouts of my campers every minute.  
3. Share my P.M.A. all week.  
4. Lead Campers in a meaningful week of camp

**Director** - the thing I do the most is to  
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.  
2. I plan and promote the camp  
3. I have a pair of asbestos boots to stomp out little fires.

**Assistant Director** - the thing I do the most is to  
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.  
2. Work closely with the director  
3. Maintain morale - rah, rah!

**Dean of Men/Dean of Women** - the thing we do the most is to  
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.  
2. Assist in the selection of the counselors  
3. Coordinate counselor/camper relationships and situations

**Professional Counselor** - the thing I do the most is  
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP  
2. Assist counselors to alleviate tension with campers and deal with troubling issues
Child Placement Coordinator - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Work with Social Services to contact potential campers
3. Call Counselors and give name and age of camper so counselors can plan room decorations, buy gifts, etc.

Nurse - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Collect medication at registration and screen campers for illness
3. Implement total health care program at camp

Activity Center Coordinator - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Prepare and run 20-25 creative Activity Centers that emphasize “process not product”

Bible Teacher - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Teach Bible lessons to the campers

Music Director - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP
2. Direct the music and music activities all week

Coach - the thing I do the most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP
2. Plan and lead organized games each day

Photographer/Video/Sound Person - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Take a minimum of six photos of each camper for their Memory Book.
3. Operate sound equipment
4. Create video/slide show if needed for Friday
Counselor Relief Coordinators - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Provide relief personnel for counselors nightly

Grandpa/Grandma/Aunt/Uncle - the thing we do most if
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Give safe hugs/read stories to campers
3. Provide general assistance throughout camp.

Counselor Assistants - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Work with assigned counselor
3. “Plug in” when necessary

Staff Assistants - the thing I do most is
1. PRAY FOR THE CAMP.
2. Work with assigned staff members

All Volunteers - the things we do for campers are:
1. Encouraging each one with love
2. Cheering their successes
3. Guiding them with patient wisdom
4. Observing creation together with awe and wonder
5. Helping them to recognize God in the midst of their lives

Note: On the following three pages are detailed job descriptions for the Camp Director, the Counselor and Staff in general. Additional detailed job descriptions for each job are available on the website in the Training Library / 101 Manual / Section I supplemental materials.
DIRECTOR

“L.E.A.D.”

John Maxwell says a good leader looks over their shoulder to see who is following. If no one is following, you are just taking a walk in the park! As a Director, have influence to accomplish the MISSION.

Listen: A leader is wise when he/she remembers that God gave 1 mouth to talk and 2 ears to listen.

Enthusiasm: Webster defines enthusiasm as a “fervor” or “feeling” as its No. 1 meaning, but the real meaning of the word is, “In God’s Spirit.” God who calls and provides will reside in us at all times.

Anticipate: Always anticipate your next move on schedule. If it rains, be ready, or in the case of one summer camp, SNOW. Be ready.

Delegate: This is a leader’s way of incorporating many hands into the work of planning and executing. As a director, delegate with authority and responsibility.

“Love Every Adult Daily”
STAFF

“H.E.L.P.”
As part of the staff, your attitude should scream out, “Whatever it takes, we can do it.” Remember you will be creating the structure by which God’s spirit can minister.

Handy: Be ready, willing, able, and handy to do anything at any time to create positive memories for the campers.

Encourage: Develop the language of a positive support for campers, counselors, or staff. Encourage individuals to reach their fullest potential.

Level: Maintain a calming influence during difficult situations. Have a leveling effect rather than a volcano in dealing with people.

Pleasant: Smile and be approachable. See the positive side of things. Even when you feel your position doesn’t “get the ink” for what you do — in spite of it, He will reward you. We do it all FOR THE KIDS — with a smile.
COUNSELOR

“L.O.V.E.”

What is a counselor? See job descriptions.

Loves the Lord and Kids: When your priorities are correct and you love
the Lord, your campers will experience the power of God’s love
through you.

Open Heart: Open your heart to the children. Let them come in
swearing, kicking, biting, swinging, and trying to manipulate the
time. With an open heart, the children will see Christ in you. See
"Counselor Code of Conduct," in Counselor/Staff Training
Manual.

Vulnerable Counselors say, "Should my camper see me cry?" Of course.
Maybe the only tears they have seen are tears of anger or
sadness. Let them see you demonstrate true emotions.

Energy: This is a quiet energy. This means you can walk and play, hike
and swim. Please conserve your energy by getting enough rest.
B. Spiritual Foundation of RFKC

Keep in mind that most of these children have never had a positive, wholesome experience at camp. The overriding environment that should pervade an RFKC is a positive, affirming, non-judgmental atmosphere.

Most of these children not only come from a background that is devoid of Christian values, many of the Christian values they have experienced have been warped or skewed depending on the severity of their past experience. Therefore, be advised that references which we all make in Christian circles that refer to spiritual things, i.e. our “Christianese” language, tends to create a barrier for these children.

For example: “God is love,” “He is our heavenly father and he loves you” may be misinterpreted by a child of abuse or neglect because a father who “loved” them also abused, molested or neglected them.

We must see ourselves as being one small part in the entire process of rebuilding hope in these children. It may be our experience to simply provide the initial love and affirmation that only begins to soften the encrusted shell that this child may have developed to survive in life. This is a beginning. Beyond this may be opportunities to sow the seed of a gospel witness. But the objective must never be that we can till, water, sow, cultivate and reap — all in one short week at RFKC. Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 3:6 “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

Royal Family KIDS, Inc. is a Christian ministry. Royal Family KIDS Camps (RFKC) are Christian camps. The founders, with extensive experience in Christian children’s camps, have observed powerful life-changes in the children who are involved in camp. The vision for this ministry to children of abuse and neglect is to provide the same opportunity for children who, because of their difficult circumstances, may never experience it otherwise. This is why you are here.

There is a scriptural and spiritual basis underlying this effective ministry, a ministry to the oppressed and the downtrodden. Founder Wayne Tesch, wrote the following paragraphs in the first RFKC counselor/staff training manual:

“I find that the benefits of being involved in helping the abused and neglected are at the very core of Christ’s ministry. Luke 4:18, 19 states clearly why Royal Family KIDS, Inc. was established. Christ says, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach
good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ Our desire is to heal the broken hearted, release the oppressed, and liberate the downtrodden.”

“The camping environment is an excellent model to allow the Spirit of Christ and His Word to make a lasting impression on the children. The children are blessed, but as a pastor, I am aware of how many of the adults who give up a week of their vacation are blessed also. Henrietta Mears, the well known and revered Sunday School authority, stated that “one week of camp is equivalent to a year of time spent in Sunday School.” What a great opportunity for the church to provide a ministry model to its own community with the Good News.”

It has been truthfully said that children are the paradigm of the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ words in Matthew 19:14 make this very clear, “Let the little children come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven”. And he went much further, stating, “Truly I say unto you, unless you are converted and become like children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:3) And then, in some of the strongest words our Lord ever spoke, “Whoever humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.” Imagine! “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:4-6) There can be no doubt as to how strongly Jesus felt about the care of and concern for children!

So when you, as a counselor or staff member in a Royal Family KIDS Camp minister to a child of abuse or neglect, you touch a need that doubly touches the heart of God. You reach two of His highest priorities, the oppressed and the downtrodden, and the child, who is the very model of the kingdom of heaven. Can there be any higher calling? In blessing these children you will be blessed.

The Mission Statement of Royal Family KIDS, Inc. speaks to the importance of your work as a vital Christian ministry, “to create life-changing moments.” For some of the children, the life-changing moments may be emotional moments, for some they may be physical, for others the moments may be social or spiritual. But for all, we believe they are moments that will change their lives.
What about bringing the child to Jesus?

We are a Christian camp. **To the “Social Services” community, we are identified as a “faith-based” camp.** What are appropriate ways for us to share our faith with the campers? They will come to camp with such a variety of experiences, and most of them will have had no previous knowledge or experience of who Jesus is.

A few years ago a term became popular in seminaries and Bible schools because of the important redirection it gave to evangelism. The term was “incarnational evangelism.” This meant simply that individuals are more likely to come to Christ when they see Jesus lived through the everyday lives of Christians than when they are told what to do to become a Christian. **Deeds are always more effective than words.** Jesus very clearly set forth this model of evangelism when he said, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

Since it is the deep desire of Royal Family KIDS to lead each child to a wholesome life lived in Jesus Christ the counselor may feel that his or her primary obligation is to continually talk about the plan of salvation in an attempt to lead the child to Jesus. The experience of the leadership of Royal Family KIDS has been that it is not appropriate to pressure any child to go to the altar, or to continually ask a child to pray the prayer of salvation. This is defined by Social Services as coercion or “proselytizing.” This simply is not the most effective way to work with these children and is prohibited by Social Services. Many of them have been unduly pressured by adults to say and do many things, and as such, many may have built up a strong resistance to an adult’s encouragement to do something, or they too easily agree to an adult’s encouragement out of fear.

If you have come from a background where new converts are “invited to make a decision to walk forward and accept Jesus Christ,” be aware of the group dynamics that takes place among these children. This process can “spiritually abuse” the children because they do not understand the emotional setting that has been created and, therefore, may not be responding on a spiritual level but on an emotional level. That is why we avoid any group appeals, with these children an individual invitation is more appropriate when they “ask” following the Joshua chapter 4 model.

A Biblical example would be that RFK follows “Question Evangelism” based on Joshua chapter 4. The people of Israel crossed over the Jordan River and into the Promised Land. God told Joshua to take 12 stones out
of the river and place them on the side where they were going. Why did they do this? Chapter 4 vs. 21-23 states:

“When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What are these stones?’ then you shall let your children know, saying, ‘Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land’; for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan…”

This now becomes a model, when the children **ASK**, then we can tell them the great things the Lord has done for us! If they don’t ask, then we don’t pressure them. If they ask, we answer their questions without pressure.

Your relationship with Jesus Christ:

As a counselor or staff member, it is important to know that you acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ in your own life. It is His life within you (Galatians 2:20) that will bring hope into the lives of these children. Most campers have never seen or received the benefits of living with a life filled with the fruits of the Spirit (i.e. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control - Galatians 5:22). You will be bringing a “cup of cold water” to these children (Matthew 10:42) when you care for them with the love defined in 1 Corinthians 13 (i.e. with patience, kindness, no jealousy, no boasting, no arrogance, no unbecoming behavior, no selfishness, not provoked, not rejoicing in wrong nor unrighteousness, rejoicing in the truth, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things).

Let it be your desire that, through your example of Christ’s love, you would draw these children into the redeeming hand of Jesus. He, through you, will be the “repairer of broken walls” (Isaiah 58:12) He, through you, can give meaning, value and purpose to a life crushed by trauma . As the Psalmist wrote, “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). On this premise walk forward into camp in the name of Christ to serve these children.

Prayer and the power of God’s love

All of the members of Royal Family pray continually that the love of God will permeate and enfold each moment of the campers’ week with us, that for this time they would know the protection and care found in Jesus Christ and that the seeds of truth planted into their hearts
(perhaps even more by our lives than by our words) would, in the timing of the Holy Spirit, bring them into a personal relationship with Jesus.

To create an atmosphere of love, safety and fun, all counselors and staff members are encouraged to pray for God’s banner to be over the camp. Throughout the day, all counselors, staff and support people are encouraged to recognize and pray accordingly for whatever situation in which they find themselves, or of which they are made aware. There are times (meals, chapel, devotions, etc.) that the campers have an opportunity to pray or hear our prayers.

Each camper, however, should experience only the light and love of our Lord Jesus Christ as seen through you.

CAMP STORY-

Here is a story to conclude this section on letting the children see and experience Christ through you. The Lancaster, CA, camp was celebrating their 20th anniversary and a volunteer told this story. A blind camper asked a male volunteer if she could touch his face. The volunteer felt uncomfortable with this but said “yes” because he knew camp was about the campers needs not his own needs. As the girl camper touched his face she said, “I feel like I’m touching the face of Jesus”. The volunteer immediately became uncomfortable and began saying, “No, no, no, I’m not Jesus, don’t compare me with Jesus.” Then the girl said these incredible words, she said “This week you have been Jesus to me!” This camper was blind, but she had a vision of Jesus through the volunteers who simply let Jesus live through them at camp. You, too, can allow your campers to see Jesus living through you at camp.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

The Counselor Code of Conduct, Deuteronomy 6:4-6, as described in this Section of this Manual, is practiced throughout the week at camp in many ways. One of the significant ways is teaching the children a trust in God as we ‘walk and talk’ throughout the day and evening at camp. When we do this, we creatively weave God’s presence into our daily lives and the life of the camper, making him/her aware of the God we know, love and serve.

The following are key moments during the week of camp that a counselor or staff member can bring the camper to an awareness of God and the importance of His presence in our lives. State agencies that refer
the children to Royal Family KIDS Camps will, generally speaking, not object to a child participating in these practices. They are a part of RFKC. (An expanded list is now available in the Addendum Chapter IX—
Maximizing the Impact of Your Week with Campers “A guide for Camp Rookies, but useful for everyone”

1. PRAYER AT MEALS

Acknowledging God at mealtimes is a non-threatening way to encourage a child to begin to pray to God and thank him for something very important to their daily lives – food. This can be done in various ways as we have seen demonstrated at various camps:

Group prayer outside the dining hall:
An adult staff person accompanies the child at the microphone and can pray a phrase at a time for the child to repeat, if they are unfamiliar with praying on their own. Or the child may feel very comfortable with praying all by themselves. This is role modeling the importance of mealtime prayers.

Another method is to have an adult staff member or a child pray aloud in the dining room, using the microphone. Some camps even include brief prayer requests for those in camp who might need a special prayer, i.e., the Camp Grandma is having difficulty with her hip; camper Joey’s mom is having surgery tomorrow. This teaches the children that God is concerned about our everyday needs as well as for providing our daily food—‘teachable moments.’

Some camps use a coffee can to place Popsicle sticks inside with each child’s name written on them. The sticks are marked green on one end and red on the other. On Monday, all the sticks are placed in the can with the green ends up. When an opportunity arises during the week for a child to be chosen (praying for the meal, leading the group in an activity, etc.) a child’s name is drawn out of the can. If he wants to participate, the stick is placed back in the can with the red end up, meaning he has already been chosen during the week. If the child chooses not to participate, the stick is returned to the can with the green end still up. This means he/she can be chosen again for another responsibility at a later time. When all the sticks have red ends up, you begin all over choosing the children, now that everyone has had a turn to be invited to lead the group. (This method also prevents some children from always being chosen to do something special, while drawing out a shy or reticent child who might never volunteer, but would willingly participate if asked to do so by this method.)
2. 30/30 TIME

Many children become more reflective when they are in a situation where it is quiet and restful. This is a time during the day when the campers can lay on their bed and read, work on their Camper Handbook or do some other quiet activity. This may be a time when the campers seem to ‘open up’ and want to talk more than at other times of the day. The counselors should be trained to recognize the opportunity to visit with the camper if he/she has a question, a comment or wants to discuss lessons that were taught earlier during chapel or Bible time.

3. CAMPER ACTIVITY BOOK

It is recommended that counselors assist the campers with their Camper Activity Books during rest time. This is a time when the counselor can answer questions or describe/interpret the morning’s chapel lesson or a concept from the drama or a life principle that was being made during the Bible story. Counselors should be trained to be sensitive to an opportunity or question from the child, to teach a Biblical principle in response to a child’s questions when they are working on their Activity Book during quiet times in the room.

4. ACTIVITY CENTERS

The Deuteronomy 6 ‘Counselor Code of Conduct’ is MOST visibly demonstrated during Activity Center times. Activity Centers are the bedrock of Royal Family as being able to accomplish things with the campers that will never be accomplished any other way through the week of camp.

Activity Centers were designed to be spread out throughout the camp – to encourage WALKING AND TALKING ALONG THE WAY. Because some climates are so HOT or the terrain or camp facility does not lend itself to this arrangement, some camp directors place the centers all in one central location or inside a building (because it’s cooler, etc.). This is not the intent of Activity Centers. The intent was to spread them out so counselors and campers would be given the opportunity to converse along the way as they move from one center to another. This arrangement also reduces the noise and commotion all in one location. Wise counselors will look for opportunities to relate something very ordinary, for example: a squirrel scurrying around the tree looking for a place to hide a nut—as the wisdom of God seen in a squirrel who instinctively knows to bury nuts in the summer so he will have food stored up for the winter. How wise God was to create squirrels to be so
smart! Pointing these things out to a camper are ‘teachable moments’ along the way.

Other moments may arise while sitting at an Activity Center working on a project, pointing out how creative the child is and how God gave us our minds to create a beautiful world for ourselves and others to enjoy. This pleases Him. Activity Centers make Teachable Moments happen during a week at Royal Family.

5. **DEVOTIONS AT NIGHT**

More than any other time of the day, children instinctively become more open and willing to share at bedtime, because their senses are beginning to relax. If children come from an unchurched home where personal disciplines or Godly principles are not practiced in their daily lives, they will not be familiar with the routine or ‘ritual’ of having a quiet time with God before bedtime. This can be an excellent time to talk about the morning chapel story or reading a scripture or Bible story before bedtime. Saying a brief prayer at bedtime may help to quiet the child who is ‘afraid’ to go to sleep or is ‘afraid’ of the dark. This is a teachable moment that the child can take home from camp and begin to practice in his/her daily life after camp.

6. **SING SONGS**

Music can be a ‘healing salve’ to a wounded soul. Songs, such as “I Will Change Your Name”, give a child hope that God can change the ‘muck and mire’ in their lives to make something good out of it. Songs can replace worrisome thoughts and fears that our campers so often are plagued with throughout the day. Psalm 40 says “He put a new song in my mouth--A song of praise to our God.” Teaching and singing a new song to a troubled child can change their countenance and give hope. The music learned at camp can also be a lasting gift that we give the children to take home to enjoy throughout the whole year. The camp music tapes can be played in the campers’ rooms to help them learn the words and enjoy hearing them played. Music played quietly can have a calming effect on a child who feels distraught. Explaining the words to Christian songs can help the child understand the meaning as he/she sings the song. These become ‘teachable moments.’

7. **BIBLE READING**

Reading God’s Word and explaining the words can be ‘teachable moments.’ If campers have difficulty reading, the counselor should read the scriptures for them and explain what it means.
8. REVIEW OF THE DAY

Part of a nightly ritual with the campers might be to talk about what the day held for each of the campers – the good things that happened, favorite activities they participated in, things they learned, etc. The wise counselor can usually incorporate into the discussion an appreciation for God’s provisions of the day, how good God is to all of us to allow us to be at camp, how he cared for us throughout the day and kept us safe, etc. This directed conversation can allow the counselor to learn things about the camper that may help him/her to better relate to the child during the remainder of the week.

Memories

One of our goals as a team is to “create life-changing moments” for each camper. We really believe that camp is the “week that lasts a lifetime”. If you believe it can happen with God’s help, then it will happen!

CLOSE

What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
II. Building a Mission Mindset and Self Awareness

As a Volunteer with Royal Family KIDS Camp, you will be interacting with children who have experienced abuse and neglect. You will bring your background and your spiritual life into Camp with you. You may feel unprepared to minister to these kids. It is also possible that Camp may unexpectedly cause past or forgotten experiences to resurface. Creating self-awareness and anticipating potential challenges will help you be a more successful volunteer at Camp.

A. A Successful Camp Experience Starts with God

NOTE to Camp leaders or Volunteer Staff, such as the Camp Bible Teacher or the Pastor liaison. Part A was added to discuss the spiritual foundation of the Volunteer. Trainers may wish to utilize this section to add personal devotions, thoughts, scriptures or Biblical precepts to prepare volunteers for Camp at a spiritual level.

Thank you for putting your faith into action, making yourself vulnerable, listening to God and desiring to minister to Campers who have been incredibly challenged at a young age. As a Volunteer, your desire to change the world by being a part of the worldwide movement of Royal Family KIDS is deeply appreciated. You are an answer to the prayers of both Camp leadership and Campers.

God works through Camp to create a week of great fun, meaningful interactions and stretching challenges. Our goal is to meet Campers who have experienced abuse and neglect where they are and provide them the love and care of Christ. For Campers and Volunteers alike, Camp is a divine appointment week. God will not only transform Campers’ lives, expect Him to greatly challenge you as well.

Royal Family KIDS teaches and models that God desires a relationship with everyone and that we are dependent upon Him for everything that is important in life.
Therefore, Volunteers:

- Demonstrate a prayer life that is personal, warm, forgiving and non-judgmental.
- Model daily habits of a connected relationship with God.
- Communicate in word and deed that all people are infinitely valuable to God.
- Teach others to seek and recognize God in the everyday activities of life.
- Guide Campers to help them embrace virtue and recognize Biblical standards.
- Communicate that God desires us to seek His refuge when life becomes overwhelming.

1. Developing a Short-Term Mission Mindset

Abuse and neglect of young children within our own community creates a lifetime of challenges for the Campers you will meet. Camper’s lives are often hidden from public view and church ministries. While church-sponsored short term mission’s travel to foreign cultures to impact children, RFK Camp ministers to children who have experienced abuse through a short term mission to a “foreign” culture within our community.

Royal Family KIDS Camp is unlike any other Camp. It is much more than a week of fun, or learning activities, or a service project or a vacation Bible school. The most lasting impact on Campers does not come from activities, or the physical camp, but in volunteers reflecting God’s love and care. Our desire is to be a group of committed Christians who take our faith seriously and then generously offer ourselves to others.

Campers arrive at Camp with a question that lies deep in their hearts: “Why did my parents abandon me to a life where I am not loved, guarded or protected and surround me with people who do not love me like I need to be loved?” God designed the family as the primary method of transferring values to the next generation. The consequences of failed families are broken lives. Campers are the innocent victims of the choices that others have made and cannot solve the challenges of their life situations alone.

Every aspect of Royal Family KIDS has been thoughtfully designed to wisely incorporate hundreds of teachable moments, actively participate in the lives of Campers and model healthy families. Camp consists of 100 golden hours where Camper’s spirits are fed, confidence is built and a renewed hope for a bright future begins to
grow. Our goal is to change the trajectory of their lives and future generations.

As volunteers, we:
- Help children understand that God loves and has a great purpose for everyone.
- We plant dreams for a positive future while encouraging the smallest successes.
- Teach the value of good character, the consequences of sin and distancing bad influences.
- Communicate and model skills for developing good friendships.
- Reorient Camper thinking from being outcasts to being unique and precious.
- Reinforce scholastic excellence and teach problem solving skills.
- Model that seeking help in life comes from strength and not weakness.
- Demonstrate that a pattern of success in new experiences leads to a more fulfilling life.

2. Understanding One’s Own Challenges, Desires, Capabilities and Limitations

New Volunteers commonly ask themselves questions such as:
- Am I a person with whom a Camper can feel safe, have fun, learn about God and see a better future?
- Am I sufficiently committed to be mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually available to provide guidance to children who have experienced abuse and neglect?
- Am I prepared to rely upon God and leave the results of my efforts to Him?
- Am I willing to be so committed to others to acknowledge that Campers need Jesus in their lives more than they need me?
- How do I prepare for a successful camp experience?

These are important and thoughtful questions for all Volunteers. Through your application, interview and background review, Camp leaders have met together to pray and discuss answers to these questions regarding you and all the Camp Volunteers. They have decided that you are capable of positively contributing to the mission of RFK. Every leader and even the longest serving Camp veterans are challenged by these questions. What is God communicating to you in your time with Him? Are your desires being drawn to this week of ministry?

God wisely places crossroads in our lives and provides opportunities to enlarge our faith by serving those in need. Only you
can bring these issues before God and answer the question: Am I called to stretch my faith to reflect more of Jesus and less of myself for five days? Serving God by expanding His kingdom is demanding, but it is powerfully rewarding. Entering the deep pain of others is a gift to both them and you.

All volunteers are chosen because Camp leaders believe that their character, gifts, competencies and team orientation will make the camp more impactful. The impact of a volunteer has nothing to do with age or experiences. Whether you are 16 or 90, male or female, campers desperately need volunteers to take the place of their brothers and sisters, moms and dads or grandparents who abandoned them at critical times. Volunteers step into these roles by providing advice, cheering their successes and quieting their fears.

Perhaps RFK is that next great step of faith for you. Will you be prepared? What are your fears and expectations? Perhaps your largest challenge will be spending a week of vacation or lost pay or sacrificing some other comfort by attending Camp? Is it your phone activity, comfortable bed, sound sleep, those you love, or your personal space? Is it showering in an unfamiliar place or eating camp food and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches? Is it giving your heart to a Camper who may injure it? Are you willing to relinquish these and other earthly pleasures and fully trust God for five days of intense ministry?

Training will provide awareness and understanding of the nature and needs of children with abuse in their history. It will increase your capacity for empathy and provide effective interaction strategies that nurture better listening, communication and behavioral management skills. The more you learn, the more you will develop self confidence in your capability to be reflective, insightful, proactive and wise. As Campers interact with you and experience God through the wonder of Camp, emotional walls reluctantly, but gradually, breakdown and Campers will begin to see themselves as different people.

Our task is to simply provide Christian care that begins to soften the encrusted shell that these children have developed to survive in life. Some Campers may take only small steps in their development during their week at Camp. Others may experience enormous breakthroughs. We are but one small part in the entire process that God is using to rebuild hope in these children.

Step by step, interaction by interaction, from your preparations for Camp, to your very first meeting with Campers, until your final good-byes, each Volunteer through care, prayer, concentrated attention and guidance can instill new values in campers that point them to a brighter future.
How you react to their best moments and their worst moments will be opportunities for you to impact their lives.

3. Words of Wisdom for Volunteers:

- Training is essential, but training alone will not prepare your emotions and spirit for Camp.
- Plan to meet others you will be working with closely at Camp to develop effective strategies and plans. Developing relationships before Camp will become handy in times of need.
- Review this manual again just prior to Camp asking God to empower and sustain you.
- Acknowledge your fears to a prayer partner. Seek advice from Camp leadership or a more experienced Volunteer. The 100 golden hours at camp is designed for intensive care of Campers, not review time.
- Your most difficult challenge in making a difference in a Camper’s life is loving them every moment of every day, rather than just managing them.
- Avail yourself of web sites including RFK.org to better understand the ministry’s mission. View relevant videos. Visit the library to read books or view movies about the foster care life. Arrange to see the movie Camp which is loosely based on a RFK camp. Read Scriptures and see what God has to say about orphans and the fatherless.
- Volunteer with church children 6-11 to better understand their capabilities and needs.
- Determine to pace yourself so that by the end of Camp you have given your all.
- Ask for help from Camp leadership as you notice your effectiveness decreasing.

Our week with Campers provides an experience of compassion and unconditional commitment backed by prayer support. Are we ever perfectly trained and gifted for the challenges we face? No. The apostle Peter said, “Such as I have, I give you”. God will provide campers with the sense that they are loved by Him and that He will never abandon or forsake them.

Volunteers need not be gifted or degreed counselors. Many Campers are positively impacted by weekly professional sessions with trained therapists. Campers come to Camp needing something different. Despite the challenging experiences Campers have endured, Campers are children with the normal desires and at least some of the innocence of other kids their age.
What Campers want is no different from what we all want: to be noticed and acknowledged for their own value, to be called by name in the hallways, on the trails and at the pool. To experience genuine generosity expressed towards them. Campers want to be liked, to experience being an insider rather than outsider, to learn new skills, to have someone truly listen to their words, to miss them when they are gone and pray with them when they are challenged.

Seeking to reflect an attitude of Christ’s compassion to volunteers and campers provides fuel for our effectiveness. God’s design is that our hearts are to be softened by the needy. Obtaining a heart of compassion is challenging. All of us need God’s help with this. God invites us to rely on Him, to make ourselves available to go deeper in our faith. Meditate on these challenging words about God-given compassion from Henri Nouwen:

“Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.”

You cannot have compassion and not feel pain. Unless your purpose is to look past Camper behavior challenges and scheduled Camp activities, you will not appreciate the Camper’s deepest needs. With a heart of compassion, Campers will not only feel your care, they will know they are lovable. Though your week will be challenging, don’t give up until Campers are not only taught new ways to look at life, but are able to begin to do it themselves. With God, their world becomes a safe place even though it is fraught with challenges. God’s kingdom design is that your ministry done in His power results in God’s kingdom being advanced.

This chapter is not about sharing your faith with others; it is about how your faith and belief should be on display in your preparation for Camp, your actions at Camp and your follow up after Camp. RFK was built on the premise that volunteers were “believers” who seek God for their personal strength and wisdom as they interact with the Campers. Volunteers should take time to reflect on their personal life. We cannot pour out, what we do not have within us. Where is God in YOU right now?
B. Understanding How One’s Experience of Abuse or Neglect Can Affect You

Approximately 30% or more of Camp Volunteers have experienced significant abuse, neglect, rejection, abandonment or have participated in a family situation of foster care and Family Court. These events are devastating and life impacting. During each interview, Camp Leadership asks about each applicant’s personal story with abuse and neglect for the protection of all Campers and Volunteers. These discussions are confidential. After the interview, each Volunteer has the option of sharing or not sharing their history with whichever Volunteers they choose.

A Volunteer with abuse in their history, who has worked through their pain, often with professional help, may be convinced that they have a special kinship with campers. There is no doubt that commonality of background and personal sensitivity to the pain of Campers may nurture a natural affinity with them. All of us can learn from those shared insights.

However, Camp is not the place to communicate a healing agenda or counseling advice. Just as all adults experience a unique walk through life, Campers do so as well. During the week of Camp, Volunteer agendas and Volunteer experiences are set aside in favor of the goal of opening the heart of each Camper to the work of God in their lives.

If you have had a history of abuse, the intensity of Camp experiences may uncover unexpected and forceful emotions. When those feelings arise, the Volunteer must know their limits and ask for help in enacting strategies necessary to sustain their ability to minister. The wounded healer’s strength lies in the willingness to experience the shared pain. You are an asset to Camp when you have received enough healing grace to emotionally separate yourself from the pain of others and minister in the wake of the needy behavior rather than moving through it.

For most Volunteers, abuse and neglect were not a part of your childhood experiences. It isn’t necessary to have come from a dysfunctional past to help children. If you come from a loving, intact family, and you have not had contact with children who have experienced abuse, you are likely to find a week at RFKC emotionally stressful.

You may experience volatile feelings of injustice, anger and sadness, as well as times of victory, joy and a sense of God’s power and presence. You will also find yourself in situations where Campers and Volunteers present behaviors that are new to you. Prayerfulness, grace, patience and a nonjudgmental attitude will serve you and the
Camp best. If you feel overwhelmed, ask for help. Understand that Camper behaviors reflect their most effective strategies to physically and emotionally get by in life. Their words and behaviors are not personal to you.

At Camp, when you say, “I’m sorry”, it does not mean you caused the pain or are asking for forgiveness, it merely means that you see it, that you’ve felt pain before in your life as well and that you are open to a connection. Silence closes the door. Empathy and warm communication connect you to others and can positively impact Campers or another Volunteer. As followers of Christ, we look to Scripture to guide us into positive interpersonal relationships.

After Camp, you may find yourself without the words to talk about your Camp experience. You may feel a lingering regret that you could have acted more responsively or done more. These are common experiences. They represent the impact of the Holy Spirit on you and your faithfulness to both the Camp and the Campers with which you interacted. Take your cares to God and others who may be helpful in putting words to your feelings.

C. Understanding Volunteer Rules Roles and Responsibilities

Authority is a biblical principle. We are all under the benevolent authority and protection of God who established rules for our benefit. While at Camp, all Volunteers operate under the authority of governmental authorities, Royal Family KIDS Inc., the sponsoring Church, the Camp and the RFK Camp Director.

Royal Family KIDS Inc. has established Camp rules and policies protecting the Camper, the sponsoring church, the Camp location and the volunteers. For a sponsoring church and local Camp to receive the annual certification to operate under the auspices of the Royal Family KIDS Inc. these rules must be followed. The sponsoring church, the local Camp and the RFK Director may create other rules as long as they do not conflict with those of Royal Family KIDS Inc. See Section 5 of this manual entitled “Understanding Behaviors & Camp Rules”

Each Volunteer’s responsibility is to learn, ask clarifying questions, and obey all of the rules at all times. A wide variety of unanticipated situations at Camp can arise quickly, requiring snap judgments, and often Camp leadership is not immediately available for consultation. When in doubt, uphold the rules, choose the safest course of action and then consult with Camp leadership as soon as possible. As you become more experienced, these decisions will become easier.
1. Volunteer roles and responsibilities

Counselors and Staff form the Volunteer team at Camp. Counselors concentrate their interaction with a few Campers; staff has the opportunity to interact with many Campers. Only God knows whether the Camper will be most impacted by their extended time with their Counselors or by a special word of praise from a staff member during a successful activity.

Although your primary job description may indicate that you are a Counselor, Grandpa, Coach, Music Coordinator, Dean of Women, etc. all Volunteers are servants to each other. During the Camp week, expect that you will be asked to meet a variety of tasks. For Staff, this may involve cleanup after a messy birthday party, quick relocation of activity centers during a downpour, providing Counselor relief, cleaning a bathroom, or entertaining at the campfire. For Counselors, you may be asked to switch Campers that have a personality conflict, shuffle sleeping arrangements, or change your activity schedule. For confidentiality reasons or other pressing priorities, you may not receive what you consider a logical explanation. Successful Volunteers trust that Camp Leadership has a broader perspective and is pursuing the best alternative for the success of the Camp.

Each Counselor team becomes accustomed to the habits and sensitivities of their group and should, unless safety is the issue, refrain from disciplining or correcting Campers who are a part of another team. Staff members are often viewed by Campers as celebrities, experts or sources of fun at Camp who perform on stage or manage an activity, play a supportive role to the Counselors.

Whenever Campers are present, full attention needs to focus on interactions with them. Social interactions between volunteers should occur when Campers are not present and after job responsibilities are completed. Each Volunteer has primary responsibilities and secondary responsibilities at Camp. Counselors are not Deans, or Activity Directors. Staff is not primary caretakers of Campers. Teams work best when attention is paid to the primary responsibility, and then the secondary opportunities that come along.

2. Building each other up

As followers of Christ, we have the responsibility to look to Scripture to guide us into positive interpersonal relationships. Loving, respecting, serving, honoring, forgiving, accepting and encouraging each other are all Christian ethics each Camp Volunteer is expected to exhibit in their personal relationships. Often the stresses of a week of Camp create temptations to override what we know is a better way.
Gossip, ridicule, sarcasm, put downs and critical speech never honor God. Ephesians 4:29 indicate that no corrupting talk should come out of our mouths.

All of us together are more effective than any one of us can be individually. Strong relationship connections among volunteers at Camp are needed for Campers to feel secure and volunteers to feel appreciated. The continual habit of building each other up in front of Camper’s models encouragement and promotes a sense of family and predictability in the eyes of the Campers. The more we live the truth that each Volunteer is an extension of God’s love through their uniquely displayed gifts, the bigger we see God and the more amazing He becomes. We all need to be reminded that our first responsibility is to represent Christ to each other and to campers.
III. BUILDING AWARENESS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Goal

Most RFK volunteers have had little or no work with children who have suffered from abuse, abandonment or neglect. This section will cover these topics and give volunteers some exposure to the experiences and events many of the campers have lived through. Studying this type of material may not be pleasant, but you will be better prepared to help these wonderful campers if you have a better understanding of what they have experienced.

A. Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect

Doris Sanford said, “To the degree that we see children who have been abused or neglected as "damaged goods", we will in subtle ways communicate that to them. We have to see in them their potential for wholeness and healing.” Although we cannot completely reverse the effects of maltreatment during a week at camp, we can give a child a new perspective. Studying the dynamics of child abuse and neglect can provide helpful insight and understanding. One does not need a comprehensive knowledge of child maltreatment or a child's past history to be a helpful and effective RFK volunteer.

What is Abuse?


- Any recent act or failure to act on part of parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation or
- An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.
- [A “child” is a person under age 18 who is not an emancipated minor.]

Definitions of abuse and neglect are based on the dependent status of children and on the rights and responsibilities of parents and society. Until age 18, children are dependent upon parents or guardians...
for nurturing and protection. Parents make decisions for their children, nurturing them in accordance with their own social and religious beliefs. They also have the right to privacy in their own homes. However, child abuse laws limit these rights by specifically prohibiting parental acts (things one does) or omissions (things one fails to do) that harm children or threaten them with harm.

Those supervising children (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers, day care workers, residential and day camp employees) are required by law to report suspected acts of abuse or neglect, and county social service departments are required to investigate all reported cases. When there is sufficient evidence to warrant it, "society"—in the form of authorized social service workers—has the legal right to remove a child from parental custody.

Abuse and neglect are commonly described using the following four categories or types:

1. Neglect
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Emotional or psychological abuse

**Neglect**

Neglect, according to Federal CAPTA definitions, is the failure to provide for the basic needs of a child, including:

- Physical (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, supervision)
- Medical (e.g. necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Educational (e.g. a child’s educational and special educational needs)
- Emotional (e.g. failure to provide psychological care, perhaps permitting the child to use alcohol or drugs)
- There may be cultural or religious exceptions.

Child negligence includes failure to safeguard household items which are potentially hazardous to minors, not feeding or clothing a child, leaving a young child unsupervised, failing to obtain proper medical treatment for an injury or illness, failing to enroll a child in school, allowing or encouraging truancy, etc.
Physical Abuse

According to Federal CAPTA definitions, physical abuse is:

- Non-accidental physical injury, ranging from minor bruises, welts, burns and bite marks to severe fractures or death
- As a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting [with hand, stick, strap, or other object], burning, or otherwise harming a child
- Inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child
- Considered abuse regardless of whether caregiver intended harm.

Although RFK volunteers need not be experts in detecting physical abuse, it may be helpful to point out that 75% of physical injuries occur in a “primary target zone” that extends from the neck to the knees on the child’s backside. Most accidental injuries are to bony protuberances such as elbows and knees. Another key element in determining physical abuse is the “fit” between the nature of the child’s injury and the story offered to explain it. For example, the clear outline of a welt from a strap, cord, or belt does not fit the explanation that the child fell.

Detecting the abuse of an RFK camper is an infrequent occurrence because it has usually been substantiated already by a social services caseworker. However, one may be in a position to discover ongoing or more recent abuse. One’s local camp will have in place procedures for documenting and reporting such findings.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse [Federal CAPTA definitions] includes:

- Activities by a parent or caregiver such as fondling a child’s genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or involvement in the production of [or exposure to] pornographic materials

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse [Federal CAPTA definitions] involves:

- A pattern of behavior that impairs a child’s emotional development or sense of self-worth
It may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance.

**Other types of abuse and neglect**

Federal CAPTA definitions include other forms of abuse or neglect.

**Abandonment** [defined by many states as a form of neglect] A child is considered abandoned when:
- Parent’s identity or whereabouts are unknown
- Child is left alone in circumstances where child suffers serious harm
- Parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide support for a specified period of time

**Substance abuse**
- Parental use of an illegal drug or other substance, exposing a child to harm
- Manufacture of methamphetamine in the presence of a child
- Selling, distributing, or giving illegal drugs or alcohol to a child
- Use of a controlled substance by a caregiver that impairs caregiver’s ability to adequately care for the child

**Vicarious abuse**
- Child exposure to the abuse or neglect of a parent, sibling or other relative [e.g. a child who witnesses domestic violence directed at the child’s parent or a child who witnesses the abuse of a sibling]
- Sometimes a perpetrator will injure or kill or threaten to injure or kill a child’s pet in order to frighten them into not disclosing something illegal

**B. Child abuse statistics**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families website at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm#can](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm#can) provides current national and statewide statistics on all pertinent aspects
of abuse and neglect. The most current data are usually two years behind because it takes time to gather, compile and report the information accurately.

3.6 million children were investigated by social service agencies for alleged maltreatment in 2009. Most cases are referred by school, medical, or law enforcement personnel. In 19.5% of these cases, the allegations of abuse or neglect were substantiated. This represents 702,000 children under the age of 18, and in 75% of cases there was no prior history of abuse.

The statistic of 702,000 children abused annually is undoubtedly a conservative number. It is estimated that only about one-third of those who witness an instance of child abuse actually go so far as to report it to social services. Also, there may be insufficient evidence to substantiate or validate many genuine acts of abuse that are formally investigated.

Although some believe that “stranger danger” is the operative phrase for child abuse, it is important to know that in 78% of substantiated cases, the offender is one or both parents.

By far, the highest percentage of substantiated cases of maltreatment, are child neglect, followed by physical abuse, then sexual abuse, and then emotional abuse. Here are the actual percentages for 2009:

- Neglect 78.3%
- Physical abuse 17.8%
- Sexual abuse 9.5%
- Psychological abuse 7.6%
- Medical abuse 3.4%
- Other [abandonment, congenital drug abuse, vicarious abuse, etc..] 9.6%

[Numbers do not add up to 100% because of multiple causations.]

Question: Does this represent the approximate distribution of types of abuse that one can expect to see at a local RFKC? Yes and No.

Most likely the highest percentage of campers at any local RFKC will be victims of child neglect. Neglect is the easiest form of maltreatment to substantiate and it is by far the most common. It is probable that the majority of campers of any RFKC will have had some history of child neglect.
It is also likely that most RFKCs will have higher percentages of children with documented instances of physical or sexual abuse than one might assume based on the percentages of substantiated cases nationwide. This is because most RFKCs receive only a fraction of eligible campers from their referring agencies. When social service personnel can only refer a fraction of eligible campers they are likely to select those that they believe have the greatest need to attend camp. Therefore, one may receive greater numbers of physically, sexually and multiple children of abuse.

**Racial and cultural factors**

In terms of sheer numbers, there are more Caucasian children who are abused and neglected. However, in proportion to numbers in the U.S. population:

- Greater percentages of Black, Native American, Alaskan American and multi-racial children have substantiated cases of abuse or neglect.
- Similar percentages of Hispanic and Caucasian children [in proportion to their total population] are substantiated as abused or neglected.
- Smaller percentages of Asian children are substantiated.

The racial and ethnic composition of one’s camper population will vary depending on geographical region, demography and the agencies that refer children to a local camp. For example, some suburban churches work with urban agencies and that may result in higher concentrations of urban minority children attending camp. Some camps, depending on locality will have higher concentrations of African-American or Hispanic children or perhaps Native or Alaskan-American children. If one’s local camp receives many children from particular racial or ethnic backgrounds, it could be beneficial for volunteers to learn more about specific customs or practices, food preferences or favored activities in order to enhance one’s ability to provide positive memories.

**C. Behaviors associated with various types of abuse**

Behaviors stemming from abuse [e.g. hyperactivity, hostility, fear, withdrawal, clinginess, etc.] are far more evident at camp than abuse or neglect. Although it is important to learn about abuse and neglect, it is
more important to gain understanding of the kinds of behaviors that stem from maltreatment and how best to manage those behaviors during the week of camp.

Words of precaution:

- Behaviors of children are influenced by many factors apart from abuse or neglect. Two children with the same pattern of abuse or neglect may react in entirely different ways. Nevertheless, some behaviors tend to be seen rather frequently among children with certain types of abuse.
- As a counselor or staff member, one should not worry if one does not have advanced knowledge and skill for coping with every possible behavior that an abused or neglected child might exhibit.
  - Most of the behaviors that maltreated children “could” exhibit are not likely to be evident in the specific campers assigned to any one individual.
  - If one’s campers do evidence behaviors that are challenging to manage, one can obtain assistance from other knowledgeable and experienced camp personnel [i.e. psychologist or social worker, dean of men and women, other experienced counselors and staff members, one’s buddy counselor].

**Behaviors associated with child neglect**

**Child’s appearance:**

- Often not clean
- May be inappropriately dressed
- Seems to be alone often
- May need glasses, dental care, or other medical care for unattended problems

**Child’s behavior:**

- Often tired, has no energy, lethargic
- Low socialization; doesn’t know how to behave in a given situation
• May cause trouble in school; often has not done homework, uses alcohol or drugs, engages in acts of vandalism or other misconduct
• Engages in dangerous activities [because child is generally unsupervised]
• May beg, steal or hoard food

Children who have experienced neglect for any length of time may be developmentally delayed due to the limited attention or guidance they have received. If they haven’t been monitored and guided by loving, caring parents or caregivers, they may not know how to act in certain situations and they may not know the boundaries of appropriate behavior [table manners, playing with friends, interacting with adults, etc.].

A child whose basic needs for food, shelter, protection or love go unfulfilled is not likely to have feelings of self-worth or self-esteem. Neglected children have usually been deprived of positive personal attention and may crave it once they come to trust the staff and counselors at camp. The RFK focus on individual attention and positive memories and activities would appear to be just what neglected children so desperately need.

**Behaviors associated with physical abuse**

Child’s appearance:
• Unusual bruises, welts, burns, fractures, bite marks
• Frequent injuries, explained as “accidental”

Child’s behavior:
• Reports injury by parents
• Avoids physical contact with adults
• Unpleasant, hard to get along with, demanding, often does not obey
• Child’s story of how a physical injury occurred is not believable; it does not fit the type or seriousness of the injury observed
• Child is apt to either seek affection indiscriminately from any adult or may be wary of all adults
Children who have been physically abused may fear or withdraw from authority figures at camp, believing that these people may harm them in some way. Some physically abused children may be accustomed to resorting to hostility or aggression as a preferred way of coping with their circumstances. Any child who has been the recipient of physical abuse is likely to have feelings of low self-worth, whether hostile and aggressive or fearful and withdrawn. Certain situations at camp [e.g. a child crying, a situation calling for some sort of discipline] may trigger fearful or hostile reactions in other children.

David Delaplane uses this illustration to describe physical abuse: when an animal is beaten excessively, two responses are common — either the animal cringes and cowers when someone approaches, or it growls and bites. One may see similar extreme reactions in a physically abused child.

The counselor of a physically abused child needs to show unconditional love—patiently and consistently. It is important to be understanding and reassuring—helping the child to construct a more accurate view of people and situations than he or she currently has. For example, you may need to point out that another child is crying because she fell and hurt her knee (not because she got hit or is about to receive a beating as the child might automatically think). Also, by being a positive and loving role model you are showing campers that not all people act like the abusive parent or guardian does. As the child develops greater discernment, he or she will be more inclined to seek out other positive role models and not withdraw from or lash out against others indiscriminately.

**Behaviors associated with sexual abuse**

**Child’s appearance:**
- May have torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- May experience pain or itching in the genital areas
- May have difficulty walking or sitting
- May have venereal disease or be pregnant
- May wet the bed

**Child’s behavior:**
- Appears withdrawn or engages in fantasy or baby-like behavior
- Has poor relationships with other children
• Is unwilling to participate in physical activities
• Very cautious, somewhat fearful or protective at times like bathing, changing, going to the bathroom, or changing clothes
• Is reluctant to change clothes in front of others; may sleep fully dressed
• Engages in delinquent acts or runs away
• States that s/he has been sexually mistreated by parent or guardian
• Acts like an adult, not a child
• Exhibits sexualized behaviors: i.e. sexual behavior atypical for a young child or has knowledge of sexuality uncommon for his or her developmental level
• Repetition compulsion: e.g. child may be seen repeatedly acting out sexual scripts

Children who have been sexually abused may be fearful of certain situations such as bed time, changing clothes, going to the bathroom, taking a shower, being alone with someone, or getting their picture taken. A sexually abused child may sleep under the bed or sleep fully dressed. He or she may be wary of or avoid physical contact. Certain kinds of friendly overtures or gestures may remind the child of the seductive pattern of his or her abuser.

Some abused children may be “sexualized” to a certain degree. This may lead them to act out sexual scripts, or attempt sexual interactions with others. They may engage in indiscriminate acts of touching or bodily contact.

One of the most frequently observed behavioral characteristics of a sexually abused child is fantasy or daydreaming. This is because one of the only defenses available to a child is to detach mentally or emotionally or “zone out” during the experience. Over time the child may daydream frequently or take on an active fantasy life as a general life approach to handling stress.

This child will likely have mixed feelings about past sexual activity. It may have been pleasurable and the child may have been manipulated into thinking that it was acceptable activity or that he or she is somehow to blame for it happening. Children model others and identify with them by nature, and children who engage in premature sexual activity are often sexualized. At camp, a sexually abused child may not only touch or stimulate himself or herself sexually, (i.e. masturbation), but may reach
for the sexual areas of a counselor, staff member, or another child. This can be rather unnerving to an unsuspecting individual. As a counselor or staff member, you must not overreact. You definitely need to pull the hand away, or indicate that you don’t want to be touched “in your private area”. Also, redirect the child gently to whatever is going on around him or her. A good Bible verse to think about here that fits the “distract and redirect” theme is Philippians 4:8.

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things.” Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

Behaviors associated with emotional or psychological abuse

Child’s appearance:
- Physical signs may be less obvious than in other forms of abuse. Behavior is the best indicator.
- May exhibit developmental delays [stunting of physical, mental or emotional growth]

Child’s behaviors:
- Self-sabotaging or destructive; apathetic, depressed, withdrawn, passive. Shows lack of a positive self-image.
- Disorganized, distrustful, or rigidly compulsive
- Seems overly anxious when faced with new situations or people, or displays a pseudo-maturity inconsistent with age.
- May take on adult roles and responsibilities, including those of a parent
- Appears autistic, delusional, paranoid; engages in excessive fantasizing
- Throws tantrums; seems impulsive, defiant, antisocial, aggressive; constantly testing limits or boundaries
- Fearful, hyper-alert, lack of creativity and exploration
- Experiences difficulty making friends and dealing with others, or lack of familial attachment and excessive peer dependence
- Is excessively fearful, anxious, prone to nightmares or is oblivious of hazards and risks

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• May have sleeping disorders, and may wet the bed.

Virtually every child who has been neglected or physically or sexually abused has been emotionally or psychologically abused as well. That is because any act of neglect or physical or sexual abuse sends abusive psychological messages to a child. For example:

• “I am not worthy of having my basic needs for food, shelter, or love fulfilled.”
• “People who burn me, cut me or bruise me are telling me that I am a bad person, worthy of this kind of treatment.”
• “I am just an object of sexual pleasure for someone. My own safety and well-being do not matter.”

Children can also be abused emotionally apart from any physical or sexual abuse. For example, frequent yelling, name-calling, threats, intimidation, extreme favoritism may happen in the absence of physical or sexual abuse. Children who are emotionally or psychologically abused tend to have low self-worth and are mistrusting of others. They may even sabotage their own chances for happiness and success out of fear of being disappointed. That is, one might refuse to accept a gift or form a bond with someone out of fear of subsequent rejection and hurt.

It may be hard for an emotionally abused child to override negative messages that he or she has internalized over several months or even years. Emotionally abused children have been repeatedly “told” in word or deed that there is something wrong or bad about them, things are their fault, they will not amount to anything, they are not as well-loved as their siblings, and they are simply not worthy of love and personal attention.

Some emotionally abused children may be very withdrawn and slow to warm up to new situations and new people. Others may crave attention and be very eager to please, especially when they learn that camp is a safe place and that counselors and staff members can be trusted. Some may test their counselors, convinced that when they see how “bad” they are they will no longer love them. It is very important to be patient and consistent with these children and to show unconditional love and approval. One can help them to discern that not all people think of them the way the way that their abusers have.

D. Child Trauma
Two key elements define trauma:
- Witnessing something threatening or harmful to self or others
- Perceiving the situation to be beyond one’s coping capability.

In light of these defining criteria, not all acts of child abuse or neglect are traumatizing. It is also possible for children to be traumatized by events unrelated to abuse or neglect [e.g. death of a loved one, car accident, house fire, etc.]. However, it can be helpful for RFK volunteers to understand child trauma because several campers will have been traumatized in connection with their maltreatment or independent of it.

Two excellent sources of additional information on child trauma are:
- Perry, B. D. and M. Szalavitz [2006], The boy who was raised as a dog: What traumatized children can teach us about loss, love, and healing. New York: Basic Books.

Many RFK campers have been traumatized by their abuse and neglect. Child trauma usually stems from:
- Victimization – house fire, mugging, robbery, kidnapping, rape, exploitation
- Loss – death or separation from a loved one
- Family pathology – chaotic or criminal families, absent or withdrawn parents, etc.

The maltreatment of many RFK campers may tie in with one or more of these factors. Kendall Johnson [1989] identifies three stages or sequences in a child’s reactions to trauma:
- **Impact** – the initial response immediately following a traumatic experience
- **Recoil** – a child’s natural adjustment and coping behavior in the weeks, months, and even years following trauma. When children have to adjust to trauma more or less on their own, these coping behaviors are semi-successful at
best and may create additional problems for the child. In short, a child may never “outgrow” or fully recover from trauma without professional guidance and support. Instead, behaviors and coping styles become “set in cement” in ways that may render it difficult for a child to concentrate or to trust others or certain situations.

- **Reorganization** – adjustment aided by caring professionals that can help a child to recover completely from trauma.

Generally speaking, RFK campers who have been traumatized will not be attending camp in the hours or days following a traumatic experience and will therefore not be in the “impact” stage. [Occasionally, a child may have been traumatized before camp. It does happen. For example, a house fire right before camp, or a change in foster placement right before camp begins.]

Traumatized children at the “reorganization” phase have recovered well from past trauma and are not likely to come to your attention. Therefore, the “recoil” stage would appear to merit the most attention. This might, for example, involve a child who is hyper-vigilant and cannot concentrate on whatever is going on in Breakfast Club or chapel. This child may get very irritated if distracted from his or her ritual of vigilant behavior. Another example would be a traumatized child who may be startled at to certain stimuli or conditions [a beeping horn, getting one’s picture taken, getting undressed for swimming or bedtime, being alone behind a closed door] because these conditions signal the onset of the trauma. Other children may have night terrors or increased frequency of bedwetting as a result of long-term reactions to trauma.

**Triggers**

A trigger is any stimulus or condition that takes one out of a normal mode of conduct and leads to less mature or maladaptive forms of behavior. Certain stimuli associated with past trauma can be triggers for some children. A common trigger for children in general is any transition from one activity to another. Recognizing common triggers such as transition from activity time, or the end of swim time can help volunteers anticipate and manage camper behavior more effectively. It can also be helpful for counselors to recognize the reasons for often quirky triggers of a traumatized child.
In conclusion, understanding abuse, neglect, and child trauma and resulting behaviors will assist RFK volunteers as they plan and implement a week of positive memories for their campers.

CLOSE

What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
IV. BUILDING AWARENESS OF THE CAMPER

If you desire to help children of abuse, you must understand how their abuse has affected them. You must also understand that the abuse has not permanently damaged them. Your knowledge of the campers and your belief that YOU can create an environment that will make a difference, will significantly help YOU to make life-changing moments for the campers.

A. Similarities and differences

*It is impossible to watch out for trouble and have a normal childhood at the same time.*
—Doris Sanford

Children are individuals with their own characteristic ways of thinking, feeling, believing, and perceiving themselves and the world around them. At any local RFKC, developmentally delayed children are mixed in with resilient children who are progressing normally and even thriving. Taken together, one may witness child development that stretches from age three (e.g. an emotionally immature seven-year-old) to fifteen (an early-maturing, "parentified" eleven-year-old).

What is it about abuse and neglect that alters the normal flow of human development? There are so many things, actually. For some campers problems begin in prenatal or perinatal life with fetal alcohol effects, drug addiction, inadequate medical care, and stressful teen pregnancies. In early postnatal life, one could add malnutrition, attachment failure, and an unstimulating environment. Some of these conditions contribute to developmental delays and learning disabilities. Some have serious head injuries as a result of physical abuse. Others have chronic sleep disorders arising from emotional trauma that has stunted their growth.

All RFK volunteers share a common humanity with their campers. Many adult volunteers are “children at heart.” Nevertheless, there may be some significant differences between adult volunteers and campers that could be beneficial to observe.
1. How are RFK campers different from most of us?

Our campers are both similar to and different from us. They are children; we are adults. Campers, in contrast to us have:

- Greater racial, ethnic, and cultural variation
- Greater diversity of religious [and non-religious] backgrounds
- More diverse and less favorable family backgrounds
- More mobility and disruption of family life
- A background of abuse and neglect [Only 1 of 100 children in general have a DSS substantiated case of abuse. RFK campers all have this in common.]

Too much emphasis on similarities with little awareness of or respect for differences can be problematic at camp. For example, if we think of our campers as “just like any normal group of kids” we may not prepare ourselves adequately for the specific kinds of behaviors that abused and neglected children may display in a camp setting. Recognizing important differences may yield insights that help us provide the best possible milieu for these children.

Can you think of differences between campers and most adult volunteers that may have implications for camp?

2. How are RFK campers different from children in general?

“Seven to eleven from heaven.” This is a phrase that Wayne and Diane Tesch frequently use to indicate the appropriate age range for RFK campers. These are the chronological ages that define middle childhood.

The average middle years child is in elementary school, has the ability to read and write, and is accustomed to the daily routines of public school. Middle years children tend to have good self-management skills. Though they may need a little pushing and prodding, they can dress and care for themselves, settle minor disputes, eat and work independently, and play cooperatively. Middlers are active learners. They are more rational than preschoolers, and can delay gratification of their impulses and keep emotional outbursts under control. Middlers are growing in their awareness of others and are getting better at discerning just what another person is thinking and feeling.

Middle years children from good homes tend to have most, if not all of these qualities. Many of our campers may evidence deficiencies in these areas. A local RFKC may run better and accomplish more positive
outcomes with campers when counselors and staff members recognize deficiencies in trust, self-worth, self-control, and other basic developmental skills and respond appropriately.

3. **Developmental exceptions and extremes.** The middle years of childhood are the common denominator of RFKC. However, there will be children at camp who do not fit the norm. Let's take a look at some examples.

**a. Functional Preschoolers**

A seven-year-old child may be "developmentally arrested or delayed" and may therefore be the functional equivalent of a preschooler. If so, some of the following characteristics may pertain to this child.

- Poor self-management skills; needs a lot of assistance with personal tasks such as dressing, bathing, grooming, eating, and going to the bathroom.
- Very dependent, perhaps even clingy. May constantly need to be comforted, and reassured; may be very touch or contact-oriented.
- Emotionally unstable and impulsive; emotions and impulses quickly overrun child's limited rational capacity.
- Highly egocentric; cannot distinguish own thoughts and feelings from those of others: projects personal and family experience into current situation; "wears personality on sleeve."

**b. Functional Adolescents**

By contrast, an 11-year-old may be a big, bright, early-maturer who has found the resources to thrive under adverse conditions. This child may be the functional equivalent of an adolescent. If so, some of the following characteristics may apply.

- Quite large or tall, perhaps even bigger than his or her counselor. (*Important to realize that a child's social, intellectual, and emotional maturity may not correspond to his or her physical size. A physically large child may be immature in other ways.*)
- Physically mature; possibly sexually active.
- Reasons very well; able to think about problems and situations on a higher, more sophisticated level.
- Bored or “put off” — may quickly size up that the RFKC program is geared to a lower common age denominator and that many
of the programs and activities are not very challenging or stimulating.

B. Accelerated Development

Children are inherently wired to recuperate from various forms of adversity. Consider the common developmental example of giving birth to twins. When a single baby is born, it is usually about 7 pounds and 20 inches. When twins are born they are typically much shorter and lighter. Prenatal twins mature in a crowded womb with limited resources. These diminished resources stunt their height and weight. However, once born into an outer world with unlimited resources, twins grown faster than normal until they catch up. In short, we all have a built in capacity to “bounce back” from adverse conditions.

How is this principle of accelerated development relevant to our campers? There are interesting parallels between what happens in the womb and what happens to abused and neglected children. By definition, neglected children do not have their basic needs for food, shelter, supervision, safety, or love met on a consistent basis. These deficiencies will likely result in diminished growth in one or more areas [physical, social, emotional, intellectual, moral, spiritual]. When neglected children come to an RFKC they find themselves in a specially crafted, nurturing environment with positive attention and support. When campers establish enough trust to engage the camp program, they are likely to grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually in a manner that may well exceed what children from well functioning families might accomplish.

“I’m an artist” — The Case of Andy

Consider the case of Andy who came to an RFKC from an abusive background. Prior to camp he had a very low sense of self-worth and his lack of positive attention created some serious behavioral management issues.

It just so happened that Andy’s counselor was an art professor and he spent lots of time drawing out Andy’s own artistic potential. Andy and his counselor bonded well that week. By Friday, Andy was a self-proclaimed artist. The activities center became a staging area for Andy’s newfound artistic creativity, and he took advantage of every minute available to him to “live out” his newfound identity. Andy could be seen “cranking out pipe cleaner creations” under his counselor’s loving, encouraging supervision until the last minute of activities time was
expended. It was Andy’s time and opportunity to grow and he seemed to be making the most of it.

The volunteers at the camp, including Andy’s former counselor, had an opportunity to reconnect with him several years later at a special staff training session. Andy was now an artist in every sense of the word and was in college studying graphic design. He recalled his time at camp with his counselor as a critical time in his life that drew out some of his inner potential and set him on a path that he still follows.

C. Child Resiliency

The more formal term for “bouncing back from adversity” is resiliency. Patterson [2001] defines resiliency as the ability of every child to overcome adversity if important protective factors are present in one’s life. Although resiliency may be inherent in children, it can also be enhanced by the protective factors we provide at camp.

In addition to Patterson’s [2001] article [Resiliency: A key for supporting youth-at-risk. Childhood Education, Washington, D.C.], Dr. Robert Brooks, at Harvard Medical School, has many additional resources on resiliency available on his website at http://drrobertbrooks.com

Years of research have led to the identification of many factors that promote child resiliency. These factors can be summed up in three words:

- Milieu (environment)
- Mentors
- Message

Create the right milieu, enlist good mentors, frame the message properly and one can create “turning points” or “moments that matter” for abused and neglected children.

Milieu – the camper’s external and internal environment

Theoretically, if we knew everything possible about what it takes to enhance the resiliency of children we could create the ideal external environment for that to happen. To the extent that we understand at least some of the key factors associated with child resiliency,

the question then becomes...“How can we structure an external environment that is maximally beneficial for the abused and neglected child?” What would be some of the key structural elements of such an environment?
Undoubtedly, an RFKC in the “cathedral of the outdoors” helps to foster child resiliency. Factors such as a residential camp experience, a two-to-one camper to counselor ratio, cooperative interaction that limits harmful competition, a well-structured program and the focus on creating positive memories are all aspects of RFKC that help to promote child resilience.

Phil Quinn at the March 2001 RFK Leadership Seminar [Irvine, CA] acknowledged the value of a well-structured camp environment, but spoke also of an “internal” environment. “It is not enough to structure an ideal external environment. One should attempt to restructure the internal environment of the child as well. For example, one can replace self-depricating and self-defeating talk with self, life, world, other, and God-affirming talk. One can replace “I can't” or “I'm not good enough” or “I'm ugly” or “No one can possibly love me” with their opposites. One can reshape the child’s image of self from “bad kid” to “royal family member” or the body as “fat”, “handicapped” or “ugly” into “temple of the living God”.

Emmy Werner, a pioneering researcher on child resiliency, claims that resilient children tend to have four central characteristics in common:

- an active, evocative approach to solving life's problems enabling them to successfully navigate their way around emotionally hazardous experiences,
- a tendency to perceive their experiences constructively even if they caused pain or suffering,
- the ability to gain positive attention from other people, and
- the ability to use faith to sustain a positive vision of a meaningful life. Children who have these qualities tend to elicit positive responses from family members as well as resource persons outside the family.


In general, provide campers with “tools” to help them help themselves. To the extent that we can help children develop empathy, self-esteem, social competence, and the ability to plan and set goals, we move them in the direction of greater resiliency.

Volunteers at local RFKCs can seek to structure many things inside the camper including:
• Trust
• Self-worth and self-esteem
• Skill development
• Knowledge of appropriate boundaries
• Ability to plan and to solve problems
• Ability to use faith and to reframe circumstances in positive ways
• Ability to locate helpful resources

Mentors – the “catalysts” who bring it all to life

One cannot simply design a milieu [i.e. camp environment] and place a bunch of kids in it. A mentor is an essential catalyst who brings children and milieu together in ways that create positive memories and defining moments. Research studies have identified characteristics of mentors that foster resiliency. At any local RFKC characteristics of good counselors include:

• Love for children and ability to engage them in positive ways
• Ability to listen to children and communicate well with them
• Experience and training related to child maltreatment and behavior management as well as team-building and helpful information on the RFK mission and purpose
• Ability to seek help from others when needed
• Stamina to endure the rigors of a challenging week

In addition to the above qualities, RFK staff members should have expertise in their specific areas of responsibility [i.e. nursing, drama, music, recreation, activities, etc.]. What other characteristics are important for RFK volunteers?

Those responsible for assembling the team of RFKC mentors should:

• Select individuals who possess desirable qualities
• Train volunteers annually to enhance their ability to work with abused and neglected children
• Support volunteers at camp with timely assistance and regular breaks

Phil Quinn [2002] sees the value of empathy in a mentor; however, empathy should not be reduced to pity. As he points out, mentors are most helpful not so much when they pity children and see their suffering
but when they see and affirm their individual potential and foresee their healing.

**Message – helping campers to frame experiences in ways that heal**

One important aspect of interacting with children at camp is helping them to reframe negative experiences in ways that heal and help them to move forward. We need to help children:

- Enlarge their world
- Frame experiences more constructively
- Acquire healthy expectations and a sense of hope
- Bring purpose and meaning to life
- Use personal faith as a tool for understanding and recovery

As Wolin and Wolin [1983] point out, “While you cannot change the past, you can change the way you understand it. You can frame your story around themes of your resilience or themes of your damage. You can find reason to be proud in some of your worst memories, or you can let yourself be overwhelmed by the harm of it all.”

As local RFKCs seek to create a “premium blend” of milieu, mentors, and message they will provide “turning points” or “moments that matter” for children. It is interesting to note that the name “Royal Family Kids’ Camp” actually embodies the key factors associated with child resiliency.

**ROYAL = Message**

- Framing the message – RFK campers have a royal heritage and they are part of God’s royal family. As such they deserve royal treatment.

**FAMILY = Mentors**

- The counselors and staff of RFKC are the mentors who bring the RFKC program to life for the campers.

**KIDS = Internal milieu**

- Camp is for the campers. The primary focus of any RFKC is the campers. We seek to provide positive experiences for them and to promote qualities within children [self-esteem, playfulness, hope, skills, etc.] that help them to go forward.

**CAMP = External milieu**
RFKC provides a one-week, residential environment for abused and neglected children in the cathedral of the outdoors. Everything about the RFK camp environment should be structured to foster positive memories and resiliency in children.

If we can find ways to tilt the balance and to promote resilient qualities in our campers or the camp setting, then the RFKC week of fun-filled activities and positive memories will not simply come to a crashing halt. If RFK campers can find ways to cast off behaviors that repel resources, adopt behaviors that invite positive attention and support, develop more self-worth, and find positive ways to frame experiences, then they will truly take from camp far more than they leave behind.

Supplemental developmental material –
Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development applied to RFKC

According to Erikson, the major elements of human personality arise at critical times in infancy and early childhood. These elements result from an interplay between the child's needs and his or her surroundings. For example, the newborn is utterly dependent on caregivers. If needs are met in a loving and consistent manner, the infant will develop an overriding sense of trust. If the infant's needs are met, but without love and consistency, then mistrust may prevail over trust.

Trust is the very cornerstone of healthy development. Trust and attachment provide the emotional security one needs to "venture forth" or explore one's surroundings—to learn about oneself, other people, and the world. One cannot skirt this issue. It is absolutely foundational.

In toddlerhood, trust promotes the development of autonomy and the ability to exercise choice. In middle childhood the healthy child is a prolific master of skills who interacts well with peers and learns actively from adult mentors.

Applying Erikson to RFKC. Every child at Royal Family KIDS Camp is chronologically a middler, but where are they psychosocially? The psychological dimensions of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry blossom in social surroundings that consistently offer safety, love, acceptance, and close personal attention. RFK campers have been removed from life-threatening and neglectful social settings. The backgrounds of many RFK children are in direct opposition to the social environment Erikson deems desirable. How can the counselors, staff, and
camp setting of RFKC help meet the *psychosocial* needs of abused and neglected children?

Alice Honig (1993) identifies several tell-tale signs that a child's psychosocial development has been arrested at some critical point. Her list includes:

- Dull eyes without sparkle.
- Eye gaze avoidance.
- Lack of friendliness to loving adult overtures.
- Fearful withdrawal/flinching when loving adult tries to hug or touch.
- Rare smiles despite loving adult elicitation.
- Frozen affect (e.g. apathetic or dour look).
- Impassiveness or anger when a peer becomes hurt or depressed.
- Biting or hitting of others with insufficient provocation.
- Little if any interest in peers.
- Sleep and eating difficulties.
- Compulsive body rocking.
- Scattered attention.
- Anxious shadowing of counselor without letup.
- Avoidance of/indifference to parent during camp visits or at pick-up time.

Some kids come to RFKC with a deep suspicion and mistrust of others as can be seen in their wariness, shyness, and withdrawal. Mistrust holds them back from positive interactions with their counselor, coach, grandma, or buddy camper. But inside, there lurks a profoundly deep need to trust—all too long denied. RFK's residential camp setting with its emphasis upon safety and positive affirmation soon opens the child's heart and a different demeanor may appear.

A trusting child quickly becomes a venturesome child with an urgency to make up for lost time. You may see wariness dissolve in a few days at the swimming pool. Initially, there are several children who slowly enter the water and hold fast to the side of the pool, preferring their own company. However, by the middle of the week, you are likely to see happy, playful children leaping from the side of the pool into the outstretched arms of counselors and staff members. You may also see children teaming up creatively to maximize their fun.
Trust leads to activity. Activity gets channeled into specific crafts, games, and exercises. New physical, mental, and interpersonal skills are formed as campers reach levels of psychosocial development appropriate for their age. Ben Fanton, a former head of Child Protective Services [Allegany County, NY] made this comment after watching a pool full of happy, playful kids, most of whom were wards of New York State "under his watch." “This says it all to me. I cannot tell our kids from any group of kids at this point.”

The RFKC setting has great potential for fostering healthy psychosocial development in children of abuse & neglect.

Close

What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
IX. Maximizing the Impact of Your Week with Campers

This section is not required, but is a helpful guide for Brand New Volunteers, and a useful tool for Experienced Volunteers!

Royal Family KIDS has so many opportunities for YOU to connect with campers all through the week. This optional section was designed for first year volunteers to highlight those opportunities. Seeking these opportunities will help prepare you to make life-changing moments in the lives of campers!

This section is designed to help you understand the underlying principles and strategies that support a successful RFK camp where campers are positively impacted in an environment that is safe, fun, engaging, challenging and deeply relational.

In this chapter you will become familiar with the key terms and concepts that make RFK unique. Some of these include volunteer assignments, familial titles, ‘royal treatment,’ ‘royal mail’ and heart notes, activity centers, a non-competitive atmosphere and 30-30 time. You will become acquainted with the ways in which the design of camp emphasizes teachable moments and your critical role in positively impacting campers.

Step-by-step, interaction-by-interaction, from your preparations for camp to your very first meeting with campers, until your final good-byes, each volunteer through care, concentrated attention and guidance can instill new values in campers that point them to a brighter future.

The previous chapters of this manual help us appreciate the challenges these young campers have experienced in the weeks, months and/or years before arriving at camp. Campers may have lived in households with parents who were cold, critical, cruel or remote. From their earliest
memories, campers have lived through unimaginable tragedies and separations from the ones they love. Where they deserved to have their innocence protected, they may have been exposed to the abusive behaviors of parents, spouses, lovers or relatives. They may have been humiliated for pleasure, ego or financial gain. For some, courts have compounded their agony and placed them into the foster care system that while well meaning, shuffles them around to new households, schools and counselors. Statistically, in the next decade of these young lives, campers may become prisoners of anger, sex, drugs, homelessness and gangs. Campers who have been victims, may grow up to victimize others.

These children have not caused their problems and cannot solve the challenges of their life situations alone. These are the campers Royal Family KIDS Camp willingly embraces for roughly 100 golden hours each year at camp. Our urgent cause is to change the trajectory of the lives of our campers and future generations. It is the reason why RFK is different from other camps you may have attended.

As campers begin to experience the wonder of camp, emotional walls reluctantly but gradually breakdown, campers will begin to see themselves as different people. Some campers may take only small steps in their development during their week at camp. Others may experience enormous breakthroughs.

We must see ourselves as being one small part in the entire process that God is using to rebuild hope in these children. Our task is to simply provide Christian care that begins to soften the encrusted shell that these children have developed to survive in life. Beyond care, there may be opportunities to sow seeds. Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

*It is in this environment that God orchestrates a life-changing experience for both campers and volunteers. Every volunteer plays a vital role and will have opportunities to communicate the hope He offers to those with broken lives.*

Keep in mind that most campers have never had a positive, wholesome experience at camp or in churches. Therefore, they will not understand the Christianese that we tend to use in our daily vocabularies. This creates a barrier in our communications, so we must deliberately make
an effort to **meet them where they’re at** in order to impact their lives spiritually.

**The Goal for the Camp Week**

This is our urgent work: to employ the love of God that flows through us to care for and repair these young campers who have been so incredibly challenged at such a young age.

Every aspect of Royal Family KIDS Camp is specifically designed so that volunteers can wisely incorporate hundreds of teachable moments during the week to help each camper get mentally, emotionally, academically, socially and spiritually unstuck from their current circumstances. Camp is a place where camper spirits are fed, confidence is built and a new hope for their future can begin to grow.

*If we do not anticipate or have the discipline to see these opportunities because of the rush of the day, these moments will inadvertently just slip away and wonderful windows for healing will be missed.*

The following truths have been learned over the course of thousands of RFK Camps. Applying them will help you to begin to maximize your impact on campers:

1. **Prepare Yourself to Positively Impact Campers in the Weeks Before Camp**

   The most important decision of the week for volunteers is one they make before camp. Will I prepare *myself* spiritually to impact the campers God is going to put before me?

   For campers and volunteers alike, camp *is a divine appointment week.* As volunteers actively depend upon Jesus to help campers recognize God in their lives through guidance, challenging experiences and fun activities, He can impact campers. *Experienced camp veterans can attest to the truth that preparing yourself for an effective camp does not happen on the bus on the way up to camp. Utilizing your personal devotional time before camp for aligning your heart to purposely hear and rely upon God will prepare you for the work He has uniquely created for you.*

   You are the answer to camper prayers and their desperate need to be for cared for and about. The impact of camp does not primarily come from
scheduled activities; it comes from selfless volunteers willing to rely upon God and give of themselves. Campers yearn for the experience of being loved. Our method is to use the unconditional and uncontainable love that we have gained from our relationship with Christ to touch the hearts of the campers.

To be like Jesus is to relate to those in need with a deep sense of connection. Compassion is God’s gift and is cultivated by an ability to imagine how someone else views their circumstances. Compassion compels and allows us to care. Paul says: “Put on a heart of compassion. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion” (Col. 3:12.)

Henri Nouwen captures the thought well when he writes, “Here we see what compassion means. It is not a bending toward the underprivileged from a privileged position; it is not reaching out from on high to those below; it is not a gesture of pity for those unable to make the upward pull, on the contrary, compassion means going directly to those people or places where suffering is most acute and ‘building a home there.’ God’s compassion is total, absolute, and unconditional, without reservation.”

Compassion is our method. Being compassionate is challenging, especially within the new environment of being at camp! We need God’s help. And God invites us to rely on Him, to make ourselves available to go deeper in our faith. Compassion at camp means:

- Meeting campers in their world, but not leaving them there.
- Relinquishing your agenda and seeking God’s.
- Loving campers, not managing them.
- Being compelled by God and becoming conduits of His love.
- Being able to see past your pain to step into the pains of others.

The table below provides a variety of ways that volunteers can relate to campers. The way we view campers and our week at camp, to a great degree determines how effective we can be at camp. As our purposes, commitments and actions move down the chart, our effectiveness at meeting the deep needs of campers increases:
Unless you purpose to give your compassion to campers, you will not know how to speak to them effectively. With a heart of compassion, campers will not only hear your words, they will experience what it is like to feel like they have a friend.

Unless you purpose to look past camper behavior challenges and scheduled camp activities, you will not appreciate the camper’s deepest needs. With a heart of compassion, campers will not only feel your care, they will know they are lovable.

Unless you purpose to seek God in prayer, you will not know how to be a camper’s advocate. With a heart of compassion, campers will not only feel that they are loved, you will touch their souls.

‘Clothing yourself with compassion’ is a spiritual decision. As you prepare for camp, ask God to soften your heart and give you the courage to stretch your capacity for being compassionate.
2. **Pre-camp Devotions and Prayer Partners**

Camp is, in many ways, a spiritual battle. Therefore, no one succeeds at camp without prayer. Many will say that camp is their most difficult week during the year. Without a connection to God, we lose focus and determination. The following are some sample pre-camp prayers and activities:

- Pray that you will challenge yourself to cultivate the depth of relationship with Jesus that will keep His love, presence, and power in your life and compel you to share it with others.
- Pray that you will be able to speak the language of truth in a way that contemporary young children will understand.
- Pray for your flexibility adaptабleness, patience and energy. Pray that you will so tangibly represent God’s love that the campers will recognize Him in you and be transformed.
- Pray that you will be genuine and authentic. As you shed your mask, others will too.
- Pray that you will be able to listen to campers and others without distraction.
- Memorize the verses that will be taught to the campers. You respect campers, when your heart is attuned to what will be communicated during the camp.
- Get to know as many names of volunteers and campers as you are able to.

Many camps have prayer partners who support volunteers in prayer, but do not attend camp. Personally connect before camp and ask them to pray for you each day. Talk to them in advance about what you anticipate will be your greatest challenges. Reconnect after camp, share your experiences during the week and thank them for participating alongside you.

3. **Titles, Roles and Responsibilities at Camp**

Each camper comes to camp with deep hurts and yearns to be part of a well-functioning family. Every volunteer accepted at Royal Family KIDS Camp is assigned by the Camp Director to be in one of two roles: ‘Staff’ or ‘Counselors.’
Some staff will have the roles of Grandma, Grandpa, Aunt and Uncle for the purpose of modeling supportive, intact family relationships to campers. In total, staff serves as the public “stars” of camp and has responsibilities for being on stage, directing, planning, organizing, teaching, playing music, taking photographs, nursing and overseeing activities. Every staff member, no matter their age or responsibility, will have many opportunities for camper teachable moments. Some campers’ greatest needs will be for an older sister or brother with whom they can share their hearts. For others, it is a nurturing Grandparent or Aunt and Uncle, or for still others, it is for a teacher or an activity where someone who does not know them will deliberately see through their background to soothe their hurting heart or challenge them with new hopes.

Counselors are the volunteers with the potential to have the greatest impact on the campers. Many campers’ greatest needs are to experience caring volunteers in a semi-parental role to provide one-to-one guidance through both the intense fun and challenging circumstances of the camp week. As teams are stronger than individuals, these counselor teams will ideally consist of 4 campers and 2 adults. The team of 6 will sleep, eat and participate in most activities as a group.

Counselors will get to know their team of 6 in depth, while staff will impact many different campers. Like most children, campers are attracted to the security found with their counselors, but have an innate desire to be stars. This tension creates many opportunities for everyone to impact campers. As counselors build up staff in the eyes of the campers and staff build up counselors to the campers, relationships are super-charged and the impact of everything positive done at camp multiplies.

The more we live the truth that each volunteer is an extension of God’s love uniquely displayed in their gifts, the bigger we see God and the more amazing He becomes. Placed in this environment, campers can begin to gain an understanding of relational wholeness.

4. **Royal Treatment/Greeting Campers/ Room Decorations/**

**Variety Show/Everyone’s Birthday**

Campers come to camp feeling like outsiders in most all aspects of life. Each desperately desires to feel like an insider. Despite the challenging experiences campers have endured, campers are kids with the normal desires and at least some of the innocence of other kids their age. What
campers want is not different than what we all want: to be noticed and acknowledged for their own value, to be called by name in the hallways, on the trails and at the pool. To experience genuine generosity expressed towards them. Campers want people to like them, to show them a way to participate in something bigger than themselves, to learn new skills, to have someone truly listen to what they say, to miss them when they are gone and to pray with them when they are challenged.

This is what Royal Family KIDS Camp calls ‘royal treatment.’ We strive to provide ‘royal treatment’ not only to the campers, but to fellow volunteers as well. Here are some concrete examples of how this happens:

- Camper buses are greeted with raucous applause and shouting, with signs proudly displaying camper names and each camper’s name loudly announced when they step out of the vehicles upon arriving at camp.
- Everyone applauds and cheers after each variety show event.
- Great effort and planning surrounds the birthday celebration.
- Worn-out clothing items are quietly replaced with new.
- Volunteers warm up stark camp rooms with posters, balloons, crepe paper, glow in the dark stars and themed decorations. While the decorations may not be intact after the first night, the seed of well-meaning generosity and care will last far longer.

Generously giving ‘royal treatment’ to campers confers dignity to lives that are desperately short of it. Campers remember what important people in their lives do, what they say and how they say it. They remember special care exhibited just for them. Every opportunity to interact with a caring volunteer can be memorable to the camper. Honoring campers magnifies their importance as people individually created and loved by God.

5. Chapel/Drama / Breakfast Club

During Chapel, Drama and Breakfast Club times the staff creates spiritual and emotional bridges beginning where the campers are and attempting to help each camper get to a place where they can recognize God in their lives. These daily, large group communication times collectively present Biblical truths that are portrayed and reinforced through teaching, a play and puppets. There are 5 themes designed by RFK that are used in annual
rotation so that campers will always be presented with fresh truth when they come to camp.

Chapel is a creative teaching venue where all campers learn Bible truths. The drama presents a Biblical story that resonates with the experiences of campers and daily builds to a conclusion as the week progresses. The drama is designed to help campers empathize with the challenges of the characters and see positive resolutions in challenging life circumstances. Breakfast Club reinforces the same truths using a more interactive method with the campers.

These daily group times are challenging for the staff presenters as RFK is not a camp for church kids who hear a reinforcing similar message weekly at church. The kids have an extraordinarily wide range of exposure levels in spiritual matters. Some have a faith that, due to their situation, has made them extraordinarily dependent upon God at a very young age. Others have experienced evil so intimately that they have no concept of a good God.

The abuse that many campers have experienced has scarred them so intensely that they experience arrested emotional development. They do not recognize ‘good,’ much less a good God. For example, when we say “God is love,” “He is our heavenly Father and He loves you.” It may be misinterpreted by a child of abuse or neglect because of a father who supposedly “loved” them also abused, molested or neglected them.

The design of the spiritual truths we communicate is targeted to the lives campers are experiencing the other 51 weeks of the year. Therefore, campers need to know God, not just know about Him. This means, for example, that campers need to:

- Deeply know and experience that God loves each of them, in addition to being told that a particular Biblical character was loved by God.
- Identify with God’s moral character that’s being demonstrated in the stories.
- Personally identify with the characters in the stories to appreciate for themselves that the Biblical character is deeply loved by God despite their faults.
- Understand that the love of God changes the Biblical character’s way of understanding and accepting themselves.
• Realize that God’s love allows the character to change their way of seeing others in their lives.
• Comprehend that when the Bible character trusts in God, that God will always be there even when life is difficult.

This is the hope each camper needs for the future.

Many campers have never seen a Bible, much less owned one, and can easily lose interest unless their counselor provides enough information and on-going context so that the camper gains respect and appreciation for what is being communicated. Counselors need to gauge camper interest and explain the story.

In a large group of campers with many levels of comprehension, the counselor must then reinforce the key truths and help to apply them to each camper’s life. This may occur over a meal, or while walking, or just as the camper wakes up or before they go to sleep.

One approach to help campers relate to the characters and stories is by asking a question such as, “Have you ever felt that your problems were so large that no one could solve them?” “There is a person in the Bible who lived long ago and felt the same way, his name was …… and this is how he solved his problem, and this is what did not work for him…” This provides Biblical truth in a way that connects to camper’s emotions, spirits and minds.

The stories offer great springboards to talk to campers more broadly about: temptation, prayer, God’s care for people, right and wrong decisions and their consequences, forgiveness and hope in a future. The goal for all is to provide them enough insight to give them eyes to recognize and trust God in their life circumstances after camp so that they know that they can connect with God at any time.

6. Worship and Singing Songs

Worship is the single most powerful force in restoring the soul. It is what we will be doing throughout eternity. Music has the ability to cut through the poor messages we carry in our heads and be a healing salve in a wounded soul. Teaching and singing a new song to a troubled child can change their countenance and give hope.

The music learned at camp can also be a lasting gift that we give the children to take home to enjoy throughout the whole year. Camp music provided to the campers can also be played in the campers’ rooms to
help them learn and understand the words. Music played quietly can have a calming effect on a camper who feels distraught. Explaining the words to Christian songs can help the camper understand the meaning as he/she sings the song. These become ‘teachable moments.’

In large group singing, energetic adult participation with the motions that go with some songs not only provides the campers freedom to participate, they become yet another remembrance that campers will take away from camp.

7. **Royal Mail and Heart Notes**

You probably still have a cherished note you received many years ago tucked away in a safe place. Campers rarely receive notes of encouragement or thanks. Often they have only a small space to keep their most prized possessions and they value the few they receive for many years.

‘Royal Mail’ is intra camp mail that allows any volunteer to send a note to a camper. A ‘heart note’ sent through royal mail can capture in a few words an uplifting message of encouragement or gratitude. Often they capture a moment of camp life that describes a camper’s character, value, success, good choices and hopes for the future.

Heart notes can become a permanent memory of positive camp experiences that campers can recall for many years. What do you write about? Just be yourself, be genuine, be warm, be personal, and call campers by name. Recall great camp successes and fun events. Encourage them in their skills and recall other volunteers who had a great impact on their time at camp.

Providing campers with a permanent reminder of both the wonderful times at camp, as well as public respect of those at camp can begin to heal a hurting heart.

8. **Changing Campers View of Themselves**

A favorite song sung at camp is “I Will Change Your Name.” The words are:

I will change your name.
You shall no longer be called,
Wounded, outcast, lonely or afraid.
I will change your name.
Your new name shall be,
Confidence, joyfulness, overcoming one,
Faithfulness, friend of God,
One who seeks My face.
(written by D.J. Butler)

Campers who’ve been robbed of a childhood, often rob themselves of an adulthood. At a young age campers have been called, useless, lazy, selfish and stupid. They have been told they are good for nothing or scarred by statements such as, “I wish you had never been born.” Campers innately believe what those in authority tell them and then live out what their abusers have labeled them.

When volunteers observe, recognize and publicly communicate positive character traits like those noted below, a camper ‘can change their name.’ You can deliberately fan this ember and change the camper’s self-concept. These traits can be memorialized and presented to campers in a small or large ceremony and will become new character goals which they can strive to integrate into their lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Leader</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Resourceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Tenacious</td>
<td>Modest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaginative</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>Hard working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Truthful</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeful</td>
<td>Peacemaker</td>
<td>Dependable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring</td>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td>Persevering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brave</td>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Polite</td>
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<td>Loyal</td>
<td>Problem Solver</td>
<td>Determined</td>
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Through consistent love and guidance, counselors communicate that a camper’s identity can be changed from outcast to greatly loved by God.
9. **Prayer Before Meal Times**
Modeling gratitude in prayer for the food God provides at meal times is a non-threatening way to acknowledge God’s generosity to all of us. We thank Him and rely on Him for His abundance, while asking Him for help with our daily challenges. This can be done in various ways. Group prayer can be led by a camper using a microphone, each team or table can assign a prayer leader, or campers may want to pray silently by themselves. Knowing that God watches over us soothes a troubled soul.

10. **First Experiences at Camp**
First successes remain as positive milestones throughout our lives. These experiences will be permanent reminders of personal worth and uplifting memories that instill a deep sense of personal accomplishment and pride.

First experiences include things like shooting a basket, serving a volleyball, hitting a tetherball, throwing a Frisbee, scoring a touchdown, reading a Bible, catching a fish, being publicly applauded for a stage talent, swimming in a pool, skipping a stone, attending a tea party, throwing a horseshoe, pounding a nail, painting, using an electric drill, riding a bike, feeding a horse, shooting an arrow, painting your fingernails, talking into a microphone, attending a birthday party, praying like God is really there, finding a new passion in an activity center and finding a new friend with a similar background.

Campers will long remember the kindness of Christians who loved them enough to share these times and communicate that they were valuable enough to be showered with care and attention.

11. **The Cathedral of the Great Outdoors**
God speaks loudly through His creation, complexity and beauty displayed in nature. Having a conversation about God’s nature unlocks the reality that He is real and there and cares about His creation. It expands our experience to include the enormity of God. Paradoxically, He becomes both more tangible and transcendent.

For example, a squirrel scurrying around the tree looking for a place to hide a nut can be explained as the wisdom of a God who created a
creature that instinctively knows to bury nuts in the summer so he will have food stored up for the winter.

Pointing these things out to a camper are ‘teachable moments’ that can be stretched into longer conversations about God and His creativity. Even short conversations can sow seeds that can sprout later. Individuals either live in awe and wonder or in doubt. Teach campers awe and wonder for God’s unmistakable goodness in creation.

12. **30/30 Cabin Time /Camper Activity Books**

Many campers become more reflective when they are quiet and restful. This is a time during each day when the campers can lay on their bed and read, work on their camper activity books, memorize their Bible verses or do another quiet activity.

Campers often ‘open up’ and want to talk more during this time than at other times of the day. Counselors can use this time to make sure the ideas presented in Chapel/Drama/Breakfast Club are clear and to reinforce Biblical principles as they relate to the successes and challenges of the day. Giving them your full attention honors the person that God is developing.

Counselors can use the power of questions to ignite thoughts about the hopes campers have for the future or learn more about a camper’s character. Recognize that this time is a wonderful opportunity to relate to your campers on a deeper level and be a mentor. Often, campers are not only missing common childhood experiences, they are missing thousands of practical points of advice about how life works.

Relationships with campers deepen when you see their strengths and compliment them, listen to and respect their opinions (even if you disagree), are playful and verbally affectionate, respect their boundaries, are fun to be with, honestly share and embrace the total person (good, bad, struggles, successes) in love.

13. **Activity Centers/Non-competitive Environment**

Activity Centers are spread out throughout the camp to encourage quiet walking and talking along the way. They are intended to expose campers to experiences not found in other parts of their lives. They may be fun
physical activities like archery or games, or creating something from wood or other materials.

One of the significant ways of teaching the children a trust in God is to ‘walk and talk’ throughout the day and evening at camp. When we do this, we creatively weave God’s presence into our daily lives and the life of the camper, making him/her aware of the God we know, love and serve.

Gentleness and reassurance are our methods. Activities focus on the process of doing the project versus the end product. Interactions between campers and counselor and/or staff members are more important. A constant stream of positive affirmation on their project will go a long way in creating an environment where campers are valued. Other moments may arise while sitting at an Activity Center working on a project, reinforcing the camper’s creative abilities and observing how God gave us our abilities to create a beautiful world for ourselves and others. Campers may view sports or activities as a mental and emotional escape for their challenging lives. Helping them find their giftedness provides great blessing and hope for the future.

Royal Family KIDS Camps operate with a policy of non-competitiveness throughout camp. In every competitive situation there is both a winner and a loser. While helping a camper win something may be uplifting to them, campers who lose feel the reinforced negative stereotypes that devalue a person. Instead of keeping score, being first and creating champions, we model playing games and doing activities for the fun of participating. Being first in anything at camp does not mean being more important or more superior in God’s economy.

14. **Camp Schedule**

Children generally thrive with a schedule. A well-planned schedule will help everyone be more successful at camp. The schedule should not be so tight that it drives everyone crazy. There must be scheduled downtime and there must be built in flexibility for the things we cannot anticipate. The campers may come from a life-style completely devoid of anything scheduled and may feel hampered by it at first. The scheduled should bring comfort to the campers who need to see that eating three times a day is already on the schedule. You may want to
post a copy of the schedule and/or the camp rules in the cabins and use it to plan ahead and give comfort to campers who need to know what’s coming during the week.

15. **Morning and Evening Devotions**
More than any other times of the day, most children instinctively become more open and willing to share when they awaken and before bedtime. These can be an excellent time to ask questions about the day ahead or the one just ending.

Good habits of having God bookend our days can be established where we ask God to go before us in our day and be our constant companion. Praying with each camper quietly when they are in their beds brings a blessing of individualized attention and a word of personalized encouragement that may be impressed on a young soul. In the evenings, some campers for good reason will fear the dark. Prayer may help to reduce the anxiety in a camper’s soul. This is a teachable moment that the child can take home from camp and begin to practice in his/her daily life after camp.

Reading Scripture or reinforcing the materials taught in Chapel will help campers both begin the day and end it well. Previewing the day’s activities and reviewing the day’s accomplishments will help campers appreciate the blessings they have experienced, and allow them to tell stories where they are the hero. These are the stories that they will take from camp.

16. **Bible Reading/Verse Memorization**
Reading God’s Word, explaining the meaning of the verse and customizing the meaning of the words to their situation are invaluable ‘teachable moments.’

17. **Saying Goodbye to Campers**
Once campers have returned to where they will be picked up, leaving them can be quite emotional for both you and them. You have just gone through a tremendously emotional and exhausting week. Grieving deeply means that you have loved deeply. Part of entering their pain during the week is also entering the hope that they have that God will be with them in life’s future challenges.
They are in a place you cannot continue to reach, but God can and does. Our God is a God of miracles. You can take solace in that you contributed as much as you were able in the time you had together. Prayer is God’s method of staying close to another when you cannot interact with them. Take time to journal about your experiences you are committed to pray for; it will keep your memories fresh and accurate and allow you to continue to impact campers.

*What you cannot change you have to accept. We take comfort in knowing that God puts all things right in the end.* —Bonheoffer

### 18. Extending the Impact of Camp

Once you have completed your week with the campers, it is easy to bemoan that you were only able to impact them for a short time. But remember that RFK is specifically designed to extend the positive impact on the camper through many tangible and intangible ways.

These ways include, in part, the ideas, conversations and commitments you made to your camper. The Bible they received allows God to reach out to them and them to reach back. The songs they sang will stick in their heads, the love you shared in conversations and actions will have imprinted them with an understanding of true love and care. The habits of prayer in the morning and evening will provide them with an outlet during frustrating times ahead. The many ‘firsts’ they experienced will create long lasting memories and take them to a place of emotional escape when life gets challenging. Camp gifts with the RFK logo will immediately take them back to their wonderful camp experience.

Campers often lack any photos of themselves; instead they only have manila folders that mark their lives. Memory books can be the most powerful and tangible reminder of their activities, fun, Bible verses they learned and most of all, your devotion to them. Every time memory books are shared with others, campers will also relive all of the positive feelings that camp represented. They also provide a sense of pride with admiring comments or impacting Royal mail inserted. In other words, memory books come with built in self-esteem.

When your church is ready, **Royal Family KIDS Club and Mentoring** program is a great way to meet with the kids from camp every month through the school year. The Camp Director can find out more by contacting the National office.
Conclusion
We need a vision of compassion before we interact with campers that can break the chain of abuse not only with these campers, but the generations that follow. When we focus on our personal goals, dreams or ambitions for our week at camp, we fail. When we focus on God, we can accomplish more than we could ever dream.

Though your week will be challenging, don’t give up until campers are not only taught new ways to look at life, but are able to begin to do it themselves. With God, their world becomes a safe place even though it is fraught with challenges. God’s kingdom design is that your great fulfillment meets His great need for you. The fruit of Jesus’ kingdom is to make a positive difference in the lives of campers.

The following are examples of critically important truths for campers. They can be taught formally in groups, discussed in teams and/or communicated in brief conversations.

Themes to Explain and Teach RFKC Campers throughout the Week
- God is a ‘Father To the Fatherless’
- With Hope a Camper’s Future can be Transformed From Doubt to a Future of Purpose
- A Camper’s Idea of Being Abused Property Can be Transformed to being Infinitely Valuable
- A Camper’s Self Image of Being an Outcast Can be Transformed to Being Unique and Precious
- A Camper’s Perception of Being Alone can be Transformed to Being Watched Over by God
- A Camper’s Self Image of Being Defined by Others can be Transformed to be Defined by God
- Trusting God with their Lives is a Choice Everyone Makes
- A Camper’s Sense of Present Hurt can be Transformed to a Sense of On-going Hope
- The Sure Knowledge that They Belong to God First and He has a Purpose for Them
- Asking for Help from Trusted People is O.K.
- Just Because Someone Says Something About You Does Not Make it True

CLOSE
What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
V. UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIORS & CAMP RULES

As with every camp, business or organization, Royal Family KIDS has policies and rules in place to protect the children, the volunteers and the organization. In order to understand the importance of the policies, it is also important to understand the behaviors the campers often demonstrate. Understanding the behaviors and policies will help YOU be a better volunteer at camp!

“Anyone who welcomes a little child welcomes me.” Jesus said in Mark 10:37.

Remember that your goal is to offer a “cup of cold water” in the name of Jesus Christ. Let your attitude be thankfulness for having the privilege of caring for these children during the five days of camp. These children have endured many experiences of being placed in settings that they would not voluntarily choose. They have been removed from familiar surroundings to be placed in the hands of strangers. Few of us, as adults, would feel comfortable under such circumstances. The children will sense whatever you are feeling. Exude joy. Give any apprehension or anxiety over to God. Allow Christ’s enormous love for the children to flow through you. Jesus would gently and peacefully approach some children. With others He would show His enthusiastic excitement at their arrival. There is an old Quaker saying, “Attitudes are caught, not taught.”

The interactions among and between adult staff at camp should be above reproach; in fact the adults should be models of interpersonal behavior. Why? Our campers are attuned to adult behavior. They are watching, listening, learning, imitating and ultimately incorporating your behaviors into their lives.

A. Communication Skills

Communication is an important component of any relationship, and the relationship with the campers is no different. In fact, it is even more important because it is a chance to model positive, healthy communication for them. Our actions and our words are observed.
throughout the week by the campers. The challenge is to communicate to the child, by both word and deed, how important they are.

Learning To Listen

When another person is speaking, listening is NOT thinking about what you are going to say when the other stops talking.

Listening validates the one who is speaking, and attentive listening requires a servant’s attitude. This may be the first time a child has felt “heard.” Remember that you are not here to correct the child’s perspective or change his or her feelings, but to listen and empathize.

Listening values the child. This may be a first for the child.

Listening respects the child. This may be a first for the child.

Listening is complete acceptance without judgment of what is said and how it is stated. This may be a first for the child.

Some additional tips for effective listening are as follows:

- **Provide your undivided attention:** When possible, give the child your undivided attention. If you are not sure what the child has said, repeat what you think you heard to see if you really understand what was said. Absorb and process what the child is really saying.

  *Restate the message:* Listening is the ability to restate accurately both the content and the feeling of a message. It is not enough just to repeat your words. I have to know what they mean to you and how they affect you.

- **Make sure the camper is heard:** Assure the camper that he or she has been heard by using “you feel” statements. Example: Camper - “I really liked swimming today.” Counselor - “You felt good about swimming today. What did you like about it?” It is important to speak back to them what you heard. This affirms to them that they have been listened to and heard.

- **Be aware of your body language:** Be aware of your body language(798,895),(941,988) as well as that of the child. 93% of what a child hears is non-verbal and they also communicate that way. Listen to the whole child -- words, behavior, body language, and facial expression.

  Children are often difficult to listen to effectively because so
much is said through their behavior. Many times, listening and understanding is enough. This may be all the child really wants. Many abused/neglected children feel uncomfortable squarely facing anyone during a conversation. Sitting side-by-side or at an angle may be a less threatening position. Be careful with the duration of eye contact. Be careful with the tone of your voice. Avoid quick or sudden movements, but relax and enjoy the conversation!

**Although the camper may have or need a therapist, you are not here to fill this role.** You don’t have to know where the fire started to put it out. Simply listen to their perception of their day, the people they’ve met, the stuff they’ve made. See the value in affirming the “here and now.” Try to keep the children engaged in current activities and experiences when possible.

“Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable.” David Augsberger

“Like tender limbs of a tree, children can be bent only so far before they are broken. But broken isn’t a frightening word to God; He was once broken for you and me. But He is whole and strong and powerful again today.” Wayne Tesch

He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him. Proverbs 18:13

Even a fool when he keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is counted prudent. Proverbs 17:28.

**Diffusing Anger**

Anger is human emotion we’ve all experienced. For your campers, the expression of anger may occur in difficult and unexpected ways at Camp. No matter the level of their angry outburst, remember that our goal is to diffuse the anger and allow the child to return to having “fun” at Camp. If your camper has an angry outburst, here are some things you can do:

Be angry and sin not.

Not all anger is because of a difficult childhood, but everyone has seen and heard different attitudes toward anger and the use of anger.

Pray silently for the camper and for the Holy Spirit to calm and quiet the activity.
*Alert a staff member to the struggle even before you need physical assistance. Ask for help from a staff person before you become completely overwhelmed or frustrated or you neglect your other camper. This is a large part of the staff’s job.

*Verbalize the feelings of the child. For example: Camper, “That’s not fair.” Counselor: “You don’t feel like it’s fair.” This may seem redundant but it is highly effective. You are not disagreeing, you are not challenging, you’re just listening. Coming to a resolution over the problem will come later, if possible, but when the emotions are high, let them vent. Until you acknowledge their feelings they will keep repeating themselves until they make sure you know just how they feel. This process can become tedious. You may have to repeat the feelings several times. It is worth the effort. If the camper’s anger subsides the real issues may come out. “Why did such and such happen,” or “I’m scared,” etc.

When the emotions subside, reassure the camper of your acceptance and love for him or her. Many children aren’t ready for hugs yet. With your camper, rejoin current activities as soon as possible.

B. Sensitivity Skills

Note: adapted from “The Bonding Blues” by Becca Johnson, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist, Santa Cruz, CA.

Social Stages: A camper may go through these stages during the first few minutes, hours and days of camp.

1. Pre-affiliation stage. This first stage takes place while campers are being processed through registration, riding the bus to camp, and in the first few hours with their counselors. First year campers tend to be a little shy and polite as they go about sizing up new people and new surroundings. Returning campers will warm up more quickly, but even they will have to check out who and what is new. You should not expect children to bond or warm up instantly. Allow time for campers to warm up to each other. Have some games and activities prepared which are suitable at this stage. For example, you might play a name game, take a camp tour, or tell a story. The pre-affiliation phase is also the time to set down rules and regulations in a friendly and creative manner.

Homesickness typically occurs in this phase, although RFKC kids may not display it much because they have had to adjust frequently to new surroundings. As soon as they see that camp is a safe, friendly, and inviting place, most campers will be fine. If anything, a child may feel
homesick because of responsibilities at home, such as Mom or Dad need him or her, or younger siblings need to be cared for and protected.

2. **Power and control.** Once campers feel safe and acquainted with their surroundings, they are likely to start “testing the waters.” Kids may begin to establish “pecking orders” with each other, see how closely rules are enforced, and perhaps see if you will still love them even when they misbehave. This dynamic is more easily controlled at RFKC because of its highly structured program and small camper-to-counselor ratio. Still, a camper may need to put your love and patience to the test. You need to respond appropriately and provide healthy outlets for such “power and control” games.

   Children who are “weak” or “different” tend to get picked on in the power and control phase. This may include developmentally delayed children, children with disabilities or visible deformities, minority children, or any child who stands out in some way. Power and control games can tax the most experienced and energetic of counselors. That is why you need to have occasional periods of relief as well as access to supportive and helpful staff persons. Without periodic relief and support, you may soon lose confidence and commitment and begin to back away from the kids.

   This all will be a part of the first time you meet your campers.

   Here are some suggestions for greeting your campers for the first time, and approaching them in a non-threatening way.

   Parents and other care givers also want to feel secure about those who will be caring for their children during this week. Help build their confidence in the quality of RFKC.

   **When you first meet your camper:**

   1. **Establish eye contact briefly, respectfully.** It is usually best to kneel or stoop to be on or below the level of the child. It is empowering for the child to be on equal footing during conversation with the counselor.

   2. **Introduce yourself.** When your camper speaks, listen for both the spoken word and the language of the body. The child’s actions may tell you as much as his or her words.

      Use affirmative expressions such as:

      “I’m so happy you’re going to camp with us, Susie.”

      “You’ll have an exciting time at camp this year.”

      “What are you looking forward to at camp this year?”
“The counselors are excited about meeting you up at camp.”

3. Allow time to “warm-up.” When possible, give choices to encourage the child to have some control in this new environment. For example: “Shall we sit down and introduce ourselves or should we wait in line and get our luggage?” OR “Would you like to walk around for a couple of minutes while we are waiting?” Don’t expect instant bonding or even a willingness to be hugged.

Be aware that this camper may not be anything like the person you imagined the day before.

4. Talk about what comes next in the schedule (if you know), such as lunch, unpacking, or tour of the camp. Remain flexible. Be aware of the variety of emotions.

5. Play brief get-acquainted games. For example, find out all the ways the three of you are similar (brown hair, blue eyes, white socks, etc.). Find ways you are different. Play a Name game, such as using the letters in your name to make an acronym. (Tom = Tall, likes Oatmeal, makes Music)

6. Be impressed with the child, don’t try to make the child be impressed with you. Remember why you are there — to help create “positive memories” for the child.

7. Be sensitive to any cultural differences - some attitudes and responses may be different from your own merely because of cultural distinctions, and nothing else. Do not judge an action simply because it is different from your own. Ask “how do they do it at home?” types of questions before coming to conclusions.

8. Explain your role in the camper’s life for the week, such as:
   a) You are responsible for knowing where they are and keeping them safe at all times.
   b) You will be with them at meal times
   c) You will sleep in the same room with them
   d) Your whole week’s purpose is to care for them, to have fun, to show them lots of T.L.C

9. Find a fun way to explain / describe the basic camp rules or work with your campers and establish your own “cabin rules,” responsibilities and consequences. Empower the campers to write them, post them and sign them.
C. Safety Issues.

1. Reporting Abuse

By law, all cases of suspected child abuse must be reported. Section 11166 of the Penal Code requires any child care custodian, medical practitioner, non-medical practitioner, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity, or within the scope of his or her employment, whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of a child abuse, to report known or suspected instances of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible, by the telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

Reporting Procedure

Staff or Counselors who suspect abuse has occurred must bring the matter to the attention of the Camp Directors. It is necessary to know enough about the situation to avoid reporting “bruises from falling down at camp”, but once there is reasonable suspicion that “abuse” has occurred it must be reported. It is not our job to investigate the situation, just report it and let the proper authorities do the investigation. Once notified, the proper authorities, may lead the camp through some additional questions or procedures to help determine if an investigation needs to move forward.

If a child is in immediate danger, child abuse may be reported to law enforcement officials who should be called by the camp director.

Remember, our job is to show the kids a great week of fun and create life-changing moments. We are not there to try and find abuse in their lives. If you notice or suspect abuse, report it, but don’t go looking for it.

The local Social Workers for the child in each area should be able to offer more specific guidance in this area.

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice has produced the following list of ways to help calm an anxious child. It may be helpful in a number of situations, especially if you believe the child has been abused.

Ways to Calm an Anxious Child

• Respond as quickly as possible to the child’s signs of distress by approaching the child and by showing interest in what the child is feeling.
• Do not hug or touch the child unless he says it is okay to do so.
• "Listen" to what the child is saying with words and actions (e.g., nod, summarize what the child said when appropriate).
• Take the child's feelings—especially fear—seriously.
• Be as relaxed as possible when helping the child calm down.
• Restate to the child what he is saying to make sure he is understood.
• Provide appropriate outlets for strong emotions, including anger, frustration, sadness, and loneliness (e.g., letting the child use a punching bag, go to a quiet corner, play with a tape recorder, run in a special "running space," paint).
• Be there for the child. Your presence and care can be reassuring.


2. Medical Issues

The camp nurse is responsible for collecting and dispensing medication. If you are staying in the sleeping quarters with the children or where the children can have access to your rooms, you will not be able to keep medications with you. Medication is to be brought in the original container with instructions clearly indicated. At registration, Monday morning, the camp nurse will collect and label all medication from the children. Adult medications in, or accessible to, the children’s sleeping quarters should be collected before the children arrive.

Fanny packs or backpacks are great for using at camp to contain basic emergency first aid supplies, including Latex gloves.

Every child will be checked for head lice and treated, if necessary. Children should not be treated any differently because of the head lice. This is our opportunity to give them the royal treatment.

Infection Control - Recommended Practices for all infectious agents:

Hand washing

1. Wash hands thoroughly before and after each contact with potentially infective fluids or materials. For example, wash your hands with hot soap and water before and after: using the toilet, changing a diaper, wiping a runny nose or preparing food.

2. Even after wearing gloves, wash your hands with soap under running water for ten seconds.
Use of Hand Sanitizers
Alcohol-based hand sanitizers, are an acceptable alternative when soap and water aren't available. If you choose to use a hand sanitizer, make sure the product contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Then follow these simple steps:
1. Apply enough of the product to the palm of your hand to wet your hands completely.
2. Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces, until your hands are dry.

Soap and water are best for washing hands before meals and after possible infection. Hand sanitizers are convenient, but should only be used when soap and water are not readily available.

Use of Latex Gloves
1. Necessary if the worker has the potential for direct skin contact with: blood, semen, vaginal secretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, blood soiled materials, saliva, vomit or feces. All can transmit infectious diseases.
2. Gloves should also be worn if the worker has cuts, broken skin, or dermatitis on their hands.
3. Use of gloves during diaper changing is not necessary unless blood is apparent in the stool or urine.
4. Soiled gloves should be placed in a plastic bag and discarded.
5. Never delay the urgent care of a bleeding child because gloves are not immediately available.

Information about AIDS/HIV can be found on the RFK website / Training Library: 101 Manual supplemental materials Section V.
3. Camp Rules and Religious Policies

Below are 7 Camp Rules and 7 Religious Policies. They are for the protection of the campers, the adults and the organization.

Rules Overview

Rules are very important at camp but they are not the most important things at camp.

The most important thing at camp is fulfilling the mission, “To Create Life-Changing Moments.” The rules are only there to help us fulfill the mission. The rules do not exist for themselves; they only exist to help us Create Life-Changing Moments. Without the rules we would be allowing for some very painful memories to occur. Think for a moment about how far this organization would have come if we had not implemented rules for the safety of the children.

Jesus was accused of breaking the rules when the Pharisees accused him of healing on the Sabbath. Jesus asked, “Is Man to serve the Sabbath or is the Sabbath to serve the Man?” The Pharisees enjoyed enforcing the rules but they lacked the bigger picture as to why God made the rules and what the most important things were.

Royal Family KIDS was not created so we could serve the rules, but the rules were created to serve the mission. This is not to imply that the rules can be broken at will or that they are not important, for in fact, they are very important. This is simply to draw perspective to the idea that the rules are only tools to accomplish the mission.

If we understand the true place and importance of the rules we will have a proper perspective for following them and for enforcing them.

What we are looking for is the diligent and consistent enforcement of the rules for the greatest success of the camp. The over enforcement or the under enforcement of the rules can cause problems and take away from our ability to achieve the mission and make life-changing moments for children. With that in mind, let us take a look at the rules.

Camp Rules-

Every organization must have rules by which it operates. This is especially so when dealing with children of abuse. Due to the nature of child abuse and society’s views of it, it is important to be cautious to ensure that the children placed in your care are protected 24 hours a day.
and that counselors and staff prevent any accusation of bad intent on their part.

To ensure that there is no question as to one’s involvement with a child, the following rules must be adhered to at ALL times.

1. **Two-Deep.** There **MUST always be TWO TRAINED ADULTS providing direct and indirect supervision over a camper from the time the Guardian drops the child off at registration, to the time the Guardian picks up a child.**

   a) Any camper going behind closed doors, into restrooms, behind buildings, or into secluded areas away from the mainstream of the group, must be accompanied by two adults.

   b) Large areas that allow for several children to be gathered together such as cafeterias, play fields, pools, activities centers, etc., may be supervised by adults from a reasonable distance provided the children are in the **line of sight** and adequate supervision can be provided based on the events occurring and the number of children involved.

   c) Some States may require additional Check-in / Checkout procedures for the pool. Do not just drop children off at the pool. Verify that there is adequate supervision and that campers do not leave the pool area without supervision.

   d) Use of bathrooms, especially at night, may require extra supervision or “line of sight” conditions to ensure compliance with the “two-deep” rule. Cabins without interior bathrooms may require a Port-a-John to be placed near the cabin or cluster of cabins. This allows for one Counselor to stand at the door of the cabin and observe the child who walks to the Port-a-John and returns to the cabin while the other Counselor remains in the cabin maintaining the Two Deep Rule.

   e) When there are sleeping quarters that are only large enough to allow for one Counselor and two children they shall not be used, unless there are adjoining **interior** doors that can remain open at **least 10 inches** at all times between bedrooms or to open hallways. Keeping the interior door open continues the Two-Deep rule as two adults can check on each other and the children through the open door. This “open door policy” discourages improper activity between counselor and camper. This dos not apply to exterior doors.
WHY? This “TWO-DEEP RULE” is to ensure the safety of the camper and the protection of the adult. This provides accountability so that an adult cannot carry on in a particular way with a child, without another adult knowing what he/she is doing. It also provides for a second adult to be present to vouch for the behavior of the other adult, should a child falsely accuse an adult of particular behavior. By leaving doors open between adjoining rooms, this accountability among the adults subtly says to the camper, “Someone in the next room or someone going down the hall, will know if anything inappropriate is going on that shouldn’t be”. Too much abuse takes place behind closed or locked doors, especially sleeping rooms, and the child should be able to feel ‘safe’ in this space at camp. This is the beginning of building their trust in the adults at camp. Work to ensure this is adapted in some way in those situations.

2. Private Beds. At NO time during camp should a camper be allowed to lie or sit on the counselor’s bed or shall the counselor lay or sit on the camper’s bed.

   a) There will be times when the camper may be awakened by nightmares and plead to “climb in bed” with the counselor or ask the counselor to come into his/her bed. Leave NO room for a false accusation upon any of your counseling staff. Counselors’ or Staff may sit in a chair next to a camper’s bed or on the floor, but may NOT lay or sit on a camper’s bed!

WHY? This is to avoid the situation whereby a camper could say, “My counselor laid on my bed and we did...” or “Our counselor let us lay on his bed and we did...” Counselors or staff members will not be present following camp when a camper could make a similar statement to a social worker or caretaker without the counselor or staff person there to verify what really happened or reframe it. This rule will, hopefully, prevent the child from making a false accusation about questionable behavior on the part of the counselor. It is to protect, not only the camper, but also the counselor. “Abstain from the appearance of evil.”

3. Personal Touch. The following three touching scenarios are against the rules:

   o Sitting on Laps
   o Piggy Back rides
   o Frontal Hugs
Positive and healthy touch is important and vital for everyone, especially for children from abusive backgrounds. We have listed some important and proper ways to touch children at camp following this list of rules.)

a) This list is not all-inclusive and there may be other similar touching scenarios that local camps feel they need to add to this list.

b) Part of the challenge with enforcing these three rules is that they are common forms of touch outside of camp. The children will naturally seek these touching scenarios, mostly in a loving and innocent way. Great care must be taken to not reject “the child” while redirecting these particular forms of touch. Simply redirect the child to another form of touch that is appropriate and let them know it is because of the special rules at camp for their safety.

c) Since many of the children will initiate these forms of touch on their own, it is considered a violation of the rules when the following takes place: if the adult is initiating the touch or if the adult lets it linger too long.

Example 1. A camper comes off the bus and sees his counselor from last year. The camper is so excited he leaps into his Counselor’s arms and they swing around in a full frontal hug. Violation? Did the Counselor initiate the hug or did he let it linger too long?

Example 2. A little girl falls asleep in bed with Grandma sitting in a chair beside her. The girl wakes up in a night terror and leaps into Grandma’s lap and immediately falls asleep. Violation? Did Grandma initiate the lap sitting or let it linger too long?

Example 3. A boy stands on a log and when his Counselor walks by the boy jumps on his back. Did the Counselor initiate the piggyback ride or let it linger too long?

WHY is there NO sitting on laps, NO piggyback rides and NO frontal hugs anywhere throughout camp?

These touching scenarios are used by pedophiles to break down a child’s resistance and gain access for groping or fondling them. Pedophiles use these techniques to arouse themselves or the child when the bodies rub against each other. Avoid these situations at all times, so as not to trigger a child’s previous victimization. Also, this policy exists to avoid allowing the child to fondle or grope the adult, as they might have been
“groomed” to do in order to win the adult’s favor. Avoiding it altogether prevents it from being a problem for the child who was a victim of this behavior in the past. “Abstain from the appearance of evil.”

Healthy Positive Touch

The following guidelines deal with the way persons touch each other. The importance of touch, in a positive sense, cannot be stressed enough. The children need it.

And they were bringing children to Him so that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this He was indignant and said to them, “Permit the children to come to me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.” And He took them in His arms and blessed them. Mark 10:13-16

For our campers, these children, many of their past experiences have been negative. Non-threatening, “good touches” will be new for them.

It is very important for the safety of the child and of the camp to adhere to these guidelines.

Even though touch is very important, don’t assume that a camper wants to be touched. Be aware of what is on the campers’ application and especially watch the body language to see if the child is uncomfortable (or too comfortable) with being touched. Many cannot verbalize their boundaries or ask you to “stay out” or “come close.” Be sensitive to this as it may be necessary to ask for permission before you touch the campers.

A “safe” unintimidating expression of touch, even for boys, is the side hug, instead of face to face. While some children may be resistant to any touch, others will be “clinging vines” (velcro kids). Some children have “wandering” hands. Children who have been sexually molested may try to touch inappropriately. Re-direct gently. Give them something to do during chapel time such as coloring in their workbooks. If necessary, gently hold their hands. Do not ignore physical advances. Just redirect. Most children will prefer constructive activity versus sexual acting-out. If possible,
change activities before they become bored or self-absorbed (inwardly focused on themselves).

4. **Photography / Videography.** There is to be NO distribution, posting, or publication of identifiable photos or videos of the children to anyone other than the children themselves. (During the week of camp identifiable photo and video shows are encouraged within the camp environment only).

   a) That means there are to be No identifiable photos used of the children on websites, Facebook, church bulletins, thank you cards, newsletters etc. Photos where the children’s faces are not identifiable either from photo angle, distance, disguise, blurring, etc., may be used in such cases. Videos shown during the week at camp may show all faces, but any video used for the public or posted on any website, YouTube, etc, must only show non-identifiable faces of the children.

   b) Neither children nor individual Counselors or Staff are allowed to take pictures with personal cameras or personal cell phones. If a camper brings a camera or cell phone, it should be held in a safe place and returned on Friday. Counselors and Staff may only use cell phones during scheduled breaks outside of the view of the children.

       These rules prevent any child’s picture from randomly being circulated through the community following camp and being identified as a foster child. Privacy of the children must be respected and protected.

   c) It is recommended that the Camp Director appoint one Staff Photographer to be in charge of all photo and video equipment, use, processing and distribution. The Staff Photographer may have several team members working with them at camp taking pictures / video and handling the use, processing and distribution, but this one individual should be responsible for all areas of compliance with the camp photography and videography rules. The Staff photographer should create and make available a certain number of “safe” non-identifiable photos from camp for the Directors and others to use for general publicity throughout the year.

       Any exceptions to these rules must be obtained from RFK, Inc. and possibly the local Social Services offices.
WHY? You probably will not be aware of which children may have been victims of video or photographic pornography. The very sight of a camera may be a ‘trigger’ for a particular camper who was a victim of this violation. This is why we are very careful to let the children know as soon as possible after arriving at camp, that there is a “Camp Photographer(s)” who will be in charge of all photos for them to keep and possibly show a slide show during the evening during camp. They should be assured and reassured that the Camp Photographer / Photography Team are the only people who will be taking pictures during camp, and these are done out in the open where everyone can see what is happening. Reassure the children that if they do not want their picture taken they can simply tell their Counselor.

5. **Exchanging Personal Information.** **DO NOT exchange** any personal information with the children such as: last names, addresses (US Postal, e-mail or Facebook, etc.) or phone numbers.

   a) Any scheduled contact outside of RFK Camp, Club or Mentoring must be done through the local Social Services department and with the knowledge of the local Camp Director. Random contact with former or current campers at church, school, and sports teams, etc. is not uncommon and is considered to be covered under those organizations. Social Services need not be informed of these random, naturally occurring contacts.

   b) Inform the children that these rules are in place and you can not call them later or become their friend on Facebook because of the rules.

WHY? This will prevent extended contact beyond the one week of camp and extending the camp/church liability. This discourages a typical pattern of pedophiles to meet a child and gradually “groom” them to perpetrate at a later time. This helps to prevent an adult at camp from making further contact with the camper after camp under the name of the local church or RFK.

6. **Medications and Distribution.** All medications (including over-the-counter medications, vitamins, etc.) are to be given to the nurse for security and dispensing for all campers and all adults who stay in children’s quarters or whose medications could be within reach of children.
WHY? Children may look for or find medications and use them inappropriately. Even though an adult is with the children at all times, it only takes seconds for a child to grab a bottle of medication to be used at a later time. This also allows the children to see that the adults have to go see the nurse for their medications too.

7. Name Tags. Nametags are worn by EVERYONE all week.
   Visitors, or part time workers must also be given a “visitor” name badge so everyone is identified and everyone is part of the same team and seen as a safe person.

WHY? These help other counselors and staff to immediately use the camper’s name (promoting self-esteem) and identifies everyone as ‘safe’ persons. Calling the children by name is part of the “royal treatment”. In order to make the most of the nametags, use a large font and if the nametag can twist around, consider placing the name on both sides of the tag. Make sure you have extra tags as well.

7 guidelines for a successful camp:

1. Be on time for and attend all activities.
2. Keep the cabins / rooms clean and help keep the camp clean and pass this trait on to your campers.
3. Keep all personal snacks/sodas, etc. in a private break area away from the children, and **DO NOT** give children snacks containing sugar as they may increase hyperactivity and/or counteract medications.
4. Maintain consistency in adhering to rules. The children deserve to have the same rules applied equally to all.
5. Use common sense even when you may at times be placed in some uncommon situations.
6. Use of pay/cell phones is off limits to the children. Many of them are not allowed to talk with biological parents or siblings. Counselors should use phones out of sight — away from the children — to set an example. Be consistent when restricting the children from phones.
7. **DO NOT** give out the physical camp address location or dates to the media. This includes news articles prior to or following camp. This will help to prevent a disgruntled biological parent from trying to locate their child.
7 Religious Policies

The following list is from the RFK Camp Directors Manual under “Camp Environment” pages II-29-1 / II-29-3. Additional information is also communicated in section 1 of this manual under “Teachable Moments”.

1. No Altar Calls

   At RFK we are privileged to work with children who are wards of the state; therefore, we cannot proselytize. “Proselytize” means to coerce or force someone to believe in a prescribed manner, or the same doctrine that you believe. We respect that policy as communicated to us by the social services agencies with which we cooperate to provide the week of camp for the children.

2. No Laying on of hands

   People of certain faiths may practice ‘laying on’ of hands when praying for an individual to show fervency in the desire to extend or ‘transfer’ their faith to the individual for whom they are praying. Although this is acceptable in some church denomination(s), it would be ‘foreign’ to a child who has no church background or religious training and could be misconstrued to someone back home, if a child tried to explain what was actually taking place at the time. It could seem to be frightening or ‘spooky’ to a child who is not familiar with the practice. It may be appropriate at church, but not at this camp.

3. No ‘Casting out of Demons’

   At times in history, and even today, some individuals feel that the behavior displayed by some of the children attending Royal Family KIDS Camps could be rooted in the devil or demons. If individuals who hold this position are involved in your camp staff and ask to perform such exorcisms, they must be told this is not allowed at a RFKC. Royal Family Kids’ Camps’ staff & counselors are not permitted to make this judgment.

4. No Water Baptism

   Again, because the children who attend Royal Family KIDS Camps are wards of the state, care must be given to accept children of all faiths, so long as their caretakers choose to send them to our camps. Because churches of varying denominations sponsor RFKC, and because these various denominations practice the religious sacraments of the Church in different ways, water baptism is not allowed during the week of camp. To do so, may violate a child’s religious beliefs and we are not authorized to practice specific religious sacraments at camp.
5. No Speaking in Tongues

Speaking in tongues or ‘glossolalia’ as described in the Book of Acts in the New Testament, is practiced by some church denominations in their public gatherings. Again, this may be ‘foreign’ to the children at camp and should not be practiced in their presence. If a staff member is from this religious persuasion and chooses to pray in this way in private, he/she may do so, but not among the children.

6. No Communion

Because we serve children who are wards of the state, no religious preference can be forced on a child while they are in our care. Communion, like water baptism (discussed in #4.) is a sacrament of the Church and is practiced in different ways by various denominations. To hold a communion service with the children present and ask them to take communion in any way other than what they are taught in their church would be a violation of their religious belief system. You may not administer communion to the children.

7. No Anointing with Oil

The patriarchs of old in the Old Testament first practiced anointing with oil. This was done as a symbol of God’s blessing being poured out on an individual as they were given new and added responsibilities of a religious nature. It is still practiced by some church denominations in prayers of healing and blessing of individuals for new ministry within the Church. Again, because of the varied religious backgrounds of the children attending Royal Family KIDS Camps, this practice at camp may violate their religious beliefs. It must not be done at camp.

In spite of the limitations of these religious practices we must remember that our overwhelming task is to provide a safe and life-changing week for these precious children. God’s love is motivating us to be with these children. His love can work in us in ways more powerful than we can see and in ways that are beyond these policies. Let yourself be amazed at what can happen at camp as you simply prepare yourself and follow Joshua Chapter 4, “when the children ask”.

CLOSE
What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
VI. Behavior Management Techniques

The behaviors of the children can be one of the most intimidating factors at camp. In reality, about 10% of the children will be very obedient, about 10% will have more significant behavioral concerns that take time and energy away from the camp, and the remaining 80% of the campers will mostly go along as you lead them. Most poor behavior is not based in rebellion, but in the pain of loss in their lives.

This Section will provide proven techniques to help you deal with the smaller percentage of the campers whose behaviors need time and attention.

Goal

Your Lens on Behavior

How you, the volunteer, see the cause of behaviors will have a MAJOR impact on how you approach a child’s behavior. If you believe that all behaviors stem from rebellion, or just being a bad child, then you will approach that child as a rebel or a bad kid. Some behaviors do stem from rebellion and some children have made bad choices, but we need to understand that MOST, let’s state that again, MOST of the poor behaviors that you will see at camp will stem from the trauma of the abuse and the neglect the children have been through.

Survival techniques the children needed earlier in life are the source of many behaviors:

If you were starving, you might learn to steal food.
If you were physically abused every night, you might learn to run away.
If you were assaulted by a drunken parent, you might learn to manipulate and lie

These behaviors are not good, but when we, the volunteer, understand that they are rooted in survival we can and must change our approach to helping the child.

We can tell the child, they don’t need to steal food from the cafeteria because plenty of food will be provided all week.
We can tell them they don't need to run away because they are safe here.

We can tell them they don't need to lie or manipulate.

Even when we tell them these things, some children will find it difficult to drop their survival strategies that they have developed for years.

For some children, it may just be too difficult to feel safe even though we, as volunteers know and tell them they are safe. We need to realize that they see the world through the lens of their past, which may not be the current reality.

We need to understand its not rebellion, its just survival.

Another common phrase to explain these strategies is to, “see the need behind the behavior”. Most of the behaviors you will see at camp stem from an unmet need in the child’s life.

Notice the word “NEED” is hidden behind the word “BEHAVIOR”. This is a visual demonstration of what you will see at camp. First you will see the behavior, but behind that behavior is an unmet need. Help the campers in your care by being patient and discerning the unmet need behind the behavior.

**A. Modeling Appropriate Behavior**

Most of the campers at RFKC have not had many models of positive appropriate behavior, either toward themselves, between other individuals, or in a social setting. One of the goals of this week is to provide this model and to encourage appropriate behavior in a structured yet nurturing environment. The children may learn some great life lessons just by watching you.
Wayne Theodore wrote a book titled, “Wayne: An Abused Child’s Story Of Courage, Survival And Hope.” Wayne was horribly abused by his father and grew up doing poorly in school; he could barely read, even as an adult. He eventually became the owner of a construction company. He was asked how he could be a business owner with such poor classroom skills. He said at a RFK Director’s Enrichment conference, “I learned everything I know through observation.”

Volunteer, the kids we serve are observing YOU! You are their education about what a kind, patient, caring adult looks like. They are watching what you are, and are not doing. They are listening to what you say and what you don’t say!

Don’t underestimate the power of modeling appropriate behavior in front of children from hard places.

1. How to help when behaviors are poor?

In a 5-day camp environment we need to have appropriate expectations about what we can accomplish. Yes, God can intercede and do miraculous things, even in a child’s behavior and we have seen amazing behavioral changes over the years. We have also seen children who have developed years of survival techniques who didn't budge an inch at camp. For some, we might have to just manage their behaviors the best we can in this 5-day experience to help them have the best week they can have.

It’s amazing what can help when you see poor behaviors on display. Modeling and engaging in playing with the campers! Climb, hike, crawl, throw, create, and enjoy what childhood should be. Your enjoyment of life gives him or her hope that life may be worth living. Be prepared for the campers to need lots of activity. Have games to play in your cabin. Watch for restlessness and be ready to transition to the next activity. Keeping campers engaged will prevent enough trouble to make it worth your efforts to provide alternatives. The many Activity Centers are designed to accommodate the child’s short attention span and diversified interests.

Watch for what triggers a camper to misbehave. Large group activities are often situations where children are more likely to need additional attention. When possible, engage the aid of staff members before problems escalate. This saves face for the camper and helps keep the relationship healthy between counselor and camper.

2. Affirmation and Praise

The words we use are powerful communicators of esteem.
With our children, especially, the majority of our words need to be positive affirmations.

Find something, to be positive about with the campers. Generally, we don’t expect it; and thus, we don’t comment on helpful behavior. Counselors need to look for an opportunity to be positive with the child and compliment him or her. By the end of the week, this specific praise about good behavior will lead to share expectations on being positive and helpful.

It is most difficult to find positive things to comment about with the angry child. The angry child seems to evoke anger from us. Look for the hurt child under the anger. (Information about diffusing anger is in Section V) Every child has strengths and interests.

Non-Judgmental approach

At the same time we look for positive ways to affirm the campers, we must remember to be Non-Judgmental.

- Remember that any feeling is O.K. from the child but we may not like the behavior that accompanies the feeling.
- Learn to separate the behavior from the child.
- One way to practice this is to begin a statement with “I . . .”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say this:</th>
<th>Do not say this:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t like your hitting.”</td>
<td>“Bad boy” “Bad girl”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can’t allow you to hit.”</td>
<td>“Grow-up”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Don’t act like a baby.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like it when you help to make the bed.”</td>
<td>“Good girl” “Good boy”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The goal is to be non-judgmental of the child and/or the child’s feelings.
Remember to AFFIRM the campers in a healthy, positive way.

What is Praise?

“Praise is a statement or comment that acknowledges acceptable and/or appropriate actions and attitudes.”

Praise is a form of positive reinforcement that is relatively simple to use. It helps build self-esteem in a child and can be used to increase a desired behavior. When used properly and sincerely, praise can be a powerful tool in changing behavior because it communicates what behavior you want to see.
When should you praise?

Sincere, specific praise should be given immediately after the desired behavior, or as soon as possible. Praise may be ineffective as reinforcement if it is delayed for too long. Example: If a child makes the bed in the morning, praise should be given during the morning, rather than at dinner that evening.

While it is important to praise your camper often, praise can be overdone. Praising too often can cause the child to question the sincerity of the praise and the effectiveness is lost.

How should you praise? Be specific, clear, and sincere.

Praise is the most effective when you pinpoint the behavior that you are praising. Examples: “I like the way you made your bed.” “You drew a very attractive picture. I like the way you put the sun in the corner.” Make it clear to the child exactly what it is you are praising, so the appropriate behavior will be reinforced. Your praise must also be sincere, as the child will know when it is not.

How should you NOT praise?

Praise can lose its effect if it is paired with a negative comment. A common mistake is to offer praise linked with a demand, put-down, or backhanded compliment. Examples: “I’m glad to see you picked up those clothes. It’s about time you did it.” “I liked the way you helped with the dishes. Now go clean your room.” “That’s great that you were on time. If you did that all the time, I wouldn’t have to yell at you so much.”

Sarcasm

For healthy adults, sarcasm is a way to poke fun and keep things light, but it is totally ineffective and often damaging to children who have not come from a healthy environment or healthy relationships. Children from abusive backgrounds do not understand sarcasm and often believe what you have said in jest, to be real or true. Guard yourself against sarcasm in this environment.

Time IN instead of Time OUT.

Children who have experienced the trauma of abuse, neglect or abandonment will need to know that you won’t abandon them, even in a “time out!” Therefore, at RFK, we use time in instead of time out. Time outs for children who have already been abandoned and left alone only
reinforce that they are not worthy our time. Therefore, *Time ins* can serve a better purpose.  

For a *time out*, a child did something that needed to be addressed and the child was removed and placed *out* of the situation. Not only a loss of privileges, but isolation or alone time. The loss of privileges may be valid for their actions, but not the isolation. Therefore, give them a *time in* instead. Remove them from the event and stay with them, they are now *in* with you!  

During the *time in*, you may have the opportunity to talk and discuss the reason for the removal and it could be a great teachable moment. Don’t be surprised though, if the child remains silent or complains the entire time. That’s okay, you have removed them from the situation to address the inappropriate behavior, but you have remained with them to build relationship and tell them, “You are worth my time!”  

3. **Appropriate behavior with food and mealtimes.**  

   - Food should be  
     1. Eaten for nourishment  
     2. Provide a time of promoting personal choice for the child  

   - Food should NOT be  
     1. Withheld as punishment  
     2. Used as a motivational reward  
     3. Used as a threat.  

   Mealtimes should be an enjoyable, pleasant experience. Some of the children who attend will not possess socially acceptable table etiquette. Remember that it is difficult to change lifetime habits in one week. Therefore, be prepared to have some children who: Chew with their mouth open, hoard food, shovel food into their mouths from the plate, don’t understand the use of a table napkin, or don’t use knife, fork or spoon.  

   Give specific praise when campers act appropriately or are helpful at mealtimes. For example, they may help serve food, offer to get another camper a napkin, or compliment someone else at the table.
Mealtimes also provide an excellent opportunity for the camper to say Grace or a prayer out loud.

4. Setting the limits before they are needed.

Your campers will test you for a variety of reasons.
- To discern if you mean what you say?
- To get what he or she wants.
- To force you to punish him or her.

Understanding behaviors and not over reacting to them is one of the essential parts of being with children within the RFK environment. Kids need and crave structure. They need to know how far they can go.

On the other hand, adults need to know that setting limits can be done in lots of ways.

When setting limits ...

1. Stay calm and firm. Your tone of voice can often make the difference with success.

2. Make sure that you have the child’s attention by saying the child’s name before giving the direction. Kids are great at saying “I didn’t hear you.” “I didn’t know you were talking to me,” or other ways of avoiding the responsibility for their actions. If necessary, give a reminder for an action you have requested. If possible, make eye contact and be sure you are heard and understood.

   “Sandy, I asked you to ______.” “Juan and Diego, we all need to ______.”

   “Tasha, are you following directions?”

3. Give clear and specific directions or expectations. Explain them before you try to enforce them. Use visual reminders and hand signals to communicate with each other about your expectations when you are in a large group.

4. If the child really doesn’t have a choice about doing something, tell him or her rather than ask. And, explain why there is not a choice. “Meet me by the door.” Be careful how you use phrases like “I want...” or “I think...”
or “I feel...” when setting limits, making commands or giving directions.

5. Expect the child to comply. Be sure your guidelines are age appropriate.

6. If you have a clingy child, use the “invisibility” circle as a technique to help set physical limits. Telling them, “I have an invisible circle around me,” uses a visualization technique to impart the concept of personal space. “I like for people to ask to be inside my invisible circle. Try it.” If the child forgets, you should say, “I think you almost forgot something.” (Don't say she did forget because that is more judgmental than saying “almost forgot.”) One can also reverse the process, pointing out that they have an invisible circle too, and you can ask permission to enter their invisible circle. When permission is granted, you have an opportunity to demonstrate a more appropriate form of closeness than the child might use with you, or be used to at home.

B. When a Camper’s Behavior is Not Appropriate

Major behavior issues apply to only about 10% of the kids. If your camper fails to comply with the limits, remember that you have many choices in responding to misbehavior. With a prayerful heart, training and guidance from camp leadership, decide which response fits your group, your counseling style, your camper and the situation. Some of your choices include:

- Prayer
- Example/Modeling
- Prevention & Early Intervention
- Communication
- Reward Positive Behavior
- Ignore (petty issues)
- Natural Consequences
- Discipline
Use the techniques at the top of the list the most often, resorting to discipline only when absolutely necessary. Disciplinary techniques may also have to be guided by your local Social Service office regarding their acceptable methods of discipline.

Do not physically restrain a child unless they are in immediate danger, or someone else is being threatened with immediate danger. If not properly trained in restraint, we could cause more harm than good.

Then what? Your child’s behavior may get worse before it gets better as he or she tests limits and your consistency. Hang in there. Stay calm. Ask for help from staff or relief counselors as needed.

You need to be structured yet nurturing in the way you guide the misbehaving child. Depending on the child’s background, this could be the area that defines your leadership. Will you be firm in the consequences you require, or will everyone get off easy? You don’t want your approach to be so black and white that it becomes a rigid structure—especially for a child who has lived with no structure.

**Natural and logical consequences**

Consequences are to fit the misbehavior. If you have defined three misbehaviors that will result in consequence, then follow through with that consequence. If a different misbehavior occurs, another consequence would be in order.

What is a consequence? A consequence is a technique for use with unacceptable behavior. It gives the children responsibility and holds them accountable for the results of their own actions. It must be reinforced consistently, or the unacceptable behavior reoccurs.

**Natural consequences** are the direct results (or consequences) of the child’s own actions. The natural consequence of playing in the snow without mittens is cold hands.

*An adult due to the child’s actions provides logical consequences.*

- A logical consequence of hitting someone is being removed from his or her vicinity.
- A logical consequence for throwing rocks at other children is that the camper can no longer pick up rocks and go down a path where there are lots of rocks.
- A logical consequence for dunking kids in the pool is that the camper has to leave the pool area immediately and may not swim at the next session.
Methods for Improving Behavior

Specialized training provided by the camp Social Worker or the local Social Services agencies should provide additional techniques and boundaries. Camp leadership should also be able give instruction on acceptable methods to help volunteers deal with behavioral issues.

**Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) and other Trauma based programs provide specialized techniques in this area.**

C. Tools to Use

There are many tools that are used to help structure the week at camp and to help you assist in teaching some appropriate behaviors. Use the tools that work most effectively for you. Below are some examples.

1. Charts. Charting can monitor the frequency and quality of certain behaviors by recording them systematically on paper — a behavioral accounting system. Positive or negative consequences are used to reinforce and/or reward the camper’s performance.

2. “Mini-passport” (receiving stamp for appropriate behavior during large groups: Breakfast Club, Chapel, etc.)

3. Modified “classroom rules.” (Sounds a lot like Charts. Involves earning stars for participation, getting along with peers, following directions — includes time-in as a consequence.)

4. Time trials to get things done — make it fun. (Kitchen timers — use time to challenge the child to beat the clock and establish a time frame to get tasks started or completed.)

5. Give an appropriate channel for feelings - anger management, alternatives to use that are safe and appropriate, etc.

6. Use humor and remember the child’s need for love, acceptance and forgiveness in a healing community. However, sarcasm or something negative in the guise of humor is NEVER appropriate. “Put-down” humor, even if used for objects or persons not hearing your remarks, is inappropriate. You are modeling a lack of respect for those persons.

Cool Things to Use as Motivators

Each camper has individual motivators that work for him or her. They do not have to cost money or be something to win. Here are some examples that have worked with campers before.

- Special Reading Time with a preferred staff member
- Story Time sharing a special memory
- Learning about something that interests the camper.
- Ask questions about his or her strengths.
- Teach them something new, such as:
  - How to play notes on a guitar.
  - How to make a bracelet.
  - How to make stationery.
  - How to tie specific knots.
  - A favorite Bible verse.
  - A magic trick.
- extra time in a preferred activity
- crafts
- stickers or stamps
- make-it-their-own journals
- baseball/basketball/football/hockey cards
- Sports Time playing their favorite sport

Consider the entire environment when a camper consistently misbehaves.

1. Is the child hungry or thirsty? Are they tired? Do they need a break?
2. Is medication affecting the camper?
3. Do you think the camper is in the right group?
4. Is the group atmosphere or climate a factor in the camper’s misbehavior?
5. Is the camper getting sufficient success and satisfaction from the camping experience?
6. Does the camper appear to have any serious worries, anxieties, or fears that might be causing or limiting factors?
7. Could poor health be a factor in the camper’s behavior?

General Recommendations:

1. Try to establish and maintain an understanding relationship with the camper.
2. What is the big problem? What are this child’s triggers that lead to misbehavior? Recognize that there are usually specific
reasons why a child misbehaves. Try to find out what his or her reasons are.

3. Try to provide more wholesome means for the camper to fulfill the need he was trying to satisfy.

4. If others in the group are affected, let them know the situation is being handled and their rights protected.

5. Approach the camper with kind firmness and use discipline and control with consistency, suitability, flexibility, and a sense of justice.

6. The counselor cannot solve the camper’s problems for him or her, but should guide him into the Word of God where the Holy Spirit can speak to him and where he can find principles for making right choices.

NOTE: For more specific information on dealing with common behavioral issues and suggestions for handling the behaviors, available on the website in the Training Library / 101 Manual / Section VI supplemental materials.

CLOSE

What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
VII. TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM UNITY

Your week at Camp with children of abuse cannot be successful without great teamwork . . . This section will help YOU work with other volunteers as a team to truly have a successful week helping these children see God in your efforts.

A. Team Development

As a team building exercise, RFK, Inc. recommends that all volunteers take the “People Skills Series Personality Type Indicator” and watch the accompanying DVD to assist you in understanding your personality and appreciate how the divergent personalities of other volunteers will best be utilized at camp. In subsequent years, other team building exercises can be used as valuable opportunities to help develop a great team and help all team members experience team development rather than just hear about team development.

“The Necessity of Team Unity” will be valuable and necessary for any RFK team working together at camp. This information is based on years of experience at camp and the inevitable interactions that occur during the adventurous and challenging week of camp.

Understanding personality differences is valuable at camp because under pressure, personalities come out! Camp will, at times, be a pressure filled event, and although volunteers may have worked with each other before, peoples personalities will be more evident at camp because of the pressure situations.

B. The Necessity of Team Unity

Camp cannot be survived as a lone ranger. It is impossible. You are essential to the success of Royal Family KIDS Camp. A successful team requires that all of us first yield to God, serving each other with dedication and joy seeking the success of the camp above our personal sacrifices.
Jesus prayed: “I do not ask for these only but also for others who believe in me through their words, that they may be one just as you Father, are in Me and I am in you...” John 17:20-23.

God designed our relationship to be one of desperate dependence on Him. Unity fuels God’s impact in the world and at camp. It is not an exaggeration to say that our effectiveness at camp is directly in proportion to this spirit-ignited unity of which Jesus spoke.

The lasting impact of RFK camp is not in the planning, great activities, or even in the physical camp, but in God’s love exhibited in volunteers and reflected directly to other Volunteers and Campers. This is the kind of radical love that Jesus knew could heal the pain of the lost and brokenhearted. It is that kind of love that we purpose to exhibit at all of our Camps. It cannot happen without team unity.

Team Unity Always Starts with Each Volunteer

Desiring to Volunteer at Camp is only the beginning of creating a successful Camp. Preparing for Camp is more than packing the day before Camp begins; it is being mentally and spiritually prepared weeks in advance for the hard work of serving Campers and serving alongside a group of like-minded Volunteers.

Forging a successful team begins with your willingness to deeply commit to a common, higher calling. Establishing a clear calling to which all members agree - a calling that is greater than any one team member unifies and prepares volunteers to create an extraordinary Camp experience for both the Campers and Volunteers. In the weeks before Camp, leaders and all volunteers should challenge themselves to think and respond to these three questions:

1. Are you willing to go to the edge of your comfort zone, being the compassion of Jesus to those He calls ‘the most innocent’?

This question cultivates the anticipation that camp is going to be a stretching experience that calls for an uncommon dependence upon God during the entire camp week. A thoughtful answer to this question begins to establish a commonness of purpose and a respectful differentiation of capabilities among everyone willing to serve. Stretching experiences and serving others for an entire week of camp are unusual for most people. No two volunteers will anticipate the same challenges and veteran volunteers will find that each year new challenges will arise.
“How do you anticipate that Camp will stretch you?”
This follow-up question will help you anticipate your and anxiety points. Knowing every person’s anticipated challenges begins to knit the group together and cultivate care, unity and the acknowledgement of frailness amongst the volunteer staff. This is how you begin to gain compassion for the individual limitations we all have and respect for each other which will carry the team through the challenges of the Camp week.

2. Are you willing to be not only physically, but also mentally and spiritually available at camp?

Obtaining a sufficient number of Volunteers for Camp does not make a successful camp. Successful teams require more than warm bodies. Understanding that each and every interaction with Campers and fellow Volunteers either builds up or detracts from the impact of the Camp week is the goal of this question.

Effective training not only informs Volunteers about their schedules and responsibilities, but it also must go beyond preparing you to be at the right place at the right time acting with prayerful wisdom. Before Camp begins, effective Volunteers prepare emotionally for the week long challenges they will experience, and they begin to anticipate and develop their own strategies for successfully navigating a week full of challenging emotions and unexpected occurrences.

Understanding and empathizing with the challenges campers face in their lives and relying upon God in all situations during the week fosters an uncommon vigilance and interdependence amongst the volunteer team. Each volunteer reading or watching RFK materials before, during or after training provides not only a common reference point but also assists you in understanding the challenges faced by Campers before and after Camp.

3. Are you willing to acknowledge that the Campers need God’s love more than they need you?

Volunteers and Campers both need to experience that there is no place that God is not.

Campers yearning to be loved can only be satisfied by God’s love. God’s promise is that ‘He will never leave or forsake’ Campers and that He will be with each Volunteer. The multitude of bad experiences in even a young lifetime cannot be repaired by well-meaning volunteers and a wonderful week at Camp. The experience of Camp may be the high point of the year for many Campers, but it soon will be overtaken
by the reality of day-to-day challenges and fond memories will fade after they return from camp.

Effective Volunteers do all that can be done to create a wonderful camp experience that centers on God’s love and care for us. Through each challenge and success at Camp, you humbly help Campers recognize that God loves them and continually works on their behalf. Volunteers who integrate their need for God into their camp week will model the truth that God is always good, and that He can be trusted with our lives. As volunteers model these truths, campers will catch a glimpse of what leaning on God looks like and take that experience back to their daily lives.

Camp is for the Campers. Campers need to see Volunteers who pray when life challenges, are grateful for everyday blessings, and who openly invest their hope and trust in a future overseen by God.

**Camp Director will Focus Team Efforts on Unity of Purpose**

The goal of Camp is not to get through the week. The goal is changed lives, of both Campers and Volunteers. Communicating this transformative unity of purpose is the responsibility of the camp leaders.

Development of a camp culture where goals and purposes are clearly communicated and unity is built is difficult and time consuming. It may take several years for each team member to recognize the camp’s purposes clearly, and **instinctively act** upon those greater purposes. Everyone will have different expectations of camp. It will be as varied as the hopes and dreams of each volunteer and will be influenced by previous camp experiences; for many, going back to their childhood years.

The purposes of camp are defined by RFK Inc. and communicated by the Camp leadership until all Volunteers have an understanding of Camp goals and what each volunteer’s role is in furthering the camp objectives. This unity of purpose cannot be communicated too many times, and truths must be constantly reinforced. **Unity of team is active when everyone has the freedom to provide gentle reminders at any point when a camp decision is diverting from the primary camp goals. Therefore, each camp volunteer is responsible for knowing his or her roles and asking for clarification when necessary.**

Effective teams do not view Camp as event driven hoopla, time out of ordinary life or a service project for the needy. To impact Campers and find the highest purpose of Camp, each volunteer must,
to a certain degree, unlearn and expand their version of God and come to recognize His active work in unfamiliar circumstances.

Effective teams promote unity of purpose by seeing Camp as a short-term mission, or calling, wherein Volunteers are taken out of the culture in which they live every day, and are willingly transported to an unfamiliar environment for the purpose of allowing God to flow through the team in a tangible way to others in need. Volunteers will learn that there is more to God’s work than living within intact loving families with comfortable houses and stable lifestyles. In order to be unified Volunteers must first be willing to emotionally travel to the Camper’s world to meet the Campers.

Effective teams honor and respect those in authority. Your Director and leadership team make a tremendous commitment and invest many hours to bring your Camp to reality. Your Director is accountable not only to the sponsoring church, to RFK Inc. but also to state and local agency rules and guidelines. Ultimately, they are responsible for making sure each Camper has a safe and impacting week at Camp.

Unity of purpose is achieved when volunteers recognize that while everything else at Camp can go wrong, you still could have had a wonderful week because everyone at Camp knows the goals for the Campers have been achieved through everyone’s sacrifice. Effective team members learn that individual sacrifice in order to further a greater goal is the price paid to be a part of an effective team.

There are many who have sacrificed to make your Camp a success. Some volunteers will have sacrificed in being part of camp fundraising. Some will have invested much time in planning and preparing for Camp activities. Some will have donated funds to pay the bills. And, some will be up all night calming a distraught Camper and some will have taken their only week of paid or unpaid vacation to volunteer at Camp. Individual sacrifices are noticed and applauded for their commitment to the success of the team and the Camp and not raised above others.

To be effective, each volunteer needs to view each hour at camp as an opportunity for building Camper relationships. Communicating thoughtful criticisms and Camp improving ideas will be encouraged after Camp ends. There is no perfect Camp. Camp Leadership will unemotionally evaluate which of their decisions were effective in advancing the purposes of Camp, which seemingly good ideas failed and which need to be fine-tuned. Leadership keeps the focus primarily on bettering the Camp experience for the Campers and reasonable needs of volunteers.
Everyone has the right to his or her opinions, yet no one should have the right to sow discord. There will be time after Camp for one-on-one conversations about the difficulties of the Camp experience.

The Challenge of Diversity in Volunteers

Royal Family KIDS Camp Volunteers are ages 16-70+; new and maturing Christians; men and women; laborers, teachers, professors, school administrators, business owners; poor and wealthy, previously abused and not; children, parents and grandparents; sports team enthusiasts and not; camp rookies and veterans of many years; Americans and foreign born; those who are physically fit and those with physical challenges; racially mixed; outgoing and introverted; those who have regrets about life and those with large aspirations; those who come in groups who know each other well and those who know no one at camp; each uniquely flawed and none without sin; each having unique expectations and aspirations for their week at Camp. Volunteer diversity is not as important as the role all can play in creating a successful Camp.

The following diagram depicts that while Volunteers have the commonality of a desire to serve, these same diverse individuals quite naturally pull away from each other in exercising their gifts or conflict, resulting in wasted energy and unproductive friction

How Can RFK Camp Volunteers Possibly Work Together?

- White/Blue Collar, Professional, Entrepreneurs
- Introverts, Extroverts
- Camp Rookies, Veterans
- Ages 16-70+
- Male, Female
- Parents, Children
- Poor, Wealthy
- Multi-Racial
- Multi-Ethnic
- More than All Else — Uniquely sinful
How can Camp unity possibly be created? Royal Family KIDS Camp Volunteers must become unified within a short period of time with relatively little interaction.

Effective Camp leadership takes and creates a unifying direction that reorients the energy, acknowledges the differences, minimizes the focus on conflict, displays open acceptance and clearly communicates which distractions detract from the greater goals and purposes.

The following diagram depicts the team dynamic when attitudes are rightly focused on the larger goals.

Willingness to Change Makes Camp Successful!

Are You Willing for One Week to . . .

Serve God & Love Kids

Capturing and adopting a greater vision for Volunteers is essential for an effective Camp. The leadership team’s modeling of a greater vision of serving God and loving kids infects the entire team.

The hardest thing for all of us is change and compromise. Each of the redirected arrows in the above diagram reflects the very real pain of change - for some very little, for others very much, for all a challenge in the midst of the emotional roller coaster of Camp week. Camp Directors may know some of the challenges that Volunteers bring to Camp, but often, what is not known about a volunteer's individual challenges can be far greater than what is known and anticipated.
It is for this reason that each Volunteer is challenged to think through and anticipate your own unique limits, needs to compromise and prepare yourself emotionally and spiritually to manage the challenges of your week. You will be more effective if you know what you need to do before Camp to maximize your effectiveness. It is the responsibility of volunteers to understand when you need to ask for help before burn out overwhelms you. Pace yourself like a marathon runner, so that you know your limits. Asking for help is viewed as a positive character trait and a reflection of your willingness to be a team player.

It is also for this reason that personal comparisons or complaining at camp are disruptive to the overall camp effort. Unity’s enemy is division.

The above diagram also indicates one person, represented by an upward pointing arrow, remains unchanged despite all the efforts and influence of the leadership team. This is to be expected in large groups. If you are a volunteer that just does not seem to be in step with the others. This arrow could represent you. For the good of all you may be asked to meet with leadership who will come alongside and make a change. Perhaps a reassignment of responsibilities or a pairing with a trusted, experienced volunteer may be successful. This allows for a more effective Camp week for all of those who do choose to come to Camp. When we are filled with God we can love, respect and disagree with each other all at the same time.

**A Servant’s Attitude Knits Volunteer Souls and Teams Together**

A servant’s attitude reflects not what you do, it reflects who you are. A servant’s attitude is deliberately choosing to be least. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. Just as the Son of man did not come into the world to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:43-45).

Serving each other and Campers during the week is incredibly challenging. However, it is the type of life Jesus lived during His entire ministry, and in His challenge to follow Him, He is calling us to this better way to live life.

A servant’s attitude is characterized by displaying courtesy, helpfulness, listening and bearing each other’s burdens. It allows each Volunteer the humility of being served as easily as they serve others; it does not expect applause or reciprocation; it freely gives up being in charge and offers to help before being asked. Every problem observed becomes a challenge that volunteers with servants’ hearts will not let
slide. We serve, love, respect, and can disagree, all with the heart of Christ.

Things to leave at home for the good of the team are:
Impatience – not everything will go as planned; selfishness - Camp is for the kids, self-sufficiency, pride and jealousy, we are a team.

Volunteer Team Unity During the Camp Week

As a Volunteer selling yourself short or thinking too much of yourself, or comparing yourself to another Volunteer are all destructive attitudes at Camp. All of these attitudes take away from the attention all Campers need and deserve. There will always be someone doing better than you. The best goal is to compare yourself to the highest level of what you are capable of doing with Jesus at your side.

Grace amongst Volunteers creates the freedom to fail in the midst of a challenging week. Mother Teresa the founder of the Missionaries of Charity and lover of children is credited with the following grace-giving poem reflecting the grace needed to serve with others. Her poem was adapted from The Paradoxical Commandments by Dr. Kent M. Keith. ¹

“Do it Anyway”

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.
Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.
Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.
Do good anyway.

¹ http://prayerfoundation.org/mother_teresa_do_it_anyway.htm
Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.
Give your best anyway.
In the final analysis, it is between you and God.
It was never between you and them anyway.

Successful teams focus on individual humility and God’s grace. Each team member knows they first need God and then each and every other team member to accomplish a common goal.

No Camp is perfect, it can just be better next year.

Volunteer Team Unity after the Camp Week

The RFK Welcome Home Dinner is a wonderful time of sharing stories, laughing and bringing family members not attending Camp together for a celebration and thanksgiving to God for His work during the week.

This is a time to express gratitude for God’s presence during the week, as well as a sense of accomplishment, unity, and love for other volunteers in spite of Camp being chaotic at times. Above all, with God’s help, Camp Volunteers made a positive difference in Camper’s lives. A challenge to anticipate great things next year helps everyone transition back into their lives.

Some Volunteers will be so deeply affected by their camp experience that finding appropriate words can be difficult. You may need assistance in realizing that your inability to talk about their experience often means that their spirit was deeply impacted by serving along side a unified team of Volunteers’ committed to loving God and serving Campers. Success! Seeking conversation with others who served at Camp can help to understand your experience and challenges more deeply.

CLOSE

What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
VIII. The Week at Camp

There are a lot of things happening at camp. Whether you’re a rookie or a veteran volunteer, you need to come prepared. Part of your success at camp will depend on what you know and how prepared you are. This section will help YOU be a better volunteer by being prepared to do your part for the entire week.

1. Getting Ready for Camp

Dress Code

Being a faith-based organization we believe our dress code should reflect two things: modesty and safety. Listed below are the basic recommendations for a camp dress code. Please understand that it is impossible to address every dress code need based on geographical differences and appropriate denominational styles. Listed here is a solid faith-based camping dress code. Each camp therefore, must adapt it to their geographic and denominational needs and expectations. Each local camp is expected to have a dress code that addresses the modesty and safety needs of their camp.

There is a bottom line, if children or adults are getting hurt in ways that a dress code could protect them (such as too hot, too cold, sun burned, stubbed toes, or twisted ankles, etc.) then the dress code is inadequate. Clothing of insufficient modesty may trigger unintentional sexual cues or triggers for the adults or the children. The camp is a place to feel safe and accepted, it should not be a place where anyone feels uncomfortable, embarrassed, awkward or distracted because of attire.

Remember Romans 12:1 "... Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God ..."

Recommended dress code for counselors and staff:

Clothing for 5-6 days, should include the following:

- A conservative shirt or blouse (not too tight. Ladies wear an appropriate neckline.)
- Stylish shorts, slacks or pants
- Wear a conservative swim suit (Women need a one piece or two piece with a t-shirt. Men’s suits cannot be hanging down
and men may need to wear t-shirts while in the pool to minimize sensual triggers.

- Tennis or jogging shoes and socks (*closed toed sandals or shoes are best*)
- Sandals or flip-flops may be worn to and from and at the pool.

Note: Many camp facilities do not allow flip-flops outside the pool or shower areas because of toe and ankle injuries. Athletic events require athletic shoes, and for some campers, everywhere they go IS an athletic event! Camp facilitates may have additional dress codes listed in the contract.

Additional items to bring to camp

Bedding: sleeping bag and pillow OR sheets and blanket

Wearing apparel: extra jeans and shirts
  - shorts
  - flip flops for shower
  - hat or visor
  - pajamas and robe (*underwear covered at all times*)

Toiletry articles (for personal use)
  - soap in plastic box
  - toothpaste and toothbrush
  - suntan lotion
  - chapstick ® (lip balm) - important
  - bug spray

Recreational events
  - swim suit
  - large beach towel

Additional items
  - pencil or pen
  - flashlight
  - Bible
  - CD, MP3 player, Ipod for calming music in the cabins

Medications

If you are staying in quarters where the children can access your belongings, all medications must be checked in with the camp medical professional.

Medications cannot be taken in sight of children unless arrangements for disbursement can be made with the medical professional.

Mouthwash should not be in reach of children due to alcohol content (perceived or real).

Who goes, who stays
A team of staff may be utilized to help set up camp. Nearly all Counselors and Staff are to be at camp when the children arrive. A smaller team of people need to be at the children’s registration and be available to ride on the bus. The Director, Professional Counselor, Medical Professional or others may be required to be at registration.

**Attitude**

Attitude is everything at Royal Family KIDS Camp. Going in with a positive, flexible attitude is expected and needed from every adult at camp.

*THIS IS A LOCAL MISSIONS TRIP.* It needs to be thought of as a calling, a time of sacrifice, commitment and service.

- **“For the Kids”**
  
  Stay focused on why you are at camp. Are you here for you or for the kids?

- **Support Your Director and Leadership Team**
  
  Your Director(s) and Leadership Team have made a tremendous commitment and effort to bring this camp to reality for the children in your community. They are accountable not only to your church but to RFK, Inc. for a well-run camp that complies with all state and local agency rules and guidelines. But ultimately they are responsible for making sure each child has a safe and worry-free experience.

Keep in mind ... RFK’s Values are to:

- **Treat People Royally**

- **Keep Moving Forward**

- **Make Moments Matter**
Supporting your Counselors

Counselors are in for a long, hard week. They are working around the clock to make sure their campers are having the best time possible. They will take this job very personally and many will not ask for assistance or relief.

This is not to say that non-counseling staff won’t be working hard as well. But the reality is that as part of the non-counseling staff, you’re only responsible for you, while counselors are responsible for themselves and their two campers. We, as a body of Christ, need to do everything possible to lift up the counselors and guard them from adversity and exhaustion.

- Keep them in your prayers
- Watch for signs of fatigue and stress.
- Help them wherever and whenever you can throughout the week.

2. Camp Policy and Rule Review

Policies Review
Let’s review the policy match from previous sessions.
- 2 Deep
- Private bed
- No personal cameras
- No sharing personal contact info.

Other Policies to Remember

Campers are not allowed to bring an MP3 or CD players, radios, or electronic games to camp. If they do bring a device it should be given to the Director and returned when the camper leaves camp. RFKC music is provided on CD’s or MP3 players and counselors are encouraged to bring a player.

Snack and Soft Drinks

Since counselors and staff have snacks and soft drinks that are not available to the campers, be very sensitive to this. Keep all items in an area that is off premises to the campers. **Do not consume snacks or drinks in front of the campers.** There is only one time in the daily schedule when campers have snacks; this is planned so they all have the same snack and have it when everyone else does.

The campers are offered snacks in the afternoon or early evening so their food intake will be fairly constant all day. Candy is NOT to be given to the children at any time. This is not only for health reasons, but also to avoid the pattern of a child molester who lures children by using candy.
Pool Time

During pool time, it is possible for a counselor to take a “break” for a brief rest IF the counselor has agreed with another counselor or staff person at the pool to be responsible for his or her campers. The counselors should introduce the campers to the adult who will be responsible for the specified time that the counselor will be away from the pool.

These children can be insecure about who they can depend on and they should always be made aware of who they go to if their counselor is to be out of their presence even for a brief time.

Children love to play in water. But some struggle with how to behave appropriately. The lifeguard will make sure they’re safe from drowning.

If you’re swimming with a child or assigned to pool duty, be mindful of what’s happening underwater to protect children from intentional or unintentional abuse from another child.

No piggy back rides are allowed
Remember the 2-deep rule for restroom breaks
Remember to sign in/log out
Remember to HAVE FUN!

When campers leave the pool area, even to use the rest room, they are to sign-in and out, giving the times for each on a pool log sheet, and indicating who is accompanying them. This is a precaution to ensure that campers do not go off by themselves, unaccompanied by an adult. This is also a protection for the child to ensure that an adult is not alone with a child in the rest room.

Backed by Decades of RFKC Experience, the Rules, Policies and Schedule Needed

Rules and policies protect the children (either from potential abuse or inadvertent grooming for abuse.) Rules and policies protect you – best case, children have vivid imaginations; worse case, they’ve already learned how to manipulate the system and/or adults they’re close to. Rules and policies protect the integrity of this camp and the entire national organization.

The schedule has taken into account the balance of restful with big muscle activities. The schedule has been set to accommodate the many activities we have for the children without making them feel rushed. The schedule has been agreed upon with the camp facility and their staff.
NEVER be Alone with a Child

To further reinforce what you've learned earlier, the #1 rule to follow at camp is – NEVER BE ALONE WITH A CHILD.

Some examples of real situations:

- An adult takes a child back to cabin to rest.
- A child runs off and only one adult goes after them.
- An adult takes a child to the pool to baptize.

Remember 2 questions ...

- How does this look or sound to the child?
- How does this look or sound to Social Services?

- Campers like to tell their Foster Parents and Social Workers about camp. They will repeat just about everything you say and do because they’re kids. Don’t do anything or say anything you don’t want repeated! We don’t want things to be misunderstood in the translation. That’s another reason why we always have 2 adults present.

3. Ownership

Children in foster care are moved frequently from location to location, particularly if the child fails to adapt appropriately to a new environment. The children end up having few possessions. And what they do have are likely hand-me-downs and worn out. Having something of value, that’s new and fresh, makes them feel like they are of value, that they are worthy. OWNERSHIP of a personal item, received with no obligation on his or her part, is something most of these children have not had an opportunity to experience. Several items are given during the week of camp that helps make them feel special.

“Owning” a Bible

- Each child attending an RFKC receives his or her own copy of the Bible. When a child is relocated, personal items are usually overlooked, left behind or forgotten. Therefore, the child has few links with the past and few reminders of his or her history. Family traditions are rarely revered, and few of the kids have ever had a personal copy of the Scriptures. Also, listening to the true life accounts of those in the Bible and how they faced adversity, can be positive reminders to children of abuse that there is hope for a broken, abused life. Jesus Christ offers hope and a renewed personhood.
The counselor should write the child’s name in the Bible and present it as a special gift early in the camp week. The camper can then use it for scriptures/lessons/handbooks throughout the week.

Even more important than sharing Bible stories and scripture verses with your campers, is showing them that God Himself has permeated your life. What you say ABOUT God in the campers’ presence, your tone of voice, and your body language will testify to the reality of God in your everyday activities. Counselors who love God with their whole heart, soul and energy will become obvious examples of Christian truth and virtue.

“Owning” of your Name

*What’s In A Name* by Francis, Hartzell & Palmquist and *What to Name Your African American Baby* by Benjamin Faulkner are to be provided to counselors before camp, so you can research each camper’s name, its meaning and the Scripture that affirms the child’s name. Scriptures become personalized to the child when they realize that they are important enough to be talked about in the Bible. Hope is given to a child when they discover, perhaps for the first time, that they are valuable, have a purpose in life, are special to God or had a particular calling to perform in Scripture. Campers may be hearing their name used in a positive, wholesome way for the first time and they can read it in print — in contrast to hearing their name at the end of a trail of expletives that are degrading and derogatory. Each camper should receive a poster with their name written on it along with its meaning and spiritual reference. The poster is waved when the bus arrives and can be posted in the camper’s cabin.

“Owning” a New T-shirt

Campers will be given at least two RFKC T-shirts. One is given as soon as the child arrives at the church for registration and is to be worn over whatever he or she is wearing at the time. Since everyone is soon wearing identical T-shirts, a “group” is beginning to form. This is one of the earliest factors to involve the child that says, “you’re accepted,” “you’re one of us.”

The camper is then free to wear the T-shirt whenever he or she wishes throughout the week. Do not insist that a clean shirt be worn if the camp shirt is preferred. We are deliberately giving something to each camper that can be owned WITHOUT obligation about when or what to do with it. This is a very important concept, since ownership, identity and personal choice have been taken from many of these children. To have
something of their very own with the choice of when they wish to wear it becomes vitally important to them.

The second T-shirt is usually given on the last day of camp to be worn home. This presents a clean, “well taken care of” image to the care givers.

“Owning” Memories

How often do you look at your family photos and the memories come flooding back? This happens with our little campers and it follows them into their adulthood, just like it has with us! A memory book is given to each camper, consisting of a set of photos taken of the child throughout the week. These quickly become one of the most treasured possessions in their lives. There are countless stories of how these books are brought in to school for show-and-tell or left by their nightstand and looked at every night.

If there is an opportunity to personalize them by adding a quick note or affirming words such as “Good Job!” or “Way to Go!” with the pictures, it will further cement their positive camp experience in their minds.

Items Given to Campers at Camp

• Name Banner
• RFKC Memory Bag
• T-shirts
• Bible
• Camper Handbook
• Memory Book/Photo Album
• CD/MP3 of RFKC Music
• Water Bottle w/Name
• Schedule

4. What Happens at Camp

SUNDAY

• Commissioning Ceremony at Church, then off to camp ground to set up camp.
• Decorate cabins for the campers, with the year’s theme in mind
  • Make it feel warm and welcoming! Be careful to not get carried away with too much – another counselor may not be able to afford as much. It is recommended a budget and theme be established. Minimizing partiality between
campers, based on room provisions, will prevent some children from feeling “less special” simply because their rooms are not as elaborately decorated.

- Having books, puzzles, quiet games as well as a CD player or MP3 for music will be helpful for cabin times throughout the week.

- Create signs with the children’s names for their arrival.
  - It is recommended that each child gets their own sign – it is one more thing with their name on that they hold on to. These can be used as cabin decorations when they arrive and get settled in their rooms.

- Set up Activity Centers

- Circles of Prayer out through the camp ground.

- “Hit the hay” by 10pm….LONG week ahead with not much sleep!

**MONDAY**

- The Royal Welcome. Staff should greet the campers and bus by waving the signs with the camp names. Have some fun, lively music playing in the background, as the campers get off the bus. Use a mega phone to announce each child’s name as they get off the bus.

- There should be an “unloading” staff to get everything off the bus immediately while counselors find the campers’ belongings and head to their cabins.

**TUESDAY - THURSDAY**

- These three days normally have the same schedule. Refer to your camp specific schedule for review.

- Thursday afternoon Activity Centers begin to come down and woodworking projects are taken to the campers’ cabin, for packing.

**FRIDAY**

Campers take in Breakfast Club and then lunch before final packing and boarding the buses for departure.

**Camp Schedule:**

- *Subject to change at your director’s discretion*
- *A balance of restful and big muscle activities*
- *Consistent throughout the week*
- *Gives the campers a routine they can count on and trust*
• While it’s important to go at the pace of the child, it’s also important to stay on time
• Think of the schedule as a boundary, not a recommendation
• Be where you’re supposed to be when you’re supposed to be there
• Do not deviate from the schedule or your assignment without permission from the Director

SAMPLE:
Here’s a brief idea of the daily schedule.

7:30 a.m. Exercises
8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast
8:35-9:30 Breakfast Club - campers with assigned staff; counselors at devotions and meeting
9:30-10:45 Activity centers
10:45-11:45 Bible story time/Chapel
12:00-1:30 Lunch and 30/30 time
1:30-4:30 Swimming and Activity Centers - 90 minutes each.
4:45-5:30 Organized game — large group
5:30 - 6:00 Clean-up for dinner
6:00-6:30 Dinner
6:40-7:50 Evening activity
8:00-9:00 Stories and handbooks in rooms/group hikes
9:30 Bedtime, staff in lodges/ counselors on break

At this time your Camp Director can share your camp’s specific schedule.
Special Events

Several events are scheduled for the week, but the most important one is EVERYBODY’S BIRTHDAY PARTY! So often, because they are in foster care, birthday celebrations are forgotten or simply can’t be afforded. This is a celebration for every camper to feel special and valued.

At this time your Camp Director can share your camp specific activities (Birthday Party, Variety Show, Ladies Tea, Petting Zoo, etc.).

Activity Centers

Quality time is given to the child in the midst of quantity time. It is difficult to “schedule teachable moments”. These often “surprise moments” come in the midst of otherwise routine activities. Activity Centers throughout the camp create opportunities for counselors and campers to be placed in a setting where teachable moments are more likely to occur. It has been found that due to the quiet, calm atmosphere in the Activity Centers and a noncompetitive relationship, the trust level between counselor and camper is developed more rapidly throughout the week. This opens the door for teachable moments to take place on a more regular basis.

The success of the Activity Centers is based on large blocks of time (2-4 hours) being scheduled, allowing the counselors and campers unhurried time to utilize the centers and move from one to another without feeling rushed.

Activity Centers provide variety and choices, eliminate competition, and have few time requirements; they provide the opportunity to accomplish the purpose for which the campers have come — to relax and feel loved and affirmed.

Counselors and campers can be self-sufficient within the Activity Center. The activities are short and easy to complete, so the potential for success is easily achievable. The PROCESS is more important than the PRODUCT. What goes on relationally between the camper and counselor or the camper and one or two other campers, is far more important than the final project. Positive affirmation should be a continual stream of feedback for the child as well as a feeling of personal accomplishment. Emphasize the FUN of the experience at the Activity Center.

Teachable Moments Throughout the Week

The Word of God must permeate the total atmosphere of the camp. Christ must be the center of every activity — whether we are in serious discussions or enjoying happy moments together, hiking,
swimming, or eating. Some of the natural opportunities for teaching Biblical truths happen during in the regular activities of daily living, and if we pass them by they may never occur again. What’s more, these counselor-camper opportunities happen only at camp — not at school or in church. At camp, realities of life are obvious — where we are ourselves — both as counselors and campers.

Effective teaching needs to happen naturally and spontaneously, at times in addition to the period of instruction. A “Teachable Moment” often occurs when we are seated at the table eating or participating in Activity Centers or sitting in Chapel. It may occur when we are hiking through the woods or swimming in the lake. It may happen when we tuck the campers into bed at night or when we awaken them in the morning. “God made all these flowers. How many kinds do you see here?” Let your campers respond to what you say. You’ll learn a lot about their pre-conceptions and have a variety of brief “Teachable Moments” all week.

Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony aids in closure for the children and staff. It is a simple ceremony to remind them of what they’ve learned and allows an opportunity to “leave their cares behind” before going home. Below are a few examples that have been used at different camps:

- Tree-planting
- Time capsule
- Burying notes at bottom of cross at camp
- Balloons released in the air
- Stones tossed into the ocean

Graduation Ceremony

Graduates or Leaders in Training (LIT) is for 11-year olds (6th or 7th graders). Use the Graduates or LITs throughout the week in leadership roles. Have special, separate events for boys and girls one night (during cabin time at night). Graduation Ceremony is normally held on Friday. Make them feel extra special. (Guidelines for LIT program are outlined on our website www.RoyalFamilyKIDS.org at Training library / 101 Manual / Section 8.

6. Going Home from Camp

Make last-day logistics as stress-free as possible for the campers. Understand your transportation assignment. Counselors may ride home
on the bus with their campers if there is room aboard. The ride home can be very somber. Have tissues, sick bags, and a long movie ready if possible. It is also helpful to have the memory albums available on the ride home so they can remember the wonderful week they had.

**Arriving Back at the Church**

Counselors stay with the children. There will be a check-out process for the caregivers. Help find and retrieve your campers’ belongings. Help find and retrieve your campers’ medications from the camp nurse/doctor. Non-counselor staff must take care of unloading all children’s belongings FIRST and sort for easy identification. Staff belongings and camp materials take second priority.

**Children’s Program at Church**

Upon return, a brief program should be put on for the caregivers to help them understand what the child experienced. Usually a video or slide show of the week’s activities is shown to the caregivers, and 2-3 kid songs are sung that the campers learned throughout the week before they leave.

**Dealing with Caregivers**

Veteran staffers will tell you this is the hardest part of the camp, not just because of the child you’re saying goodbye to, but because of the caregiver to whom you’re handing them back to. Be prepared for any type of behavior. Sometimes the caregiver may be a wonderful and kind person, and sometimes they may not be. Some caregivers have even displayed behavior that is bizarre and offensive. **Don’t offend the caregiver no matter what they do or say. The child is going home with them and if you say or do offensive things the child is the one who will have to deal with it.**

You may be met with sarcasm, rudeness, disdain and disbelief their child could have been good all week. You may have a caregiver grab their child and run out the door. Make sure they get checked out correctly. The Registration Station should have the name of the designated pick-up person. Be prepared for the defensive walls to go back up with your campers right before your eyes because they are returning to their reality. At times Social Services use camp as a transition point to a new foster home.

Stay positive and affirming about all the good things that happened at camp with the caregiver. It’s the best thing you can do for your camper and for you.
Debrief Session

You have just spent a week affirming children. Now it’s important to affirm each other. Debriefing is held after all the campers are gone.

- Meet in small groups or one large group.
- Share “Stories of the One” and experiences and camp’s impact.
- There may be a need to share some difficult experiences or emotions. Be prepared for this with your staff / Psychologist.

Welcome Home Dinner/ Community Celebration

In the spirit of giving EVERYONE the Royal Treatment, a banquet is held in your honor with family and friends. It is a time to thank the staff and acknowledge their service. It may also be an opportunity to celebrate with Social Workers, donors and family members who have helped make the week possible.

CLOSE

What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?
X. GLOSSARY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Johnson, Becca Cowan and For Kids’ Sake, Inc. *For Their Sake: Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse*. This 204-page paperback is designed to assist camp directors and staff, youth ministry leaders, teachers and principals, and child-care providers. She writes the book from her vast knowledge of education and camping. American Camping Association, 1992.


The Resilient Child Institute, 14 Fortuna Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505.


Sanford, D. *Hurts of Childhood* and *In Our Neighborhood* series. Excellent series of books written for children who have experienced trauma and pain. Topics include molestation, foster care, adoption, alcoholism, AIDS, and death. Write to Doris Sanford, Heart to Heart, Inc., 2115 S. E. Adams, Milwaukie, OR 97222-7773; or phone (503) 654-3870.


GLOSSARY

Activity Centers

This is a key to a Royal Family Kids’ Camp. We do not call Activity Centers “Crafts”. For campers coming from Group Homes and Therapy, “crafts” can have a negative connotation to the camper. He may associate it with therapy or past failures. Therefore, “Activity Centers” give the camper options for making choices and create a positive experience. When we first started, we called them Learning Centers, but that, too, has a negative impact on these children because many of them do poorly in school. Therefore, “Activity Centers” are the place where campers and counselors can sit down and accomplish a successful project.

Behavioral Management

“Managing” the camper’s behavior in a positive way within guidelines prescribed in training sessions, as opposed to “disciplining” the child and reinforcing negative behavior. Recognize we will probably not “change” the child’s behavior in 5 days; but we can curb the behavior to allow the child to maximize the benefits of the week to him/her.

“Breakfast Club”

This is time scheduled after breakfast so the counselors can meet as a group with the Camp Director. This is a time when the additional staff members provide supervision for campers. Program materials/curriculum are provided by RFKC, Inc. The reason why we do this is to have a Counselor Meeting for Announcements, Prayer, Schedule Changes; things that are planned for the day.

“Buddy System”

This is a key component for Counselors. Every “Rookie” or “First Year Counselor” should have an experienced Counselor assigned to them. This should be done before the first training session so that the experienced Counselor can call the Rookie and ease the fear or answer questions that he/she may have. It is one more way to cement relationships
in the church. Buddy Counselors help relieve each other in situations where they must have someone take charge of their kids momentarily.

**Counselor Breaks**

Counselor breaks should be scheduled at a time when most of the campers can be supervised by staff; i.e., during pool time, etc. Many counselors don’t have time away from their campers to shower, set hair, rest, etc. This is vital to the morale of the counseling staff, and should be scheduled for them, rather than them having to ask for a break.

**Counselor Code of Conduct**

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your campers, and shall TALK of them when you SIT in your cabin, and when you HIKE by the way, and when you LIE down, and when you RISE. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

**“Everybody’s Birthday”**

Many children’s birthdays are overlooked in the system. To make sure every camper has a birthday celebrated at least once each year, we set aside one evening during camp for a birthday party. It is complete with cake, punch, decorations, fun entertainment or games, and gifts for every child. Memory Bags may be part of the “gifts” for each camper. The RFKC National Office provides gift items when donated merchandise is available. Camps pay shipping to receive these free gift items.

**Memory Bags**

These are given to each camper. It is a duffel bag that consists of the following:

1. The Official Royal Family Kids’ Camp Bible
2. The Official RFKC Music Tape
3. The Official RFKC T-shirt  
4. A Water Bottle Sipper  
5. The Official Camper Handbook  
6. A Photo Album

**One-To-Two Ratio**

One “Counselor” has two campers.

**PAFF’s**

Positive Affirmations - reinforcing a child’s good behavior rather than negative behavior.

**P.M.A.**

P.M.A. is in the Royal Family Kids’ Camp Theme Song. P.M.A. means Positive Mental Attitude. These children need to see and experience from the staff and counselors a “positive” mental attitude displayed.

**“Room Decor”**

Hang posters, balloons, pictures, etc. to create an appealing place for the campers. As one camper said, “This is my very own place”. Not wanting to discriminate men over women, but most men need a great deal of help in this area. Include the campers name and what it means someplace in the room.

**“Secret”**

At Royal Family we do **not** use the word “Secret” in any of the vocabulary at camp. Why? If a child has been sexualized or molested or is in the process of being “groomed” by a molester, “secret” is a term the person usually abuses with a young child. They say, “It’s our little secret” or “Don’t tell anyone about this, it will be our secret”. We refer to special information as “a surprise” not “a secret”.

Royal Family KIDS®, Inc. (Rev. 2013)
“The Royal Family Way”

1. Treating everyone with respect and dignity (staff, counselors, campers, donors, prayer partners, foster parents, social services). Giving the “Royal Treatment” whenever possible.

2. The highest standard of excellence by which everything is planned and carried out (brochures, planning, filling out evaluation forms, etc.). The opposite of this is “Sloppy Agape”.

Wards Of The State

This is a phrase that says, “every foster child is placed in the custody of the state following court action in their behalf”. Remember, Royal Family Kids’ Camps is building bridges with the state to assist children who are in the care of the state.

Welcome Home Dinner

This is an important part of the week. It is a time for “awards” to be given ... (i.e., the person who had the most difficult camper...a time to say thank you; when Grandma and Grandpa McNutt retired at age 85, after 10 years, the Director gave them a plaque; when Coach Ed moved away after 9 years, he passed his whistle to the next coach); time of affirmation and the traditional circle of prayer at the close of the dinner to leave the children in God’s care. Depending on what camp food is like, it’s a nice alternative. This Welcome Home Dinner is for Counselors/Staff and Spouses or Significant Others. Average time should last between 75-90 minutes. See Manual for further detail.

Where Do Campers Come From?

Royal Family Kids’ Camps has children attend camp from the following places:

1. Group Homes
2. Foster Homes
3. Social Services
4. Private Agencies
5. State Agencies
30/30 Time

In most states it is a law to require that children in a camp rest after lunch. It is designed for a nap time for the children. From experience, the counselors enjoy a few “zzz’s” themselves. It is a time for stories to be read, quiet activities, building a relationship with your camper. But it is a must. Thirty (30) minutes on their beds/thirty (30) minutes of quiet activity in the rooms.