SUMMER CAMP SAFETY TIP SHEET



The Beau Biden Foundation strives to ensure that children are protected year-round. Since screening of camps and programs are critical to child safety, the Beau Biden Foundation suggests parents or caregivers ask the following questions to assess a camp's child protection policies.

WHAT ARE THE SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM'S POLICIES AROUND CHILD PROTECTION?

- Does the summer camp/program have a stand-alone Child Protection Policy?
- Does the policy require all staff and volunteers to have a: finger print background check; sex offender, child protection, and adult abuse registry checks; and motor vehicle record check?
- Does the camp or program provide education for children around predator awareness, Internet Safety and bullying/cyberbullying?
- Does the camp or program require training for all staff and volunteers regarding their mandated reporter responsibility, recognizing abuse and neglect, and responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse and neglect?

What safety measures are in place regarding interactions between adults and children?

- Are all interactions with children always interruptible and observable, whether in-person or virtual?
- Are online connections between staff/ volunteers and children outside of camp programming prohibited (i.e. "friending" or "following" and online gaming)?
- What are the guidelines around appropriate vs. inappropriate touch?
- Who is the point of contact if there is an issue with child safety?



Are interactions among children adequately supervised?

- Are older children responsible for supervising younger children?
- Are the hidden/secluded areas on-site assessed for safety?
- Is there a code of conduct for campers which prohibits bullying behaviors?



What are the parameters for supervision and accountability?

- Are parents required to sign children in and out each day? Is this monitored by staff?
- Are children only released to preauthorized individuals for pick-up?
- Does the camp's staff-to-child ratio account for the age and development of the children being served?
- What safeguards are in place for high risk situations and settings (such as: bath and changing rooms, application of sunscreen, naptime and field trips or overnight stays)?

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Reporting abuse and neglect can protect a child and get help for a family. Anyone can report suspected child abuse and neglect. In many states, **every adult is a mandated reporter.**

Other states require certain adults to report suspected child abuse and neglect; generally mandated reporters include adults who provide care for children, including camp counselors and volunteers.

All reports of child abuse and neglect should be made **immediately** to the state where abuse is believed to occur.

<u>Click here</u> to find the child abuse hotline number for your community.

SUPERVISION RATIOS

0–5 years: 1 staff for each 5 overnight campers and 1 staff for each 6 day campers

6–8 years: 1:6 for overnight and 1:8 for day

9–14 years: 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day

15–18 years: 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day

How are emergency situations handled?

- Are staff and volunteers provided a policy and prepared for an emergency? (i.e. missing child, medical emergency, disclosure of abuse, lockdown, or evacuation)
- Is there an established policy for communicating to parents or caregivers during an emergency?

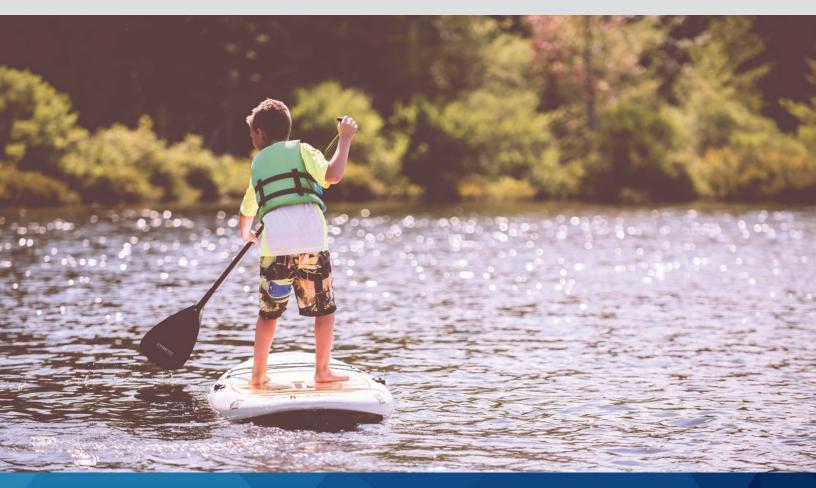
Guidelines for staff interaction with children should include:

- All interactions between adults and children should be observable and interruptible.
- Children should never receive gifts of any kind from staff or volunteers.
- Summer camp counselors or volunteers should not "friend" or "follow" children on any personal social media accounts. They should never have one-on-one electronic communication, such as texting or direct messaging, with staff or volunteers.
- All photos or videos require prior written authorization by a parent or caregiver and should not be posted on an adult's personal social media accounts unless the image was made "sharable" on the camp's social media platforms.
- Guidelines must be established to address appropriate versus inappropriate touch and positive discipline strategies to further protect children when away from home.
- Children should be treated equally with respect to gender, race, religion, culture, or ability. This policy should be upheld for peers, as well as staff members and volunteers.
- Children should never be transported alone or in a staff member's personal vehicle.
- Employee or volunteer interactions with campers outside of camp must be addressed in policy.



WHAT PARENTS/CAREGIVERS CAN DO TO HELP ENSURE THEIR CHILD IS SAFE

- Read camp policies before enrolling your child to ensure child protection is a priority!
- Encourage your child to talk to a trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable or worried about something.
- Alternate pick-up/drop-off times when possible and observe your child interacting with staff/volunteers.
- Talk to your child at pick-up about their day by using open-ended questions.



MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For more information and resources, please visit **BeauBidenFoundation.org**.