

Sample PCA Policy for a Resident Camp

NOTE: Have your camp's legal counsel review your version of this policy before using it for your camp.

To: Parents of a camper who attends with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA)
Recognizing that our camp facilities do not fully accommodate all abilities, it has been our policy to provide room and board for PCAs who accompany campers needing this level of assistance to participate in our camp program.

It is the intent of our camp to be supportive of the PCA's work. The camp recognizes the PCA as a guest in our program, an employee of the camper's parents, and someone who will have contact with other campers in various ways.

The following statements describe our practices when hosting a PCA. It is our intent to work with parents of campers who need a PCA so all parties fully understand the expectations of each other.

- A. The PCA is a legal adult.
- B. The PCA is housed in the same cabin as the camper she/he accompanies. Consequently, the PCA must be the same sex as the camper.
- C. The PCA is given a copy of the camp's staff policies prior to arrival; it is our expectation that the PCA follows these policies during his/her stay to protect the integrity of our program and the safety of others.
- D. The camp director will meet with the PCA within twenty-four hours of arrival to specifically address topics such as role in cabin life, child protection concerns, access to non-camper areas, and explanation of camp policies.
- E. The PCA is not a camper; the PCA is an assistant to a camper who needs this help to participate in the program. The camp expects the PCA to function as that camper's helper and does not view the PCA as another counselor nor as a program participant. The PCA should function within these boundaries.
- F. Should the camp believe that the PCA is hindering the camper's experience, neglecting the personal needs of the camper, and/or acting outside the parameter of the PCA role, the director may talk directly to the PCA but will, in all cases, inform the camper's parent(s) so they remain aware of the situation.
- G. Should the PCA have concerns, the PCA may talk directly to the director or contact the child's parent(s) who, in turn, should contact the director to address the situation.
- H. It is the camp's expectation that the PCA is available during the child's entire camp stay and arrives knowing how to provide the assistance needed by the given camper. The program encourages parent(s) to consider how the PCA is relieved and inform the director of these arrangements should time off be needed and/or the person is unable to complete the assignment.

A representative of our camp is willing to talk with parents and/or PCA candidates prior to the camp experience in an effort to make the experience as positive as possible for all parties. This conversation is, in fact, encouraged. Simply call <insert representative's name and phone number>.

are they solitary activities? Those things that have the child interact with others provide an indicator of the child's on-going resilience, especially in situations when the rules of school aren't guiding children's behavior.

- When doing after-school activities, what does the parent tell the leader about their child?
- Is the child able to tolerate prolonged exposure to noise? The school lunch room is a good complement to the camp dining room. How might the child handle prolonged noisy environments like the camp's Olympic Day or a rousing campfire hard on the heels of a noisy meal?
- About interaction with others:
 - Ask the parent to describe the child's idiosyncratic behaviors. Explore how these might be impactful at camp, especially if the child talks to him/herself, stares overly long at people, and/or steps too close to people.
 - Idiosyncratic behaviors sometimes occur under certain circumstances — like when a child gets overtired, over-stimulated, or stressed. Explore the “triggers” under which the behavior occurs *and* the strategies that mitigate the situation (defuse it or prevent it from happening). This may be when the parent references tools such as Buron's *A 5 Could Make Me Lose Control* (2007b).
 - When overwhelmed, how does the child express that frustration? Does behavior vary when the frustration is a mild annoyance as opposed to a full blow-out? Maybe there is no difference? What calms the child?
 - These idiosyncratic behaviors are sometimes called “target behaviors” or “behaviors of concern.” At this point, it's quite possible that some specific behaviors of concern have been identified from the camp's perspective. Clearly state these to the parents; do they concur?

Talk about Camp and Anticipated “Tension Points”

Understanding the child's repertoire of socialization skills, communication, and