

Guidelines for Working with Camp Aides (CAs)

ABOUT OUR CAMP AIDES (CA)

CAs are girls **going into** 8th grade to 12th grade. Most have been at camp for many years but do not assume that all the CAs in your unit have this level of experience. As with us all, they have different abilities: some are shy, some are funny, some have very good skills, some can teach, some are good listeners, some are easily distracted, some act bored. What they all have in common is that they are Girl Scouts who are building their leadership and teamwork skills through their camp experience. You are the most essential component of their practical training: they will be meeting you for the first time at onsite training or Monday and developing the ability to work with you as part of the unit leadership team ensuring the safety and enjoyable experiences of the entire unit. You are the role model for leadership and teamwork for each unit CA.

ABOUT CAMP NAMES AND OUR CAs

Every CA and Adult volunteer at Camp Wil-Lo-Linn has a special Camp Name. This is the name by which you will be addressed by your campers, CAs, and camp staff. Pick a name you will enjoy for the rest of your life and use it all camp. We use only camp names at camp and this is especially true for our CAs. Their camp names are very special so make a point of using only their camp name even if you know their "real" names. Introduce yourself to the CAs in your unit. Exchange camp names and learn about each other. You will be the leadership team for your unit for the entire week and your time together may very well be something special to remember for the rest of your life.

ABOUT THE RAINBOW PROGRAM AND OUR CAs

The Rainbow Program is a special outdoor skill program that we support at Camp Wil-Lo-Linn. Every year girls complete special age appropriate activities that lead to progressive independence in outdoor activities. **CAs are responsible for teaching the Rainbow program.** Time is specifically allocated in the schedule for each activity for your age group. The CAs will need time to organize their teaching of the skill. Some CAs are better teachers than others. Be encouraging and support their instruction when needed. You can also call on your CAs to teach songs, lead hikes and games.

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM = UNIT LEADERS (ADULTS) and CAs

Consider your CAs as part of the unit's leadership team. They are there to assist you in guiding the campers to a successful, fun, and challenging camp experience. If you don't know what something is or where something is, ask the CAs. They are there to help shoulder the responsibility for unit activities like taking roll each day, double checking that all paperwork gets handed in, getting to activities on time, helping with take-a-longs. It is your responsibility that the activity gets done but it can be delegated to CAs.

Ask CAs for their opinion, but remember the adults have final authority. One CA saw her role as the 'voice' of the unit leaders. The adult leaders told her what the campers needed to do, and she then helped direct and motivate the girls to accomplish these things. She discussed with the adults what things needed to be accomplished by the campers and she thought the campers listened to her better than the adults so she stepped up to make the week enjoyable for everyone in the unit. This example is ideal, but not all CAs are ready for this level.

UNIT LEADER ROLES

MENTOR: Along with being part of the unit Leadership team, the CAs are also experiencing camp to Discover, Connect, and Take Action – BUT NOT AS CAMPERS. The adult unit leader is in a special role as a weeklong mentor for these young women. Each CA has their own personality, skills, and issues. The successful unit leader is able to model skills in meeting and working with new people of different ages and experience demonstrating the Girl Scout Promise and Law in action. Some CAs find it difficult to remember that they are not campers. Remind them gently of their role. Help campers to understand how to appropriately show their affection for their CAs. They are not jungle gyms!

LEADER: CAs can never be left alone with the group. CAs can escort campers around camp as long as there are at least two girls at all times. (i.e. CA and camper or 2 CAs with a camper being dropped off at headquarters). There always needs to be an adult with your unit. First thing in the morning discuss the day's schedule with the entire Leadership team and identify some good times for each of you to take a short break.

SUPERVISOR: CAs get a couple of short breaks during the day to hang at the CA table. These should be no more than 15 minutes long. Consider doing this when your unit is in the headquarters field for an event that the CAs do not have to help run. **Crafts, Cooking, Leather, Rainbow tent, Songs, Skits and Games, and Science are NOT OPTIONS for CAs to leave the unit or "go on break". CAs need to help campers during these resources, rather than working on their own projects or visiting the CA table.** A good idea is to stagger their breaks or have them take place at the end of one activity as you are transitioning to the next.

CAs are part of the camp emergency system. They have all been asked to put the First Aid and Headquarters/RainbowHeart number in their phone. They may be on their phone to talk to First Aid or Headquarters...but nothing else. If they are otherwise using their phone, remind them that it is only for camp communications during camp. If you meet with resistance, simply let the CA coordinator or the camp director know and they will address the situation directly with the CA.

You will be asked to fill out evaluation forms on your CAs. Please be sure to do this and turn them in at the end of camp. These are very valuable in our decision making about acceptance and placement for the following year.