

**ACA STAFF TRAINING CERTIFICATES  
COMBINED LEARNER OUTCOME CHECKLIST BY COMPETENCY**

*The following checklist is a comprehensive listing of the specific skills/knowledge sets that a learner who has completed the any one or more of the ACA Staff Training Certificate courses can do by competency.*

**Key:**

**Entry-Level Program Staff; Experienced Program Staff; Middle Managers; Camp Directors; Day Camp Directors**

**Youth and Adult Growth and Development**

Learner can:

- Explain the basic concepts of youth development.
- Define resiliency, risk factors, and protective factors.
- List and describe at least five developmental assets.
- Describe the relationship between behaviors you might use while working with youth and possible youth outcomes.
- Describe physical, cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics of different age groups.
- Consider developmental issues when working with participants.
- Demonstrate specific behaviors that promote positive youth development.
- Assess staff members' applications of positive youth development concepts.
- Create trainings, tools, and continuing education opportunities that convey principles of positive youth development.
- Understand and apply to the camp experience how all youth and adults learn and develop in physical, social, emotional and cognitive domains.
- Adopt a systematic approach to embrace inclusive positive youth development practices in the camp experience.
- Assemble the resources to create staff training tools which align with current youth development practices.
- Understand and apply to the camp experience how youth and adults learn and develop in physical, social, emotional and cognitive domains.
- Adopt a systematic approach to embrace inclusive positive youth development practices in the camp experience.
- Create staff training tools by assembling resources that align with current youth development practices.

**Learning Environment and Curricula**

Learner can:

- Explain the importance of powerful, positive learning experiences.
- Explain the concepts of experiential learning.
- Describe how to create physically and emotionally safe learning environments.
- Describe how to adapt activities to different age groups and learning styles.
- Describe the benefits of positive feedback in learning.
- Recognize that children have different learning styles.
- State the philosophy and goals of a camp.
- Design an activity based on a camp's philosophy and goals.
- Describe why there is a need to evaluate programs and activities for effectiveness.
- Lead a reflection session with campers to help them gain a deeper understanding of their experiences.
- Use "teachable moments" to help campers integrate what they have learned into other aspects of their lives.

- Analyze the current use of “best practice” strategies for quality teaching and learning.
- Identify the “camp culture” and its current influence on the efficacy of training and learning.
- Assess the efficacy of teaching within major program areas
- Employ “outside the box” teaching strategies in a workplace training
- Identify critical environmental and individual influences that affect learning and development across all age groups.
- Apply relevant experiential learning theories and research to evaluating and coaching staff practices.
- Engage staff in designing, implementing, and evaluating curricula intentionally aimed at improving youth (and/or adult) developmental outcomes.
- Identify critical environmental and individual influences that affect learning and development in children.
- Apply relevant aspects of nature play to the day camp setting.
- Engage staff in designing, implementing, and evaluating curricula intentionally targeted to improve youth (and/or adult) developmental outcomes.

### **Program Planning**

Learner can:

- Articulate specific benefits of programs designed to engage and empower participants.
- Describe modifications of activities and content for different developmental abilities.
- Describe an activity that includes opportunities for participants to have input, choice, decision-making, and reflection of opportunities within the program.
- Apply the steps for program planning that result in a specific activity or experience.
- Develop a program that supports the program’s mission, goals/objectives, and desired outcomes.
- Plan an activity that includes opportunities for participants to have input, choice, decision-making, and reflection of opportunities within the program.
- Demonstrate effective program planning.
- Compare opportunities for youth voice and engagement.
- Evaluate program quality before, during, and after season.
- Examine the camp’s mission and philosophy, and determine the optimal overall program design.
- Develop program quality strategies to increase participant outcomes.
- Evaluate program offerings and assess progression at all age levels.
- Assess the year-round program potential for the camp operation, and determine unique opportunities.
- Define outcomes and intentionality and describe why they are important.
- Create a logic model to target a specific outcome.
- Design an effective activity sequence.
- Brainstorm ways to adapt activities to meet various physical, social, or logistical needs.

### **Participant Observation, Assessment, and Evaluation**

Learner can:

- Describe program evaluation.
- Identify four or more different methods of evaluating programs.
- Describe the benefits of observations, assessments, and evaluations of programs.
- Define the Camp Program Quality Assessment (C-PQA).
- Explain how the C-PQA can be used.
- Apply the indicator behaviors in the C-PQA to my work.
- Explain the importance of doing quick evaluations.

- Describe the types of information that can be gathered with quick evaluations.
- Conduct “quick” evaluations for immediate program checks and adjustments.
- Explain the Importance-Performance Assessment.
- Explain the importance of evaluation to others.
- Identify information that evaluations can provide.
- Describe the utility of evaluations for programs, participants, and staff.
- Explain why logic models are important.
- Identify the parts of a logic model.
- Construct a simple logic model.
- Describe how program evaluations are important to overall continuous quality improvement in programs.
- Explain different approaches to program evaluation.
- Complete program evaluation tasks.
- Design and implement a systematic evaluation plan that includes outcomes and program improvement.
- Select outcome measures appropriate for program participants and set goals for outcomes.
- Design a system to evaluate staff behaviors that contribute to positive youth outcomes and program improvement.
- Create or obtain assessments designed to allow participants, staff, and parents to evaluate the program experience.
- Explain their day camp’s mission, purpose, goals and brand promise.
- Identify their day camp’s specific youth outcomes for evaluation.
- Implement an evaluation plan using data collection strategies.
- Design an assessment system to evaluate day camp staff behaviors that contribute to positive youth outcomes.

## **Professionalism and Leadership**

Learner can:

- Describe key principles of ACA standards.
- Explain the general concept of the ACA accreditation process.
- State what I want to say and do to assist with conflict resolution situations
- Relate what to do to be a better problem solver.
- Describe behaviors and characteristics of a professional who works with youth.
- Apply ways to speak in a professional manner.
- Describe professional actions and behaviors, even while “off duty.”
- Describe what it means to be a “young professional” within the context of the camping profession.
- Design a resume.
- Describe how to find professional development offerings of the American Camp Association.
- Create and update my professional resource list.
- Apply current research, practices, & professional development in the professional role as a middle manager.
- Formulate a personal professional development plan.
- Appraise the professional development needs of staff supervised and develop a plan to meet their needs.
- Examine the Camp Director’s leadership role at camp.
- Differentiate between Professional and Leader, in order to create a culture of best practices.
- Identify resources that will personally benefit one's continued development while benefitting camp as well.

- Consider the role a director plays supporting the professional development of their staff as well as for themselves.
- Explore working with volunteer leadership.
- Prepare for interaction with a board or leadership team including board development.
- Learn how to lead other "professionals" for the first time.
- Judge the strength of their existing boards, recruit new board members and create a board calendar that ensures the BOD is supporting the work of camp.
- Examine the Camp Director's leadership style and role at camp.
- Examine and/or articulate the camp's organizational structure and vision.
- Explain the role a director plays in supporting the professional development of their staff as well as for themselves.
- Identify resources that will personally benefit their continued professional development while also benefitting the camp.

## **Health and Wellness**

Learner can:

- List resources for adding physically active games to my activities repertoire.
- Describe fifteen age appropriate physical activities.
- List and play activities that promote the health benefits of increased activity.
- Identify ten strategies to reduce injuries and illness at camp (but with application to any youth development environment).
- List at least five concerns and responses to health issues from an authoritative source.
- Write a safety plan which details prevention of accidents which cause physical injury or incidents which cause emotional harm.
- Define bullying and have at least three strategies for bullying prevention.
- Develop an action plan for accident prevention.
- Recognize potential unsafe features in activities.
- Analyze the details of accidents and incidents to create safeguards for prevention in future activities.
- Describe common injury and illness issues in camps and how staff can help prevent them.
- Explain how nutrition is an important aspect to the overall health of children.
- Instruct the staff on the important role of Health and Wellness in a youth development setting.
- Train staff on specific Health and Wellness protocols and their role in those processes.
- Assess the effectiveness of current general Health and Wellness Protocols and propose changes as needed.
- Assemble the resources to be able to develop specific Health and Wellness Protocols for the camp community.
- Develop policies and procedures that promote health and wellness best practices for staff and campers.
- Analyze and respond to developments that may affect the Health and Wellness of the camp community. (i.e. disease prevention, crisis like issues: Bed Bugs, H1N1, Norovirus etc.).
- Evaluate program regarding wellness, healthy eating, physical activity and even nutrition (planning).
- Design a day camp health care policies and procedures plan.
- Analyze and respond to a variety of situations common to the day camp setting.
- Describe current camper and staff health and wellness considerations.
- Identify ways to integrate health & wellness practices within their day camp community.

## **Risk Management**

Learner can:

- Integrate into my work ethic and routine habits, the basic concepts related to the decision-making process and the practice of exercising good judgment in the practice of risk management.
- Describe and practice the techniques used in “vigilant scanning,” a prevention strategy.
- Accurately complete an accident/incident form.
- Identify common certifications associated with managing risks that are required/desired for camp and youth development jobs.
- Apply my knowledge of risk management to recognize and design preventative steps to minimize “almost accidents.”
- Explain at least one crisis management plan and can fulfill my role in its implementation.
- Formulate and apply written plans that manage risk by using the American Camp Association Standards and other authoritative resources.
- Train staff on the importance of analyzing and managing risk.
- Train staff to differentiate between positive and negative risk.
- Interpret key concepts and terms associated with risk management.
- Analyze risks within your organization.
- Identify resources and subject matter experts to help reduce risk and mitigate loss.
- Assess your current emergency procedures and revise if needed.
- Construct a risk management plan for your organization.
- Interpret key concepts and terms associated with risk management.
- Analyze risks within their day camp.
- Identify resources and subject matter experts to help reduce risk and mitigate loss.
- Assess their current emergency procedures and revise if needed.
- Construct a risk management plan for their day camp.

## Cultural Competence

Learner can:

- Describe components of environments and experiences that promote respect and value and affirm diversity.
- Define and use inclusive and respectful language.
- Explain my level of understanding and comfort about cultures and people different from me.
- Define primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.
- List the 5 cultural dimensions.
- Identify websites from which to obtain information about youth demographics.
- Intervene in bullying situations.
- Respond to statements and acts of bigotry.
- Increase their own empathy.
- Identify ways to increase empathy in groups of youth.
- Increase awareness of the unique and special traits about individuals and groups.
- Describe methods of inclusion for diverse populations.
- Write an activity plan that promotes group awareness and pride.
- Select, place, train, support, and evaluate a diverse staff to ensure cultural diversity.
- Support your own and other staff members’ personal journeys to increase cultural competence.
- Design and manage programs to be inclusive of diverse youth.
- Appraise programs’ inclusion of diverse youth.
- Distinguish, determine, and develop the components necessary to create an environment that builds capacity within the camp community to understand, accept, value, and honor the unique contributions of all.
- Administer the selection, placement, training, support, and evaluation of diverse staff and camper enrollment practices to ensure cultural diversity.

- Provide the management skills necessary to pursue progress with living the principles of valuing difference, continued self-assessment, understanding dynamics, building cultural knowledge and adapting practices for your program.
- Distinguish the components necessary and the differences between a culturally competent organization as well as having an organization with a culture of competence.
- Discuss the value of diversity within the day camp setting.
- Increase their sense of cultural self-awareness.
- Create an action plan that supports cultural competence in all aspects of their day camp.
- Identify 3 specific resources to apply when fostering a sense of cultural competence within their day camp community.

### **Families and Community Connections**

Learner can:

- Describe the larger family/community/cultural contexts, both positive and negative, in which my camp's participants live.
- Articulate the value of belonging to a camp community as a cultural experience that promotes positive youth development.
- Explain the common concerns of parents around separation from their children
- Apply appropriate verbal and written forms of communication with parents/caregivers (casual, informal and formal).
- Describe the specific and special needs of family/community/cultural contexts for my camp's specific population.
- Conduct professional conversations with parents and members of the community and public that foster cooperation and partnership to meet the needs of the campers we serve.
- Develop activities that foster a powerful sense of membership and belonging in a camp community for all.
- Recognize the influence of the family of origin and formulate methods to address attitude and/or behavioral issues related to that influence.
- Demonstrate ways to be involved within the community and construct opportunities to involve the community in the organization's mission.
- Analyze communication protocols for contextual information and devise a plan to develop new strategies when necessary.
- Examine the camp/organization's methods of communication with families and the community and evaluate the effectiveness of those methods.
- Support the engagement of the camp in all of its communities: Local communities, alumni and camper families, and niche or marketplace.
- Design a component of staff training that helps staff learn about the influences of the community/families on the youth attending your camp program.
- Compare select demographics of children and families that represent your program's clientele.
- Create connections with community leaders and organizations that encourage potential interactions between the camp and the local community in ways that promote positive contributions made by the camp community back to the local community.
- Compare select demographics of children and families that represent their program's clientele.
- Design a component of staff training that helps staff learn about the influences of the community/families on the youth attending their day camp program.
- Help families understand and appreciate camp outcomes.
- Devise ways to better connect and include families in the camp programming in meaningful ways.

## Nature and Environment

Learner can:

- Articulate the power of nature to improve social behavior.
- List positive effects of nature on mental and physical health.
- Describe the developmental benefits of natural experiences for children.
- Explain how natural experiences are being employed for their therapeutic powers.
- Define “nature deficit disorder.”
- Explain experiential learning.
- Describe how to increase youth participation in nature.
- Explain the concepts of discovery and stewardship in the context of natural exploration.
- Write a nature lesson plan.
- Describe at least five nature-based activities I could lead.
- Make compelling arguments for outdoor programs.
- Appreciate creative expressions that can arise from natural experiences.
- Describe general trends in outdoor participation.
- Formulate (or evaluate) environmental procedures for programs and organizational operations.
- Design nature and environmental programming that emphasize the emotional connection with, and the stewardship of, the natural world.
- Propose changes to improve environmental stewardship outreach.
- Understand how nature promotes healthy child development and the role of camps in providing nature-based experiences.
- Explore nature as a setting for promoting cognitive and affective outcomes and elements of play, physical activity, experiential learning, and stewardship.
- Learn strategies for promoting nature contact and associated outcomes.
- Recognize resources and partners for promoting a connection between children/families and nature.
- Examine ways to evaluate nature-based outcomes.
- Create a plan for enhancing nature-based opportunities through your organization’s programs and services.
- Describe the developmental benefits for children in nature.
- Develop a personal practice with nature in your home community.
- Describe opportunities for their day campers to interact with nature.
- Locate day camp community resources, opportunities, and partners that promote nature connections with children.
- Create a plan for nature-based experiences and learning to use in their day camp program.

## Business Management and Practices

Learner can:

- Explain why youth development programs are businesses.
- Describe the importance of mission statements to businesses.
- Generate supply lists for activities, based on a budget.
- Explain how to operate activities within a budget.
- Describe the connection between performance, choices, attitudes, and actions to the success of the business.
- Articulate responsibilities related to insurance and legal expectations (i.e., mandated reporter, etc.).

- Design and/or implement a budget process that includes tracking specific budget lines, projecting program costs, and adjusting budgets.
- Explain the organizational structure, vision, and job responsibilities of staff supervised by a middle manager.
- Formulate and/or evaluate the camp's planning process as a part of an integrated system.
- Define the difference between strategic planning and financial planning and rate their camp's financial position.
- Review the value of, basic steps, and tools needed for strategic planning.
- Analyze existing market efforts, and create objectives for understand your present and potential market and provide better customer and consumer services.
- Determine the marketing strategies needed in today's market and create a marketing plan.
- Design financial planning process to chart a course toward success and sustainability.
- Compare your camp to information obtained in the ACA Business Operations Report: 2012.
- Review and revise tools for budgeting, forecasting, monitoring and presenting financial operations to BOD or other investors.
- Evaluate measures taken by the organization for the purpose of managing and safeguarding the organization's operational financial risks.
- Explain your organization's job responsibilities of staff supervised by the day camp director.
- Understand your present market to be able to provide better customer and consumer services.
- Articulate the process by which campers sign up and experience the day camp program.
- Examine responsibilities for day camp director related to financial reporting and monitoring (i.e., award camper scholarships, make purchases, pay staff, etc.)
- Evaluate measures taken by the organization for managing and safeguarding the organization's operational financial risks.

## **Human Resources Management**

Learner can:

- Explain what inclusion is and why it is important for me to understand when working with youth.
- Describe at least 3 tips that make me an effective staff member.
- Describe and apply at least 2 ways to build cohesion in a group.
- Explain how age and developmental stage are important to including everyone in my program.
- Describe the relationship between empathy and a positive program environment built on acceptance and respect.
- Describe and explain why caution is needed for my social networking sites.
- List social networking behaviors that I may need to follow for my job.
- Explain the difference between constructive and mean-spirited criticism.
- Apply techniques that help me accept constructive criticism.
- Describe and apply positive communication techniques.
- Apply practices that create a climate of inclusion and respect.
- Describe and apply positive leadership behaviors that will contribute to my abilities when working with youth.
- Design and enforce personnel policies, job descriptions, and other company policies.
- Demonstrate skill in interviewing, hiring, training, supervising, motivating, and evaluating staff.
- Comply with employment laws, exemptions, and other legal policies and procedures.
- Determine type of positions, qualifications, number of staff and personnel. organization model needed to achieve mission and desired outcomes and program design.
- Comply with employment laws, exemptions and other legal policies and procedures.



- Describe and apply techniques for the recruitment process from job posting to completing a hire for paid and/or volunteer staff.
- Determine training goals and assess participant needs to incorporate into plans for orientation, precamp and inservice training.
- Describe a supervisory plan that includes training supervisors in their role, techniques for dealing with behavior and performance issues and evaluation.
- Consider timeline for Human Resources cycle and course of action needed for staff development, advancement and/or termination.
- Identify best practices used in their day camp's hiring process, including knowledge and implementation of relevant local, state and federal laws.
- Establish a plan on how to train staff for their roles in personnel evaluation that includes a list of content to cover and the protocols, forms, and timelines used for personnel evaluation.
- Articulate the process and best practice for termination of employment for all types of staff they have at camp (including at-will, salaried, and volunteer staff, minors and adults).

### **Site and Facility Management**

Learner can:

- Describe ways to care for sites and materials to preserve usefulness and reduce waste.
- Recognize that common regulations, policies, and plans govern sites and facilities.
- Complete a maintenance request form.
- Demonstrate knowledge of common site/facility regulations, policies, and plans.
- Implement a system to appraise the condition of general facilities and equipment.
- Create a plan for replacement/refurbishing of equipment.
- Develop a support system for staff in the appropriate use of equipment/facilities.
- Supervise the management of the physical site and successfully assess, evaluate, prioritize, plan for immediate and future facility needs; including creating and supporting a site plan which includes capital improvements.
- Manage the employment, supervision, and coordination of staff engaged in the maintenance and improvement of the camp's buildings, equipment, and other facilities.
- Support the performance of all site and facility staff in accordance with prescribed regulatory compliance guidelines, including local, state, and federal guidelines as well as American Camp Association accreditation standards.
- Supervise the management of the physical site and where required, successfully assess, evaluate, prioritize, and plan for facility and site needs, which may include capital improvements.
- Understand the importance of developing a site/facilities budget that maintains and improves facilities while sustaining fiscal responsibility.
- Manage the employment, supervision, and coordination of staff engaged in the maintenance and improvement of the camp's buildings, equipment, and other facilities.
- Coordinate the evaluation of food service performance for quality and budget compliance (outsourcing/contracting, in-house)
  
- Coordinate the evaluation of transportation programs and equipment
- Support the performance of all site, facility, food service, and transportation staff in accordance with prescribed regulatory compliance guidelines, including local, state, and federal guidelines as well as American Camp Association accreditation standards.