



Summer Camp Curriculum

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Summer Camp Curriculum

Kidventure Curriculum Philosophy:

It is our mission to help build the self-esteem and self-worth of every child through our every action. Every child possesses the innate ability to learn and succeed. Our goal should simply be to lead children towards a happy, healthy and responsible lifestyle. While succeeding in building physical skills is important, teaching children to love themselves and learn is one of life's **greatest** lessons.

At Kidventure, we are more than just a camp!

The goal of Kidventure Curriculum is to provide the tools needed to help the whole child. To foster good learning habits and set kids on a positive path that will serve them well in school and beyond. This is stated as such in our mission statement above. Curriculum is no longer focused on specific projects or activities but encompasses the entirety of camp itself. **Every action** we take should be done with mindfulness intention and is important to the enjoyment, development, and education of each camper.

The cornerstones listed below are designed to set the foundation for greater learning and provide more opportunities for kids to just be kids.

1. Creative – self-expression
2. Physical Activity – being healthy
3. Exploration – creative play
4. Reflection - meaning

The driving force in these modules & camp is the social emotional development. It is the thread that is woven into every aspect of camp. It is why Kidventure was founded and why Kidventure is so important today. Kids need a place to learn from one another, practice their skills, have fun, be active and grow into **happy, healthy, responsible** adults. Kidventure Camp provides that opportunity.

Social Emotional Development

- includes the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive rewarding relationships with others and make responsible decisions. (Cohen & Others, 2005)

Goals/Keywords: relationships, regulation (controlling emotions), empathy, engaging, communication

What is Social Emotional Development?

1. Self-Management
2. Self-Awareness
3. Social Awareness
4. Relationship Skills
5. Responsible Decision Making

The core features of emotional development include the ability to identify and understand one's own feeling, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expressions in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behavior, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships. These development abilities are part of the 5 core competencies that educate hearts, inspire minds, & help people navigate the world more effectively.

Importance of Social Emotional Development

Young children who exhibit healthy social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment are more likely to have good academic performance in elementary school. The sharp distinction between cognition and emotion that has historically been made may be more of an artifact of scholarship than it is representative to the way these processes occur in the brain. This recent research strengthens the view that early childhood programs support later positive learning outcomes in all domains by maintaining a focus on the promotion of healthy social emotional development.

Fostering Social Emotional Development

Children's developmental trajectory is critically mediated by appropriate, affective relationships with loving and consistent caregivers as they relate to children through play or in our case camp. When caregivers observe their children in play or join with them in child-driven activities, they are given a unique opportunity to see the world from their child's vantage point as the child navigates a world perfectly created just to fit his or her needs. The interactions that occur through camp tell children that caregiver is fully paying attention to them and help to build enduring relationships. Caregivers who can glimpse into their children's world learn to communicate more effectively with their children and are given another setting to offer gentle, nurturing guidance. Less verbal children may be able to express their views, experiences, and even frustrations through camp, allowing their caregiver an opportunity to gain a fuller understanding of their perspective. It has been shown to help children adjust to the school setting and even to enhance children's learning readiness, learning behaviors, and problem-solving skills. A camp that allows play and unscheduled time for peer interactions are important components of social-emotional learning.

Development by Program:

Discovers: Introduction

Preschool-age children are learning to talk about their feelings and the feelings of others. Social-emotional development, however, involves more than just expressing emotions. It entails taking turns, becoming independent in following routines, interacting more with peers, engaging in meaningful relationships with others, controlling emotions, and developing a positive self-image. These skills are crucial for children's successful participation in school and home experiences and for their overall growth. For Discover's this is just being introduced to them. Practice and patience are key for campers to grow into successful Explorers.

Explorers: Exploration

While discovers are being introduced in controlling emotions and developing meaningful relationships, explorers are now incorporating it into every aspect of their lives. As peer to peer relationships become more important and the influence of peer pressure grows it is important to continue fostering and helping children focus and learn:

- Increased emotional resilience
- Strengthen impulse control and emotional management
- Improved social behavior
- Heightened empathy
- Practical skills for enhanced well-being

LEADS: Application

In the 5 core competencies listed above LEADS campers should begin to reflect on what gives them guiding direction in their lives. They need to start thinking more deeply about their own values and principles. Understanding these values and principles and how they apply to the world around them will help them identify their value and self-worth.

CREATIVE

- resulting from originality of thought, expression; imaginative

Goals/Keywords: self-expression, emotional health, freedom, process, support

What is Creativity?

Creativity is the freest form of self-expression. There is nothing more satisfying and fulfilling for children than to be able to express themselves openly and without judgment. The ability to be **creative**, to create something from personal feelings and experiences, can reflect and nurture children's emotional health.

Importance of the Creative Process

All children need to be truly creative is the freedom to commit themselves completely to the effort and make whatever activity they are doing their own. What's important in any creative act is the process of self-expression. Creative experiences can help children express and cope with their feelings. A child's creative activity can help teachers to learn more about what the child may be thinking or feeling. Creativity also fosters mental growth in children by providing opportunities for trying out new ideas, and new ways of thinking and problem-solving. Creative activities help acknowledge and celebrate children's uniqueness and diversity as well as offer excellent opportunities to personalize our teaching and focus on each child.

Fostering the Creative Process

Encouraging children to make their own choices is important. Children should be permitted frequent opportunities - and lots of time - to experience and explore expressive materials. Put your emphasis on the process of creativity and not on the finished product. What children learn and discover about themselves is vital to their development. Show your support for the creative process by appreciating and offering support for children's efforts. Independence and control are important components in the creative process.

Creativity by Program:

Discovers: Introduction

For the Discover Program, this is a time for kids to utilize their imagination. For many their creativity will reach its peak before the age of six but if we work to foster their creativity and imagination it will set the stage for continued development for years to come.

Explorers: Exploration

Creativity during this period of development is also enhanced by improved thinking skills. Between the ages of 5 and 8, children will develop the ability to think in their heads. They can try out certain, most often physical, courses of action mentally before deciding whether to try it or not. Soon, perhaps by age 8 for some, they will be able to mentally try out social situations, too, because they will grow out of their egocentric worldview. They will be able to be creative in more situations. Also, children of school age can set goals for their creativity and put their creative impulses into action. So, they will sometimes deliver creative products like videos or music compositions and perhaps begin to evaluate whether the product "worked" or came out as well as they hoped.

LEADS: Application

The potential to foster creativity among 11-13 year olds is tremendous! Surges in cognition provide children with the largest learning capacity that they will experience across the age span. Not only can children use symbols, they are now able to manipulate them abstractly, apply reason and logic, and formulate and test hypotheses independently. Their interest in topics that they view as valuable is at an all-time high as well. Middle schoolers are capable of problem solving in creative ways that will drive their own discoveries and their skills allow them to identify nuances and possibilities.

Project/Activity IDEAS:

Discovers	Explorers	LEADS
Art Centers	Process Art	Process Art
Story Time	Legos	Game Creation
Craft Art	Improv	Coloring Sheets
Coloring	Story Time	Art of the Week
Puppets	Craft Art	Craft Art

Sources: "Creativity at Various Ages": http://www.pbs.org/parents/creativity/np_ages.html, "Creative Development in Adolescents" by Michelle Anthony, PhD <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/stages-milestones/creative-development-adolescents>, "Creativity and Play: Fostering Creativity": <http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/providers/play.html>

Physical Activity

- any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure

Goals/Keywords: movement, fun, age appropriate, building to specific skills & structure, healthy

What is Physical Activity?

For kids, exercise means playing and being physically active. Kids exercise when they have gym class at school, during recess, at dance class or soccer practice, while riding bikes, or when playing tag.

Importance of Physical Activity

Kids who are active will:

- have stronger muscles and bones
- have a leaner body
- be less likely to become overweight
- decrease the risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels
- have a better outlook on life

Besides enjoying the health benefits of regular exercise, kids who are physically fit sleep better. They're also better able to handle physical and emotional challenges — from running to catch a bus to studying for a test.

Fostering Physical Activity

The Three Elements of Fitness

1. **Endurance:** develops when kids regularly get aerobic activity. During aerobic exercise, the heart beats faster and a person breathes harder. When done regularly and for extended periods of time, aerobic activity strengthens the heart and improves the body's ability to deliver oxygen to all its cells.
2. **Strength:** Improving **strength** doesn't have to mean lifting weights. Instead, kids can do push-ups, stomach crunches, pull-ups, and other exercises to help tone and strengthen muscles. They also improve their strength when they climb, do a handstand, or wrestle.
3. **Flexibility:** Stretching exercises help improve flexibility, allowing muscles and joints to bend and move easily through their full range of motion. Kids get chances every day to stretch when they reach for a toy, practice a split, or do a cartwheel.

Physical Activity by Program:

Discovers: Introduction

“Young children are wired to move and learning environments should respect that”¹ Games and other physical activities are to be focused on introduction and having fun rather than following all the rules of a game. Children while developing the physical skills to play a game properly are also learning other skills such as cooperation, following multiple rules/instructions and sportsmanship. When engaged in other activities such as art, science...etc., find ways to incorporate movement to keep kids engaged.

Explorers: Exploration

Children and adolescents should meet the Guidelines by doing activity that is appropriate for their age. Their natural patterns of movement differ from those of adults. For example, children are naturally active in an intermittent way, particularly when they do unstructured active play. During recess and in their free play and games, children use basic aerobic and bone-strengthening activities, such as running, hopping, skipping, and jumping, to develop movement patterns and skills. They alternate brief periods of moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity with brief periods of rest.

STICK TO BASICS FOR 6- TO 8-YEAR-OLDS

Expose younger kids to a variety of activities, games, and sports. Keep the focus on fun. And be sure to include some free time for kids to make their own decisions about what to do.

9- TO 12-YEAR-OLDS ARE MORE COORDINATED

Older school-age kids usually have mastered basic skills and can start enjoying the benefits of being more coordinated. That means a kid who likes basketball isn't wildly throwing the ball at the basket anymore, but is perfecting the free throw. They're also better able to understand the rules. It is important to talk to kids about handling setbacks and losses, and remind kids that sports should still be fun even as competition heats up.

LEADS: Application

As children grow into adolescents, their patterns of physical activity change. They can play organized games and sports and are able to sustain longer periods of activity. Adolescents may meet the Guidelines by doing free play, structured programs, or both. Structured exercise programs can include aerobic activities, such as playing a sport, and muscle-strengthening activities, such as lifting weights, working with resistance bands, or using body weight for resistance (such as push-ups, pull-ups, and sit-ups). Muscle-strengthening activities count if they involve a moderate to high level of effort and work the major muscle groups of the body: legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms.

Project/Activity IDEAS:

Discovers	Explorers	LEADS
Gaga Ball	Gaga Ball	Gaga Ball
Playground	Relays	Zumba/Yoga
Music & Movement	Game Creation	Challenges
Go to Games	Go to Games	Go to Games
Including movement in any activity	Playground	Game Creation

Sources: "The Many Benefits of Exercise": <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/exercise.html#catstaying-fit> "Active Children & Adolescents" <https://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/chapter3.aspx> "Being Active Everyday" <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/schoolage-active.html> 1 (Dr. Dina Lieser-chair of the Council on Early Childhood at the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Director of Community Pediatrics at Nassau University Medical Center in New York).

EXPLORATION

- going through an unfamiliar situation and learning about it

Goals/Keywords: unstructured (open-ended play), imagination, trial & error, guiding vs teaching

What is Exploration?

Exploration through play is a term used in education and psychology to describe how a child can learn to make sense of the world around them. Through play children can develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence required to engage in new experiences and environments.

Exploration and play helps develop each child's unique perspective and individual style of creative expression. Creative play expresses the child's personal, unique responses to the environment. Play is a self-expressive activity that draws on the child's powers of imagination. Play is open-ended, free-form and children have the freedom to try out new ideas as well as build on and experiment with the old.

Importance of Exploration

Children need the freedom to explore and play. The child's neural pathways are influenced in their development through the exploration, thinking, problem-solving and language expression which occur during play episodes. According to the Canadian Council on Learning, "Play nourishes every aspect of children's development – it forms the foundation of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional skills necessary for success in school and in life. **Play 'paves the way for learning'**

Fostering Exploration

Exploration through creative or unstructured play and activities allows kids to practice and hone their skills being developed throughout the other cornerstones. Exploration should be kid lead with counselors guiding them instead of leading them. Here is some way to encourage exploration.

1. Hang Back-resist the urge to give too many directions or too much correction.
2. Mistakes are ok, and trial & error is a great way for kids to learn, problem solve and experiment.
3. Open ended project/activities, do not put many, if any restrictions on what the end results should be
4. Providing opportunities to practice multiple skills such as; problem solving, social interaction, self-regulation, physical activity, creativity, and imagination.

Exploration by Program:

Discovers: Introduction

3-5 year olds will learn a lot when given the chance to investigate their environment (*with supervision, of course*). Exploring also gives kids a chance to work on motor skills for physical activities. Exploring the inside and outside world will boost their confidence.

Explorers: Exploration

Remember that play is how kids learn. This is still important for explorers (6-8 years old especially). Explorers in this age range are still learning to implement many of the skills they have been introduced to and how they apply to their surroundings. Giving kids the opportunity to practice these skills in an environment that is more child-lead, has less rules and are more open ended in terms of results expected help to create a world they can master, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles, sometimes in conjunction with other children or adult caregivers. As they master their world, play helps children develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resiliency they will need to face future challenges

LEADS: Application

Play for adolescents & adults is often forgotten and opportunities have declined recently. With the recent decline in play there has also been an increase in anxiety, depression, feelings of helplessness & narcissism. Therefore, play at this age is still important, not only for mental & emotional health but to continue fostering skills such as; creative thinking, problem solving, independence & perseverance. This also addresses teenagers' developmental needs for greater independence & ownership in their learning.

Project/Activity IDEAS:

Discovers	Explorers	LEADS
Centers	Field Trips	Field Trips
KV Live	KV Live	Games / Game Creation
Playground	Playground	Playground
Splash Day	Swimming	Corps Discussions
Science Centers	Science	Leads Lounge
Board Games	Board Games	Community Service

Sources: <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/exploring.html>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_through_play, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/119/1/182>, <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/preschool-explore.html>, <http://time.com/3726098/learning-through-play-teenagers-education/>

Reflection

- serious thought or consideration

Goals/Keywords: self-awareness, character, thinking about learning, empathy, trust, dialogue, diversity

What is Reflection?

Reflective learning is a way of allowing students to step back from their learning experience to help them develop critical thinking skills and improve on future performance by analyzing their experience. We want students to get into the habit of linking and constructing meaning from their experiences. Such work requires reflection. The point of reflection is not to arrive at some absolute truth but rather encourage children to think about what happened and why. (Epstein, 2003)

Importance of Reflection

Reflecting on work enhances its meaning. Reflecting on experiences encourages insight and complex learning. We foster our own growth when we control our learning. Students who reflect on their learnings, compare intended with actual outcomes, evaluate their metacognitive strategies, analyze and draw causal relationships, and to synthesize meanings and apply their learnings to new and novel situations. Students know they will not "fail" or make a "mistake," as those terms are generally defined. Instead, reflective students know they can produce personal insight and learn from *all* their experiences.

Fostering Reflection

1. Make reflection an ongoing part of the day. It is valuable to have a set time each day when children gather in a small group to share what they have done (ex. Opening and closing ceremonies)
2. Ask open ended questions. Questions that begin with "How did you...?" or "Why do you think...?" also encourages children to reconstruct and create meaning from their experiences.
3. Interpret and expand what children do and say. For more nonverbal children, sometimes your explanations will provide them the vocabulary for further reflection. For more verbal children, your body language and conversation show you are listening.
4. Accept conflicting viewpoints and interpretations. Children's recollections and explanations sometimes differ from one another or from those of adults. It is important to acknowledge and accept each child's version, not to correct them or take sides.
5. Comment on what you see children doing as they play. This encourages children to attend and evaluate the experience as it is happening, and makes it easier for them to recall the event later.
6. Help children connect their plans and activities with their reflections. Example: "Why did you make a different plan?" or "What made you think of doing that instead?" This does not force children to stick to one idea but instead think about their choices, preferences and problem solving strategies.

Reflection by Program:

Discovers: Introduction - “The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.” – Mark Van Doren

For discovers there are two components to reflection. The first is we want campers to start thinking about their experiences & choices. We want them to put meaning and express and/or communicate why they planned to do something or why they changed their mind and did something else. There is no right or wrong answer and kids will reflect experiences different from how you saw them. The second part is this dialogue or feedback helps us understand how each camper thinks. This in turns helps us understand what their needs may be and how we can improve upon the day to days of camp. Each child develops at a different rate. Any adaptations we can make for the child, our daily schedule or the environment helps us build a successful plan for camp that is built upon the children’s strength’s and interests.

Explorers: Exploration

To effectively get kids to reflect and communicate there must be a good, and trustful relationship to begin with. A few minutes at the end of each activity teaching strategies to utilize during camp are:

Discussions: Invite students to share their metacognition, reveal their intentions, detail their strategies for solving a problem, describe their mental maps for monitoring their problem-solving process, and reflect on the strategy to determine its adequacy.

Interviews: Interviews provide teachers and students with opportunities to model and practice a variety of habits: listening with understanding and empathy, thinking and communicating with clarity and precision, and questioning and posing problems.

Questioning: Well-designed questions will invite students to reveal their insights, understandings, and applications of their learnings.

Writing: Ask campers to write about their expectations for camp and then have them reread their writings, comparing what they knew at the beginning of a week with what they know now. Other creative writing ideas such as “Camp Letters” home to mom & dad will help campers think deeper about their experiences at camp.

Be a good Role Model: Students need to see adults—parents, teachers, and administrators—reflect on their practice.

LEADS: Application

The ultimate intent of teaching reflection is to get students into the habit of reflecting on their own actions and constructing meaning from those experiences. When they develop the Habits of Mind related to reflection, they will hear both an internal and an external voice of reflection. The internal voice of reflection is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is difficult to describe in detail, but we can define it as both *what* and *how* we are thinking. Self-knowledge includes ways of thinking that may not be visible to us consciously. Students hear an external voice of reflection in others' comments, suggestions, assessments, evaluations, and feedback. External sharing of reflections is important because this kind of reflection multiplies the learning for everyone. As students review the learning events that have taken place, they give their learning new meaning. The opportunity to share often validates a student's internal conversation.

Project/Activity IDEAS:

Discovers	Explorers	LEADS
Chill Time	Yoga	Yoga
Yoga Poses	Creative Writing	Corps Discussions
Circle Time	Group Discussion	Leads Lounge
Puppets	Ribbons	Coloring
Coloring	Teaching/Coloring	Creative Writing

Sources: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/lets/toolkit/learning/reflective>, <https://www.amle.org/BrowsebyTopic/WhatsNew/WNDet/TabId/270/ArtMid/888/ArticleID/586/Student-Reflection-A-Tool-for-Growth-and-Development.aspx>, <http://www.ttacnews.vcu.edu/2013/02/reflectivepractice/>