



ACA's Key Messages

ACA's Key Messages are adaptable for every situation—both negative and positive. Familiarize yourself with these, listed by topic, and practice them in good times, so that you will be ready to draw upon them in times of need.

Before any interview and regardless of the story topic:

- Choose three key messages to which you will bridge, and decide how you can integrate them into the story.
- Know what story you want to tell—regardless of the reporter's agenda!

Umbrella Statements

- Camp is for everyone.
- Every child deserves a camp experience.
- There is a camp for every budget.
- Camp is an experience that lasts a lifetime.
- The camp experience enriches lives and changes the world.

At Camp

Safety

- Accreditation is a parent's best evidence of commitment to health and safety.
- Nothing is more important than the safety of our children.
 - This includes emotional as well as physical safety.
 - Kids are less at risk when they have a sense of community.

Explanation of Accreditation

- ACA accreditation assures parents that the camp has had a regular, independent safety audit that goes beyond regulations in most states.
- ACA accreditation means the camp cares enough to undergo a thorough review of its operations—from staff qualifications and training to emergency management.

Fun

- Trained counselors provide safety nets for children to take healthy risks and discover or reinvent themselves—through fun, challenging, and adventurous activities.
- Fun is the foundation upon which courage, cooperation, self-respect, and a sense of contribution, inclusion, and responsibility are constructed.

Development

- The experience is a vital element in a child's total development, complementing the academic skills that are learned in school.
- Children learn experientially-based life skills and values.
 - Recent research documents an increase in self-confidence, courage, friendship skills, resilience, self-worth, and self-identity.
- Children can unlock their potential and discover the world.
- There are positive child and youth development supports:
 - Feeling connected

- Navigating on one's own
- Being productive
- Children build confidence, character, compassion, and commitment (4 Cs).
- There are opportunities for leadership, decision-making, and personal growth.
- The 3Rs of camp: responsibility, resourcefulness, resilience.

Community

- Children experience a community that fosters positive and intergenerational relationships, healthy risk-taking, and acceptance.
- Children are less at risk when they have a sense of community.
- A community is built where people share values, stories, routines, and traditions.
- A community is created for children to practice growing up.
- There are caring, competent adult role models.
- Children learn the values of caring, fairness, citizenship, and trustworthiness.

Nature

- There are opportunities for children to connect with the outside world.
 - Become stewards of the environment.
 - Build intimate relationships with the natural world.
 - Antidote to nature-deficit disorder.
- Children learn through first-hand discovery rather than learning about the world through filters such as the Internet and the media.
- We foster understanding of human connections, learning the need to protect one another as well as the environment.

Wellness

- Children are encouraged to engage in healthy, active lifestyles.
- There is an inherent inclusion of physical activity.
- Wellness is especially important in today's society with the prevalence of obesity and loss of human-powered activities.
- There is a focus on healthful eating and activities that promote healthy living.

Play

- Children play to learn; play is essential to physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development.
- There are opportunities for both structured and creative free play.
- According to the American Association of Pediatrics, creative free play protects a child's emotional development and reduces risks of stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Children can take healthy risks in a safe and nurturing environment.