

# Evidence-Informed Guidance for Summer Camp Staff Training

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The purpose of this resource is to provide camp professionals with promising practices for summer staff training. While there is much information that focuses on training topics, there is less information available that can provide camp professionals with comprehensive, research-informed evidence of promising practices in staff training approaches. This guide can help camp administrators make decisions about training their staff.

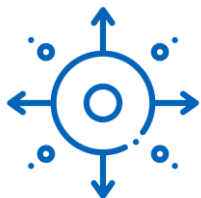
## What do we know about summer camp staff training?

While most camps deliver at least some professional development to seasonal staff, most of the training is conducted by internal staff and not much is delivered online. Further, camp employment is an increasingly researched area in workforce skills and development but more information is needed.



## What competencies should summer staff learn during training?

The point of training should be to build staff members' competencies to do their jobs. How do camps verify mastery of concepts taught during training, such as with a checklist of completion, competency assessment, skill demonstration, or other assessment? Is the training that was provided relevant to the roles and responsibilities of staff members? Is the training standards-based (i.e., is training provided to meet specific organizational/institutional standards)? If so, why and according to what standard? If not, why not? Consider doing a training needs assessment to determine which staff need to learn which concepts. Consider differentiating your training for new and experienced staff members.



## How is training effectiveness influenced by characteristics of camp staff?

Training can be tough on anyone. Use a wide variety of teaching and training approaches to meet staff-specific needs. Provide choices and options wherever you can. Learn about staff members' characteristics and issues that concern them.



## How should staff training be structured?

Consider your goals for training. Do you use training to build community or teach skills, or both? Most camp administrators will say both, so use a hybrid approach for training that balances in-person community building with remote or online training for skill building. Differentiate your training methods for new staff and experienced staff.

## How can training transfer to camp work?

Well-designed training leads to transfer. Identify the learning outcomes and create actionable steps that will lead staff through the training and toward the outcomes. Give staff opportunities to practice skills during training for better retention and implementation of the skills. Opportunities for practice, role modeling, and positive feedback can help staff become more confident in their abilities. Transferable training requires maintenance. Revisit training needs throughout the summer. Create resources that can be referenced outside of training. Do frequent check-ins or mini skills sessions to strike a balance between reinforcing positive behaviors and providing suggestions for improvement.



For the full report, visit <https://www.acacamps.org/downloads/evidence-informed-staff-training-guidance>