



# Camp Fire

## Central Puget Sound

**Group Program Leader &  
Adult Volunteer Manual**



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## Introduction

Thank you for giving your time to learn about Camp Fire's Group Program. You are making it possible for many young people to have a fun, memorable experience.

This manual is designed to assist you as you prepare for a successful year of group programming. Included among the pages are requirements, standards, procedures, guidelines, group information, and resources for working with youth. Being familiar with these materials will assist you in your work.

**You are responsible for knowing the contents of the Group Program Manual.** Please read all of the materials—it will help make life easier! After you have carefully covered these materials, sign and date the "Receipt of Volunteer Information" form at the end of the manual. Return this form to the Community Program Department.

Most importantly, always keep in mind that the children are our first consideration. Group participants are in your group to have fun while being in a safe and positive environment.

Thank you for being part of the Camp Fire Central Puget Sound Group Program.

## About Camp Fire



**Camp Fire's Vision:** We inspire and enable youth of all backgrounds and abilities to discover their spark, value the natural world, and become tomorrow's leaders, today.

Camp Fire is a national nonprofit youth agency with a focus on developing leadership, compassion, and life skills in youth. Camp Fire began as an all-girls organization in Maine in 1910, and has since spread across the country and expanded to include all genders.

### History

Dr. Luther Halsey Gulick and Charlotte Vetter Gulick founded Camp Fire in 1910. It began at their summer camp for girls called Camp Wohelo-Sebago in Maine. The Gulick's wanted to encourage girls to be independent, active, and appreciate the outdoors. Camp Fire grew out of the youth service movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and shares roots with similar organizations like Girls Scouts and the YMCA.

By 1912, the first Camp Fire groups had formed near Seattle. Ruth Brown, who became the first Executive Director of the Seattle Council and the first Director at Camp Sealth, did much of the early work in Camp Fire in this area.

In 2010, Camp Fire celebrated its centennial with campfires lit at councils across the country. Today, over half a million youth participate in Camp Fire programs in nearly all 50 states. Programs include summer overnight and day camps, group and family clubs, after-school programs, teen leadership and service learning, and much more.

### Our Local Council

Camp Fire Group Program is part of the Central Puget Sound council of Camp Fire, based in Seattle, Washington. In addition to traditional group and Family Clubs, the Central Puget Sound council also runs an overnight camp at Camp Sealth on Vashon Island, as well as day camps at nine different locations in the greater Seattle area.

### What Makes Camp Fire Unique

Camp Fire was one of many youth organizations that got its start around the same time; although they share many things in common, there are some things that make Camp Fire stand out.

- **Professionally trained adult leaders:** Camp Fire adults (including camp staff) are passionate role models and champions of children, they encourage and guide youth to discover their sparks, and they work with young people to help them be their best.
- **Inclusiveness:** We embrace the uniqueness of all young people and their families, and celebrate the differences among ourselves. Camp Fire proudly affirms its inclusive nature, openly welcoming people of all backgrounds, beliefs, abilities, and identities.
- **Participant-driven:** Guided by adults, young people choose their own course; they build self-esteem and identify their own voice. Camp Fire guides youth towards compassion and caring for others, and we encourage youth to explore and discover their own sparks.
- **Immediate action:** Camp Fire engages youth right away, helping them develop skills today and build a strong foundation for now and in the future.

## Goals for Child Development

Group Program is a unique opportunity for children to gain independence and experience positive social interactions that will give them lifelong skills. Listed below are Camp Fire's specific desired outcomes for children in all of our programs.

### Group Program Outcomes

- Develop knowledge and appreciation for the natural world
- Develop and build leadership skills
- Acquire and improve their social and emotional learning skills
- Develop skills for academic and workplace success
- Value people of diverse backgrounds and abilities
- Demonstrate civic engagement and stewardship
- Develop and maintain active and healthy lifestyle habits
- Be empowered with a sense of purpose and optimism for the future

# Job Description – Group Leader

**Position:**

Group Leader

**Responsible To:**

Directly responsible to Community Program Department

**General Responsibilities:**

Facilitate a Camp Fire Group Program experience for children on a regular basis through activities based on the official Camp Fire Group Program curriculum and the children's interests and needs.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

1. Ensures that club meetings are planned and occur on a regular schedule
2. Ensures that needed supplies are available
3. Involves and guides youth in selection of activities that provide opportunity to experience learning by doing and develop life skills
4. Ensures that all activities meet Camp Fire standards and council policies
5. Provides innovative ideas for carrying out Camp Fire program including service projects and participation in area and council events
6. Retains program records and forms as assigned
7. Supports and participates in council-wide fund-raising activities
8. Ensures a program experience which fosters respect and inclusiveness of all
9. Attends and participates in leader/area meetings and council trainings
10. Acts as liaison and maintains positive relations between council, parents, and schools
11. Maintains professionalism in terms of appearance, attitude, and conduct
12. Stay current on Camp Fire Central Puget Sound news by reading emails and checking the Members Website

**Essential Job Functions:**

1. Able to lift and move 20 pounds.
2. Able to demonstrate sensitivity to needs of the children, interact appropriately with children in a variety of situations, appropriately model behavior and use positive behavior management techniques.
3. Able to ensure safety of children and assist children in an emergency.
4. Able to observe youth behavior, assess its appropriateness, enforce appropriate safety regulations and emergency procedures, and apply appropriate behavior-management techniques.

**Qualifications:**

1. At least 18 years of age or be in a supervised leadership training program
2. Must attend and participate in Group Program Training

## Job Description – Adult Volunteer

**Position:**

Adult Volunteer

**Responsible To:**

Group Leader

**General Responsibilities:**

Help Group Leader facilitate meetings and other group program aspects.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

1. Abide by Camp Fire Standards
2. Stay current on Camp Fire Central Puget Sound news by reading emails and checking the Members Website
3. Communicate with the Group Leader regularly.

**Essential Job Functions:**

1. Able to lift and move 20 pounds.
2. Able to demonstrate sensitivity to needs of the children, interact appropriately with children in a variety of situations, appropriately model behavior and use positive behavior management techniques.
3. Able to ensure safety of children and assist children in an emergency.
4. Able to observe youth behavior, assess its appropriateness, enforce appropriate safety regulations and emergency procedures, and apply appropriate behavior-management techniques.

**Qualifications:**

1. At least 18 years of age or in a supervised leadership training program

## Group Program & Adult Volunteer Personnel Guidelines

Volunteers are an essential part of Camp Fire. Our volunteers make our services possible and are integral to our community relations, fundraising efforts, and governance.

Camp Fire welcomes all people to volunteer, regardless of race, gender, creed, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, economic status or mental or physical disabilities. Accommodations for special needs will be provided upon request whenever possible, matched with the position requirements on the volunteer job description.

### **We utilize volunteer resources because:**

- There is important work to be done: Camp Fire inspires and enables youth of all backgrounds and abilities to discover their spark, value the natural world, and become tomorrow's leaders, today.
- Volunteers are part of the best way to get that important work done. Volunteers bring added support, community resources, community information, potential donors, and are a part of community relations. More youth, families, and communities can be reached by the services and resources of Camp Fire with the help of our volunteers.

### **Background Checks**

Background checks are done when individuals first begin work with Camp Fire as an adult leader or adult volunteer, and then annually for returning or ongoing staff and volunteers. Background checks include:

- A voluntary disclosure form completed by the individual (either online or a paper form)
- A state criminal records check for those who have lived only in Washington State for the past three years; or a national criminal records check for those who have lived outside of Washington (but in the United States) in the past three years
- A check of the National Sex Offender Public Website

Staff or volunteers who have lived outside the United States must undergo a criminal records check in the country(ies) in which they have resided in the past three years. Camp Fire may have staff or volunteers provide an official transcript from the country in which they resided verifying they have no criminal record in that foreign country.

Background checks will be completed before the individual begins their work or volunteer service with children.

If a criminal conviction is discovered, the program manager, HR department, and executive director will decide on a case-by-case basis whether the individual should be disqualified from employment or volunteering. Persons with violent crimes are disqualified, and those convicted of theft are disqualified from handling money or personal information.

### **Volunteer Rights**

Volunteers are a valuable resource to Camp Fire. In acknowledgement of this significant role, volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, and the right to be provided effective orientation, training, support, supervision and evaluation. Volunteers have the right to be kept informed of policy changes and changes to curriculum, and be listened to by paid staff. Volunteers' time is valuable and thus they have the right to have their time used for meaningful and valuable pursuits. Volunteers should expect to receive prompt return of phone calls and e-mail messages, and to be appropriately recognized for their efforts.

In return, volunteers agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. They are expected to uphold the mission and goals of Camp Fire and to operate according to the Council's procedures.

Volunteers benefit from giving their time to Camp Fire in a number of ways. For example, they:

- Gain experience working with youth and the community
- Enhance job skills
- Acquire new job skills to increase marketability



- Gain satisfaction from helping others
- Network and make professional contacts
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Give back to the community

### **Benefits**

All registered persons on site will be covered by accident insurance.

### **Terms of Assignment**

All volunteers will serve the full group program calendar (Fall-Spring).

### **Volunteer Responsibilities**

1. Must see that all activities are conducted in a safe and prudent manner
2. Must adhere to the safety policies and procedures of the Central Puget Sound Council, defined in this document

### **Staff Vehicles**

Vehicles used to transport group participants must be in safe condition and covered by the insurance required by the State of Washington. Claims arising out of the use of personal vehicles are the owner's responsibility.

### **Dismissal**

The Director of Community Programs may dismiss a group leader or adult volunteer if they commit one, including but not limited to, of the following things:

1. The volunteer does not adequately guard the health and safety of the participants;
2. The volunteer repeatedly acts without respect or consideration for other persons;
3. The volunteer is found, during group program meetings, to be using alcoholic beverages and/or drugs which violate the Federal Drug Laws regardless of intent to distribute or otherwise;
4. The volunteer is found, during group program meetings, to be using Marijuana;
5. The volunteer does not have firearms in their home secured at all times.

## Child Abuse Policy & Reporting

Washington State requires persons who supervise employees or volunteers, who train, educate, coach, or counsel children or have regular unsupervised access to children to be **mandated reporters**. Camp Fire Staff, in this case, are mandated reporters when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.

Camp Fire Group Leaders and Adult Volunteers are known as **permissive reporters** in Washington State unless they are **mandated reporters** through their occupation. Permissive reporter means that they can volunteer to report but are not required to. If they do not wish to report the reasonable cause, they must notify a Camp Fire Community Programs staff member so that the Camp Fire staff member can report it to authorities. Camp Fire Staff will contact Child Protective Services within 48 hours of being notified by the group leader/adult volunteer. Leaders/volunteers should be aware that they might need to discuss suspicions with CPS.

All information is confidential. Information is only to be discussed with appropriate council staff.

Washington statute defines child abuse and neglect as “the injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances which indicate that the child’s health, welfare, and safety are harmed thereby.”

Any person making a good faith report concerning suspected child abuse or neglect is provided civil and criminal immunity by Washington State statute.

A report is required when:

- A reporter has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.
- Any person, in their official supervisory capacity with a nonprofit or for-profit organization, has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect caused by a person over whom they regularly exercise supervisory authority.
- Any adult has reasonable cause to believe that a child who resides with them has suffered severe abuse

## Child Abuse Training

All Camp Fire Group Leaders and Adult Volunteers will be given a training video/paperwork to review Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting. All Group Leaders and Adult Volunteers will turn in a signed form stating that they have participated in the video and/or read the paperwork and fully understand their duty as a reporter.

## Harassment-Free Environment

### Purpose

In order to provide an environment that respects the dignity of all persons and to provide an environment that is free from intimidation or hostile or offensive behavior, Camp Fire strongly disapproves of and will not tolerate harassment by or of staff or youth. Camp Fire is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment of any kind *including but not limited to* harassment based on sex, gender, race, creed, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical ability, marital status, medical condition, or veteran status.

### Defining Harassment

The defining parameters of unlawful harassment established in Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 include, but are not limited to, unwelcome racial, ethnic, religious or sexually oriented conduct, intentional or unintentional unwelcome verbal comments, jokes or comments of a sexual nature, physical sexual advances, and/or unnecessary physical contact.

To harass is to engage in an incident or pattern of unwanted or unwelcomed conduct related to an actual, perceived or insinuated personal characteristic (i.e. race, gender, religion, sexual orientation) that is hostile, intimidating, offensive,

insulting, discomforting, disturbing, tormenting or humiliating. As such, harassment creates an intimidating, uncomfortable, hostile and/or offensive environment.

### **Types of Harassment**

Harassment is usually classified according to the type of offending conduct: *verbal, physical, and non-verbal*.

*Verbal harassment* includes offensive language and jokes and/or inappropriate comments about a person's body/appearance. *Physical harassment* is unwanted physical contact – touching, holding, grabbing. *Non-verbal harassment* involves circulating or displaying degrading or offensive materials – pictures, cartoons, letters; using offensive gestures and/or staring at a person's body.

### **The Case of Sexual Harassment**

*Sexual harassment* is defined as unwanted sexual advances and/or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favors
- Verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of interfering unreasonably with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

### **Complaint Procedures**

1. Any volunteer who is subject to harassment should, if comfortable, inform the alleged harasser that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. Camp Fire recognizes that harassment may occur in unequal relationships (i.e. between a supervisor and their employee) and that it may not be possible for the victim to inform the alleged harasser.
2. The volunteer must report the situation to their supervisor. Should the harasser be the volunteer's own supervisor, the employee should report the situation directly to a member of the Human Resources Department (found on the Camp Fire Website).
3. Camp Fire Central Puget Sound Council will investigate the volunteer's complaint. The volunteer will not suffer retaliation for filing a complaint. Where the investigation confirms the allegations, appropriate action will be taken.

## **Confidential Information**

As a Camp Fire volunteer, you may learn information about members, staff, suppliers, or others that should not be divulged to anyone. When in doubt about the confidentiality of information, please confer with the appropriate management or supervisory staff. Confidential information obtained as a result of association with Camp Fire is not to be used by a volunteer for furthering any private interests, or as a means of making personal gains. Volunteer, staff, and youth membership lists are not made available or circulated for any reason without the approval of the Executive Director or their designee.

## Camp Fire Program

Camp Fire believes that the small group atmosphere is the best way to help children learn and focus on positive youth development outcomes. All Camp Fire programs offer children activities that are age-appropriate, fun, and will result in the accumulation of assets that will lead to productive, healthy lives. It takes time for relationships to develop, and for children to connect with adult leaders and mentors. Camp Fire recommends groups of six or more children in the same grade or within a grade of each other, with the exception of family clubs, which may include the whole family.

### **Leader and Co-Leader**

In this group setting, two co-leaders plan, lead, and run the meetings for the children in the group.

### **Leader and Adult Volunteer**

One leader plans, leads, and runs the meetings while adult volunteers/co-leaders rotate through helping at the meetings.

### **Family Leaders (Cooperatively Lead)**

All parents sign-up and rotate to plan, lead, and run the meetings in groups of two.

### **Community Family Club**

Family-focused program that encourages parents to participate in small group programs with their children. The program serves families with children aged five to 18, and preschoolers may be included as well.

## Registration

Every year all groups must register with the council. The children and adults in your group pay a membership fee to participate in Camp Fire Activities. Registration begins in the fall at the beginning of the new school year. It is essential that all group leaders and children register with the council. At least two adults need to be registered with each group. The council's insurance program covers any accident you or a member might have during a group activity.

You may have children join your group after you have submitted your group registration. As new children join, a registration for each child must be submitted. The registration forms provide valuable information about each child. They contain the child's health history and information about the family. Important information from these forms will be needed later when you put together an emergency notebook.

## Meeting Times & Places

It is important for groups to meet on a regular basis over a period of time. Regular, frequent meetings are important to the success of Camp Fire Group Programs because it allows children and adults to bond together, learn together, depend on each other, and share successes. Each group will have a different preference for meeting times and place because each group has different needs and interests. Here are a few things to think about in determining your meeting time and place.

- The younger the children, the shorter the meeting should be. Kindergarteners usually meet no longer than an hour. Older children can concentrate longer so their meetings may be closer to 1½ hours.
- The younger the children, the more frequent the meetings should be. Weekly meetings are best for young children. Older children may choose to meet every other week or monthly.
- Keep a routine. Families live very hectic lives and it is hard for them to keep track of any changes in their children's schedules. To make it simpler for everyone, create a routine and stick to it.

When choosing a meeting space, you should look for a space that has room for active games both indoors and outdoors, space to work on projects, is free from hazards, and is a secure area.

Below, you can find a checklist to use when looking for a meeting space. The meeting space should:

- Be clean and free from hazards
- Be secure
- Be properly ventilated
- Have heating and cooling
- Have at least two exits
- Be large enough for a variety of activities
- Have first-aid equipment on hand
- Be accessible by telephone
- Have easily accessible emergency exits
- Have well marked emergency exits
- Be adequately lit
- Have tables and chairs available

## Supervision

Supervising participants is about more than just watching to make sure the children do not get hurt. The goal is to ensure both physical and emotional safety, prevent inappropriate behavior, and monitor and address conflicts between participants.

Groups must meet Camp Fire standards for adult supervision.

All group meetings must have two adults present at all times.

Appropriate adult-child ratios are essential to a positive group experience. The following ratios assure good supervision and a mentoring relationship for children. The minimum ratios must be followed. The preferred ratios will result in a higher quality program.

Things to do while supervising children:

- Ensure all children are engaged in an activity or conversation
- Actively participate in the same activity as the children
- Stay in a location from which you can see and hear all of your children
- Listen and watch for inappropriate behavior or conversation

## Supervision Ratios

		2 Adults	3 Adults	One Additional Adult for:
Pre-K - Kindergarten	Minimum	Fewer than 13 children	Group size is 13-16 children	Every additional 6 children
	Preferred	Fewer than 11 children	Group size is 11 -18 children	Every additional 6 children
1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Minimum	Fewer than 16 children	Group size is 16-24 children	Every additional 8 children
	Preferred	Fewer than 12 children	Group size is 12-24 children	Every additional 8 children
3 <sup>rd</sup> and Above	Minimum	Fewer than 20 children	Group size is 20-30 children	Every additional 10 children
	Preferred	Fewer than 16 children	Group size is 16-30 children	Every additional 10 children

## Safety Requirements, Meeting Spaces, & Procedures

### First Aid or Illness

Each group should also have a filled first aid kit with them for all meetings. When the group goes on a trip, they need to take the first aid kit with them. The first aid kit should contain the following items:

Adhesive Bandages (assorted sizes)	Adhesive Tape	Band-Aids (assorted sizes)
Bar of Mild Soap	Bottle of Distilled Water (eye rinse)	Chemically Activated Cold Compresses
Elastic Bandage	First Aid Manual	Flashlight
Gauze Compresses	Insect Repellent	Latex Gloves
List of Emergency Phone Numbers	Matches	Moleskin
Needle	Paper & Pen	Paper Drinking Cups
Plastic Bags	Pocket Face Mask or Shield	Oral Thermometer
Roller Gauze Bandages	Rubbing Alcohol	Safety Pins
Sanitary Napkins	Small Scissors	Sun Screen and Sunburn Protection
Triangular Bandages	Tweezers	

First Aid/CPR Certification is not required of our Group Leaders and Adult Volunteers when in the normal meeting spot or when within 10 minutes of emergency response vehicles/paramedics. First Aid/CPR certification is required of one adult chaperone when your group is on a trip that is located more than 10 minutes from emergency responders. When on your trip, you will have filled out the Trip & Outdoor Activity Form and filled in who holds the First Aid/CPR Certification and its expiration date.

### **Health History**

Every registered child must have a completed health history form, which is part of the registration process on UltraCamp.

## **Permission Slips & Forms**

Each child in Camp Fire must be registered by a parent or guardian to participate in the program. In addition, a special permission form must be signed each time you take children away from the usual meeting place. This is a way to inform parents and have proper documentation for where the children will be, what they will be doing, and what adults will be present.

### **Trip & Outdoor Activity Form**

A Trip & Outdoor Activity Form is required for all overnights, activities of more than five hours in the out-of-doors, and/or outdoor activities that require more preparation and physical endurance. This form is not necessary for Council planned activities. The Trip & Outdoor Activity Form must be turned in 1 week before the group plans to take their trip or participate in their activity. Please fill out the form to the best of your ability and scan it in to the Community Program Department.

### **Special Activity Forms**

Each child in Camp Fire must fill out a Special Activity Form when they register with their group. This form should be kept by the Group Leader and be brought with them on all activities when they take children away from the usual meeting place. This form contains the child's information, emergency contact information, and a place for guardians to sign that they give permission to the Group Leader for their child to take place in an activity away from the normal meeting place. The form can be used for up to five special activities before a new form should be filled out for each child.

The Special Activity Form does not need to be turned into the council but is to be used by the Group Leader for all Special Activities. The Special Activity Forms may contain confidential information and should only be shared with other Adult Volunteers who are supervising on the activity if appropriate to do so.

If the guardian wishes to change the information on the Special Activity Form, they should fill out a new form and the Group leader should shred the old form.

At the end of the Program Year, all Permission Slips and Forms must be handed in to the Community Program Department.

### **Water Front Activity Form**

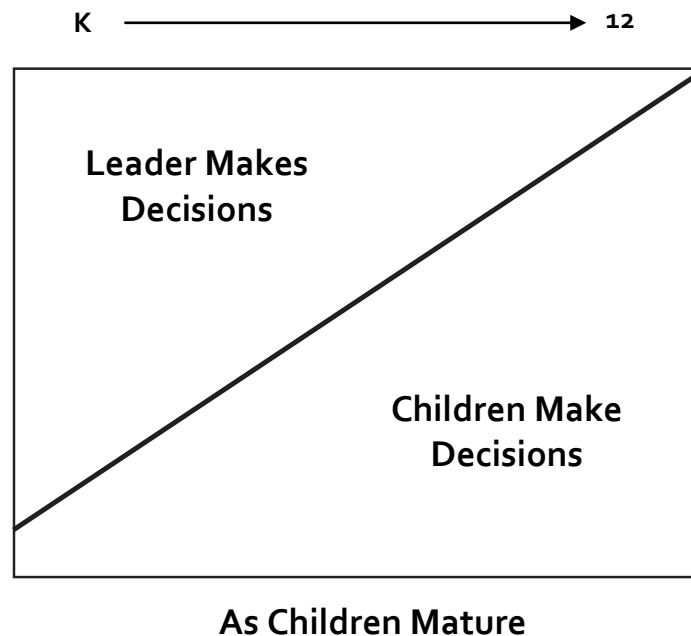
Parents are required to provide this signed form **and** the Camp Fire Special Activity Permission Form to the Group Leader prior to their child playing, wading, swimming, or boating in water. This form is required to be turned in to the Group Leader in order to participate in any water activity.

## Program Planning

The Camp Fire program consists of projects and activities that are challenging and interesting for children and meet important Camp Fire program outcomes. Each project consists of three to five meeting plans that offer educational and fun activities. Camp Fire is committed to youth involvement in decision making at all levels of the organization, and it begins with the meeting plans. Each project offers ways to involve children in the decisions. Approach each meeting plan with an open mind, changing your plans as needed to support and succeed with the children you are working with. Do not insist on doing it your way, but allow the personalities of your group to influence the way the program unfolds.

Youth-adult partnership is a cornerstone of the Camp Fire program and is practiced throughout the organization. Partnership means sharing the decisions that are made. It means that the ideas of both children and adults are listened to and considered. This partnership changes with age and experience of the children. Even though your title is leader, your job is to hand over the leadership tasks to the children.

In your group, give children the chance to make decisions about things that are important to them. You have a say, too. You can make suggestions, stimulate creative problem solving, and open new doors. You will make some decisions on your own, as well as with your group. As children get older, they will make more of the decisions. This partnership is what makes Camp Fire an exciting learning environment.





## Meeting Agenda

Much of what we do with the children takes place in a group meeting. Since this is how you will spend most of your time with the children, it is important to develop a strong meeting plan. Most Camp Fire group meetings follow the same basic plan. The order may vary, but each meeting generally has these basic components:

<b>Early Bird Activity</b>	A few children always arrive early, so plan something for them to do. They can help you set up for the meeting or they can play a game among themselves.
<b>Opening</b>	Start each meeting in a special way to help develop Camp Fire traditions. Each grade level guide provides openings and closing suitable for <i>Starflight</i> and <i>Adventure</i> groups.
<b>Business</b>	Take attendance, collect dues, plan for future meetings, etc.
<b>Snack/Meal</b>	Set aside a special time to share a snack or meal together.
<b>Activities</b>	The activity is the focus of the meeting. Generally, these activities are part of a specific project. Each grade level guide provides activities and curriculum for a year's worth of meetings.
<b>Clean Up</b>	Involve the children in cleaning up after each activity. It is part of the learning process, too.
<b>Reflection</b>	Review the activities of the day. Reinforce what was learned and how it applies to home, school, or the neighborhood. Ask each child to describe what they learned or a favorite part of the meeting.
<b>Look Ahead</b>	Make decisions with the children about the next meeting. This might include choosing a particular snack, activity, or game. Remind the children about any permission forms, supplies, or clothing they need for the next meeting.
<b>Closing</b>	Plan a fun, quite yet meaningful closing. It helps create a bond in the group if you repeat the closing at each meeting. Share a special song, poem, or form a friendship circle.

Remember not to plan too much for each meeting or they will run late. Be sure to say thank you to everyone who helped or had a job at the meeting. Do not forget to thank families and other special guests too!

## Camp Fire Uniforms

For Camp Fire, symbols of belonging are the official national attire, council-created items, and a variety of emblems and pins. The official uniforms are red vests for *Starflight* and blue vests for *Adventure*. These vests can be purchased through our online store on UltraCamp. Wearing Camp Fire attire communicates membership in a national organization as well as a small group. Wearing Camp Fire attire also creates awareness and visibility of Camp Fire as a leading organization for children and families.

The informal uniform is any Camp Fire t-shirt with pants or jeans. The official uniform is the red or blue vest with pants or shorts. Encourage youth to wear informal uniforms to regular meetings and formal uniforms during special events or events away from the regular meeting space. Wearing uniforms is a great way to demonstrate the presence of Camp Fire to others in the community.

## Emblems & Recognition Awards

As youth begin the curriculum for the five trails, they will be able to earn emblems that they can proudly iron on or sew on to their vests. Sewing on emblems is a great way to show progress and see all the child has achieved. Camp Fire Central Puget Sound has its own Council Identification Emblem. Each year, the child can also purchase the Identification Emblem & Bars that shows what level they are in and how many years they have been in that level.

Our entire emblem guide is available on the Members Website that you will be invited to. The Emblem Guide will give you a better idea of what types of items are available and for which level they belong.

## Group Expenses

Each group will handle their own finances. These finances can go towards supplies, trips, recognition items and emblems, snacks, or a camping trip. Groups will also receive Candy Currency from their participation in the annual Candy Sale Fundraiser. Groups vary on how they decide to have dues. Some groups decide to collect \$10-20 at the first meeting and use that throughout the course of the year, other groups will collect a small amount of money at each meeting, and other groups will pay as they go for events and snacks.

It is highly recommended that the group leader start a checking account with their group money in it. Keeping accurate records allows you to plan better for future projects. Keep families informed about the status of the groups account balance to make them feel included.

## Candy Sale Fundraiser

Groups are expected to participate in the annual Camp Fire Candy Sale (late January-mid February) to support the council financially. Camp Fire councils sell candy and other products to raise money for council operations and keeping the program prices low. Your support helps to pay for services your group receives such as training, resources, and the opportunity to participate in council activities and programs.

The Candy Sale is a great opportunity for your child to learn social, business, and life skills. During the sale, your group will learn about goal-setting, following through, goal tracking, and accounting. Not only does the Candy Sale benefit the individual, the group will also gain Candy Currency based on how much they sell as well as other incentives throughout the sale.

Groups may choose to do additional fundraisers to the Candy Sale with approval from the Director of Community Programs first.

## How to be a Great Leader

The job duties of a group leader are closely tied to what the participants do and what they need. The vast majority of your time will be spent directly supervising participants. Listed below are the top four areas of responsibility for a group leader.

1. Ensure the safety & well-being of each of your children
2. Establish behavior standards and enforce these within the group
3. Create & follow a program plan
4. Guide children in building healthy & positive life skills

### **Ensure Safety & Well-Being**

This is of course your top priority at all times: to ensure that the physical and emotional needs of your participants are met. This will include monitoring for safety in every activity they do, ensuring they have enough to eat and drink, and get treatment if someone is sick or injured. To establish an emotionally safe environment, leaders must be both firm and compassionate, listen respectfully to youth, speak in a positive way, and not allow bullying behaviors to occur.

### **Establish & Enforce Behavior Standards**

Rules and structure, when applied in a moderate and fair way, are essential to the overall well-being of children. What this means for you is that you must learn to be clear about your expectations for behavior and (at times) strict in making sure that children meet those expectations.

### **Create & Follow a Program Plan**

Being able to make decisions about the schedule is empowering for children, so we intentionally create opportunities for children to be involved in the scheduling. It will take some practice, but you will get very good at creating a meeting schedule that is fun, innovative, balanced, and age-appropriate, and at keeping your children engaged in the process.

### **Guide Participants in Building Life Skills**

Participants gain much more from the group program experience than just fun times, good memories, and new friends. They gain a sense of confidence, pride over their individual achievements and skills for resolving conflict with their peers. You have an incredible opportunity to guide children in learning these new skills, through everyday interactions and teachable moments.

## Emotional Safety

Emotional safety and security comes second only to the most basic physiological needs in terms of importance for people, especially children. In this section, we will discuss how creating a safe emotional environment will help children have fun at your meetings and reduce behavior problems.

### Participant Code of Conduct

Before starting your first meeting, you should come up with a group code so that all participants, parents, and leaders are on the same page. The Code is simple, but it reminds children of what we expect of them while at meetings. The Code could be something like:

While at Camp Fire, I agree to:

- Be a responsible member of the Camp Fire community
- Be considerate and respectful of others' feelings and needs
- Think in advance about the consequences of my actions
- Assure my own and others' safety
- Resolve differences in a respectful manner
- Protect the natural environment
- Commit to honesty
- Commit to try

If needed, leaders can refer back to this Code when a participant is having behavior problems.

### Group Contracts

Take about 15 minutes to have a conversation with your children about their expectations for each other during group meetings. Use a large piece of paper, and have someone write down the ideas they come up with. You will find that most groups will come up with a similar list to the Code of Conduct. At the end, everyone signs the paper. You can refer back to it throughout your meetings if issues start to arise.

### Respect & Positive Language

From the very beginning, establish the expectation that we *only* use respectful and positive language at Camp Fire. This does not mean just not using swear words or put-downs. Avoid using phrases like "this sucks", "that's stupid", or "shut up", because these words do not facilitate positive or respectful interactions. You do not have to make a big deal out of it, just redirect the conversation or politely ask the participant to find another way to say it. Put-downs should never be tolerated, even in jest.

### Model the Behavior You Want to See

Children will do what you do, not what you say. Staff have the utmost responsibility to model in their behavior what we want participants to do. Keep your tone and language respectful, avoid sarcasm (younger children will not understand it), and use "please" and "thank you" frequently. Treat the children with the respect you want them to show each other. Be genuine and honest in your interactions with children. The children will notice all of these things and, because they look up to you, will likely mimic your good behavior.

## Behavior Management

So far, we have discussed many ways to prevent bad behavior, but the reality is that the behavior will happen anyway, despite your best efforts. So this section is dedicated to giving you the resources to redirect and stop the undesired behavior.

The Camp Fire philosophy of behavior management builds on a child's need to develop a sense of self-worth. To promote this sense of self-worth, Camp Fire programs are carefully planned according to national standards to foster positive behavior.

To accomplish this:

- Participants are involved in rule setting and help determine the consequences for misbehavior.
- The group program activities are set up to promote positive interaction among children.
- Staff encourages participants to learn how to solve problems and settle differences among themselves.
- Staff tries to understand the underlying causes of the behavior.
- All disciplinary efforts are based on these practices.

When a child's behavior creates a risk for the physical health and/or safety of another child or of the group leader, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The child is separated from the problem activity or situation. The leader or another adult help the child rejoin the group when they are ready.
2. The leader or adult listens to the child and discusses the consequences of further inappropriate behavior.

### Hard to Soft

Most people want children to like them – it is easy to fall into the trap of letting the rules slide so that the children will like you. However, they will like and respect you *more* in the long run if you are firm (not mean) about the rules right from the beginning. Children will try to test your boundaries. Set clear boundaries and expectations right up front. The hard to soft rule says you should be firm at the beginning to enforce the structure, then you can loosen up (somewhat) as you get to know the children better.

### Pick Your Battles

Not every negative behavior needs to be corrected. Ask yourself whether the behavior is harmful to the child or to others, or whether it is simply annoying. Some behaviors may be acceptable if they are not detrimental to anyone. If you are too nit-picky about the little things, you will have no credibility left when it comes to behaviors that are more serious.

Bad behavior is often about attention seeking. Children naturally seek attention, and will get it in any form they can. If you are offering positive attention (for doing things worth praising) the child will continue to seek that positive attention. If they do not get positive attention from you, they will likely act out in order to seek negative attention. That is why ignoring bad behavior (when you can do so safely) is more effective than reacting to everything.

### Praise Positive Behavior

Whenever you see a child doing something good, be sure to praise them. Be specific and genuine in your praise. Children usually want to do well, and they will respond to praise by doing the good thing even more. See above – positive attention is more valued than negative attention.

### Stay Calm

Above all, in dealing with participant behavior, you must be the one to stay calm and rational. Although you may be tired, frustrated, or even overwhelmed, it will not improve the situation if you show that to the children. Be firm without being mean or showing anger. Use a calm and clear voice. Avoid getting emotional. Children will notice your demeanor and eventually will calm down themselves.

## **Firm, Fair, Clear, Consistent**

These are the four basic tenets of effective discipline. However, you choose to implement discipline with your group, remember these four principles:

- **Firm:** Be firm and unwavering in addressing the issue with a child. You can be firm without being mean. Do not back down from your stance, or the child will have learned that they can get away with the behavior.
- **Fair:** Make sure your behavior expectations are reasonable. Do not expect the same behavior from a 6 year old as from a 13 year old. Treat all children equally; if you correct the behavior in one child, you must do so for all of them.
- **Clear:** Be clear and specific about the behavior you want (or do not want) to see. Clearly state that such-and-such behavior is not acceptable at the meeting. Make sure the child knows what consequences will occur if the behavior continues.
- **Consistent:** Treat every similar situation exactly the same. Do not correct a behavior one time but allow it another. Make sure your expectations are always the same and follow through on the rules every time.

## **Escalation**

A child's behavior will often start small and escalate if not addressed early on. Choose a response that is appropriate to the situation. A minor infraction (such as talking over another child) should be treated differently than a major one (a threat to another child). As the behavior escalates, your response and the consequences should also escalate.

## **Appropriate Consequences**

In many cases, you will need to implement consequences if the behavior is not changing or if it is escalating. Consequences should be implemented gradually, as the behavior gets more serious, and should be related to the behavior.

Group Leaders may utilize these consequences with children:

- Verbal warning
- One-on-one conversation with the leader
- Time out away from the group
- Loss of a privilege, activity, or special treat
- Other consequences related to the situation, such as cleaning up a mess they made

If these consequences are not effective, the Group Leader may assist with implementing one of the following:

- Written behavior agreement (contract) between the child and leader (with parents help)
- Talking to the parent/guardian of the child after the meeting

## **Follow-Through**

Discipline is only effective if you follow through with what you say you will do. Children test boundaries all the time, to see if you will really apply a consequence. If you state a consequence for a specific behavior but do not follow through when the child acts up, then you have no credibility, and they have no reason to listen to you the next time.

## Ages & Stages

### 5-8 Years Old (K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

Physical	Behavioral/Learning	Social/Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large muscles better developed than small muscles</li> <li>Lack of fine motor control</li> <li>Starting to be able to catch a ball or tie shoes</li> <li>Hand-eye coordination not fully developed</li> <li>Endurance is poor (get tired easily)</li> <li>Reaction time tends to be slow</li> <li>Constantly active</li> <li>Use bathroom often</li> <li>Need to eat more often and in smaller amounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short attention span</li> <li>Learn through participation</li> <li>Do not accept criticism or losing well</li> <li>Forgetful</li> <li>Eager, curious</li> <li>Motivated to learn</li> <li>Little understanding of time and space</li> <li>Imaginative</li> <li>Friendships/teamwork important</li> <li>Able to describe experiences, talk about thoughts/feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little understanding of abstract concepts</li> <li>Becoming aware of gender-role expectations</li> <li>Individualistic, self-centered</li> <li>Dramatic, cry easily</li> <li>Seeking adult approval</li> <li>Exaggerate</li> <li>Easily frustrated</li> <li>Friendships become more important</li> <li>Want to be liked and accepted</li> <li>Develop responsibility, respect</li> <li>Understand other's feelings, still learning how their actions affect others</li> </ul>

### 9-11 Years Old (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade)

Physical	Behavioral/Learning	Social/Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Girls mature faster than boys by one to two years</li> <li>High energy level, physically active</li> <li>Fine motor skills</li> <li>Fatigue easily, more endurance</li> <li>Very early physical changes of puberty might be showing—can be hard for early bloomers</li> <li>Huge range in development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer attention spans</li> <li>Talkative and curious</li> <li>Enjoy competition and teamwork</li> <li>Sense of responsibility, dependability</li> <li>Capable of group cooperation/planning</li> <li>Increased reasoning ability</li> <li>Strong sense of right and wrong</li> <li>Understanding abstract concepts</li> <li>Able to see others point of view</li> <li>Desire independence</li> <li>Capable of self-evaluation, can recognize failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desire to belong to group</li> <li>Peer recognition important</li> <li>Attached to same gender</li> <li>Emotionally volatile</li> <li>Boys relate in physical activity, girls relate by talking</li> <li>Peer pressure stronger</li> <li>More aware of body, body image</li> <li>Interested in people and aware of differences</li> <li>Idolizing stars</li> </ul>

## 11-13 Years Old (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade)

Physical	Behavioral/Learning	Social/Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Girls grow faster than boys</li><li>▪ Boys can be immature</li><li>▪ Bodies clumsy and awkward with growing</li><li>▪ Physical appearance changing rapidly</li><li>▪ Most girls going through puberty, body image and self-esteem issues arise</li><li>▪ Good fine motor skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Abstract and logical thinking skills</li><li>▪ Ability for complex thought</li><li>▪ Sense of right and wrong</li><li>▪ Respect honesty and directness</li><li>▪ Respect adults getting to know them, hearing them</li><li>▪ Starting to test limits</li><li>▪ Strong fear of rejection</li><li>▪ Loud behavior can hide insecurity</li><li>▪ Perfectionists—can be frustrated if they fail at a task</li><li>▪ May start experimenting with drugs, alcohol, dating/sex</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Better handle on their own feelings</li><li>▪ Questioning authority, needs reasoning behind rules</li><li>▪ Wants to be heard and understood</li><li>▪ Easily embarrassed</li><li>▪ Moody, can be rude and short-tempered</li><li>▪ Influenced by peer group, acceptance is very important</li><li>▪ Distancing self from parents</li><li>▪ Crushes are common</li><li>▪ Need to belong—may dress and act alike</li></ul>

We would be happy to give you resources for Ages and Stages of younger and older participants that did not fall in the age ranges above.

## Child Behavior - Key Messages

### Positive Emphasis

Focus on the positive. Praise or acknowledge children when they are cooperative. Use incentives as a reward for positive behavior, rather than punishment.

### Drop the Rope

Avoid getting into a power struggle with children by giving firm, clear choices, allowing the child to be "right" and using "and" instead of "but."

### Do not Take Things Personally

Stay calm; know that a child's anger has nothing to do with you.

### Ask Good Questions

Ask "What?" instead of "Why?" Ask, "What happened?" "What should we do about it?" "What can I do to help?" "What do you think will happen if this keeps going on?"

### Seek Help

Smart adults know they do not have all the answers. The community program department is always available to answer questions and help.



## Anti-Bias Teachable Moments

Work *with* children to problem-solve *without blame*. Provide them with information. Honor the need for them to try resolving their conflicts.

### Description

An anti-bias teachable moment is an incident, event, conflict, comment, or interaction that presents an opportunity for the youth you work with to find out about diversity and inclusion. Responding to a teachable moment is a chance to expand everyone's thinking – your children and your own!

Below are some guidelines for handling teachable moments. Alter and adjust these guidelines so that they are appropriate for the children with whom you work and for the situation itself.

### Guidelines

1. **IMPORTANT!** Do not ignore what occurred. (Not responding implies agreement with and approval of what happened or what was said.) Be prepared with what you will say, before the situation arises.
2. Respond in some way as soon as possible. (Respond in a way that is comfortable for you and the child/youth.)
3. First, make sure you understand the situation. Ask questions in a friendly way to clarify what was said/what happened, especially if you are not sure (e.g. "When you said "\_\_\_\_", what did you mean?" "What happened, so you said that?")
4. If what was said or done was a problem, explain the difficulty without blaming. "You probably didn't realize it, but saying that could hurt someone's feelings." "When people hear "\_\_\_\_\_" they think people don't like them – we know you wouldn't mean it that way, so let's make sure there isn't a misunderstanding about this."
5. Answer any questions simply and honestly. (Avoid over-answering.)
6. Set boundaries, if necessary. (Reinforce rules or agreements you have about not excluding or teasing others based on their identity.)
7. Comfort children/youth whose feelings are hurt. Support the teased/hurt person in taking action if they wish. Follow their lead.
8. Help the children/youth problem solve – explore reasons for a conflict. There may be no reason, but discuss for clarification. Ultimately, the youth and adults in our programs do not have to become friends, but everyone needs to treat everyone else with respect.
9. If other children or adults have been witnesses, get them together when the issue is being resolved and explain it to them. It is important for everyone to know that they are protected psychologically, and that are clear boundaries and all are accountable.

## Corporal Punishment Policy

We never use corporal punishment to discipline a child, nor allow others to do so. Corporal punishment includes hitting, slapping, spanking, denying food or sleep, imposing physical punishment like push-ups, neglect or confinement, hazing, embarrassing activities, pranks, or in any way compromising a child's physical or emotional safety. These things constitute abuse, which is against the law.

## Two-Minute Time Fillers

### Physical Challenges and Contests

- Stand on one foot
- Touch tongue to nose
- Taco tongue
- Tongue flip
- Raise one eyebrow + both sides separately?
- Curl up lip + both sides separately?
- Cross eyes + one at a time?
- Pat head and rub stomach
- Coordination jumping jacks

### Guessing Games

- **"I'm thinking of a number..."** See who comes closest
- **Who has it? Who doesn't?** – Choose an observable object, such as hair ribbons, a watch, or a white shirt and say, "Juan has it. Kimi does not. Abdul has it. Andres doesn't." When the children think they know the answer, they raise their hands and ask, "Is it a watch?" (or a ribbon, or Velcro shoes, or whatever object you chose). The youth who guesses first is the winner.
- **Observation and Changes** – children in partners face each other. Exactly 30 seconds to look at the person with whom they are paired and to study everything about that person. Then the students in one line turn around and close their eyes while the students in the other line change something about themselves. For example, one person may take off an earring, switch shoes, or put their hair behind an ear. Then the children in the other line turn around and try to name what has changed. Switch roles and play the game again.
- **Don't Be Greedy!** – Players stand and leader rolls a die. Each time it is rolled, participants add the number to the previous total, keeping a running score. They can sit down at any time during the game, accepting the total at that point as far as their final score. For example, if a player sits down after three rolls of the die showing *four*, *six*, and *one*, they have a score of 11. The game continues until someone rolls a *two*. The children still standing lose ALL their points – because they have been greedy! The seated player(s) with the highest score wins.

### Memory Games

- **Alliteration** – "My name is Gloria and I love green grapes!" The next person in the circle says, "Her name is Gloria and she loves green grapes. I am Steven and I love silly stories." Keep repeating beginning and add on next person.
- **Favorite something** – "My name is [insert name] and my favorite food is [insert favorite food]." Same idea as above.

## Internet Communication Policy

**As a volunteer of Camp Fire, I agree not to use social networking profiles, group pages, blogs, or other Internet mediums to discuss behavior that is prohibited by Group Program policy, including but not limited to underage use of alcohol, or drug use, sexual behavior, delinquent behavior, destruction of property, harassment, or intimidation.**

I agree to be respectful of the program, the children and its employees in all communications online. As such, I agree to the following:

- I will not use obscenities, profanity, or vulgar language.
- I will not engage in harassment or intimidation.
- I will not post comments that are derogatory with regard to an individual's race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
- I will not use sexually explicit, suggestive, humiliating, or demeaning comments.
- I will not post photographs that compromise someone else's privacy.

I must request and receive prior permission from Camp Fire in order to:

- Use the camp name or official camp logo, or camp photograph.
- Add a link from my group page, profile or other site to the official Camp Fire or affiliated websites.
- Create a group "group page," or similar, with the above items.

**Once I identify myself as a Camp Fire Volunteer, the general public may see me as an ambassador or spokesperson of Camp Fire. I agree to adhere to the guidelines outlined above. I understand that if any guidelines are violated, it could result in disciplinary or legal action.**

## Service Agreement and Receipt of Materials – All Staff

**I agree** to carry out the responsibilities of my position, as described in my job description (pages 5-6), to the very best of my abilities.

**I agree** to model for youth and adults the Camp Fire philosophy of good citizenship and abide by the policies and standards of Camp Fire.

**I agree** to attend all training sessions, to be on time, and to be present during the entire training session.

**I agree** to the full time **COMMITMENT** I have made to the Community Programs Department, will be on time, and will be present as agreed.

**I agree** to notify the Director of Community Programs immediately if, for any reason, I find that I am unable to carry out my responsibilities as a Group Leader.

**I have received a group program manual and agree to read and adhere** to the policies and procedures of Camp Fire as documented in the Group Program Manual.

**I have received a Child Abuse Training PDF and agree to read and adhere** to the policies and procedures of Camp Fire as documented in the Group Program Manual.

**Having Completed the Leader Training, I agree** to follow:

Group Leader & Adult Volunteer Personnel Guidelines (p. 8 - 9)

Supervision Ratios (p. 13-14)

Safety Requirements, Standards, and Procedures (p. 13-15)

Permission Slips & Forms Procedures (p. 15)

Child Abuse Prevention & Reporting (p. 10)

Harassment Free Environment (p. 10-11)

Confidential Information (p. 11)

Internet Communication Policy (p.27)

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**Signature**

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**Date**