MANAGING CAMPER BEHAVIOURS - RCSC

INTRODUCTION

Please note that the content in this section discusses sensitive topics or shows sensitive images regarding potentially uncomfortable situations involving negative camper behaviour. While these topics may be uncomfortable to talk about, it is important that they be discussed and learned from.

All campers are required to conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful and cooperative manner while attending RCSC camps. Campers are responsible for their own behaviour and conduct. This module will walk you through different aspects of camper behaviour and provide insight on how to deal with behaviour related issues at camp. There are 5 lessons to discuss in this module:

1. Understanding the camper behaviour
2. Camper to Camper Conflict Resolution
3. Strategies & Tips
4. Incident Levels & Reporting
5. The Camper Removal Process

Lesson #1 - Understanding Camper Behaviour

A well-organized camp with a predictable routine and clear expectations will set campers up for success.

The Functions of Behaviour

Developing a strong, positive relationship with campers is imperative for developing good behaviour. Provide lots of praise…use campers names…and be specific, descriptive and convincing in order to reinforce the behaviours you want to see.

Instead of saying "Great Job" say "Great Job Sam, I love that you used your left foot in that exercise, that's going to make you a better player!"

Aim to provide 4 instances of praise for every 1 correction. That might seem like a lot to remember, but it just takes practice.

Understanding the Functions of Behaviour

To understanding the functions of behaviour is learn about the 4 most common types of behaviours, why they occur and strategies to prevent and manage that behaviour at camp.
The 4 common types are:

1. Escape/Avoidance
2. Sensory Challenges
3. Tangible
4. Attention Seeking

1. ESCAPE or AVOIDANCE

In the escape or avoidance behaviour type, you may experience a camper who:

- Refuses to participate
- Runs from the group or camp area
- Procrastinates – takes long breaks
- is silly - throwing materials or kick soccer balls randomly
- constantly says "I can't" or "I don't like this game" or "I hate this activity"

Now, why does it occur…

The camper feels anxious or frustrated because:

- A task is too hard - they may have difficulty with fine motor or gross motor activities
- They don't understand the instructions - they may have receptive language challenges or learning disabilities
- Or they can't remember so many steps or rules and therefore don't know what to do

Here are some prevention strategies:

1. Prepare the camper, make sure they know the day's plans and expectations ahead of time
2. Use "First....Then". For example, "First we'll play this activity, then we'll have a snack." "First we'll play soccer, then we'll take break time." The first activity is something they are struggling with, the second is something that is motivating to them.
3. Have visuals available for step-by-step instructions. The best way to do this is provide a demonstration so they see 'how to do it'.
4. Keep games & activities non-competitive (focus on non-elimination games)
5. Give two choices instead of yes or no
6. Prepare campers for transitions by giving a 5 or 10 minute warning

Some tips on managing this behaviour:

1. Make the task easier
2. Break down the steps into smaller simple instructions.
3. Focus on just the first step before giving more instructions
4. Provide lots of praise for trying
5. Offer alternative roles.

2. SENSORY CHALLENGES

With sensory challenges, a camper may experience:

- Running behaviours
- Meltdowns
- Avoiding places or activities
- Covering their ears, rocking, pacing
- Roughhousing

Why does this occur:
Well, the camper often feels anxious, irritated or bored because:

- They feel overstimulated - Their body or brain may be very sensitive to certain sounds, smells, visual stimuli, busy or crowded places, etc.
- They feel under stimulated - Their body seeks sensory input that it's not receiving such as motion, deep pressure and they need to move or act roughly to feel balanced again

Here are a few Prevention Strategies:

1. Be aware of difficult sensory environments – indoor areas that are noisy

2. If a camper has a hard time in a busy place, have them transition early, so the business builds slowly around them
3. Try alternative seating – put the camper in different seats/spots in the group circle

Some tips on managing this behaviour:

- Offer breaks in a different environment - Active body breaks or calm chill out breaks
- Go for a short walk – as a group
- Coach them on calming techniques such as deep breathing, counting to 10

3. TANGIBLE

With tangible challenges, a camper may experience the following:

- The camper didn't get what they wanted - This could be a Camper of the Week medal they wanted to win but didn't, perhaps they wanted to go first but weren't chosen, maybe they wanted to play a certain soccer activity but the group chose something different, or maybe they just couldn't finish something they started
- It could have been a camper to camper conflict
- Or just regular behaviours that are calming to the camper have now been disrupted

Why do these behaviours occur:
The camper is upset because…

- They have a difficult time controlling their emotions if they need to give up a preferred activity or item
- They have a difficult time controlling their emotions if they are frustrated – eg. they lost a game they wanted to win
- If they are used to a certain ritual that is disrupted, they may feel anxious or upset

Here are some Prevention Strategies:

1. Play non-competitive games
2. Always follow through on your promises - If yesterday you said you would play tag again today, play tag
3. If the schedule changes, let the camper know, ideally with a visual schedule
4. Intervene to facilitate camper conflict early - De-escalate emotions <u>before</u> you problem solve

Some tips on managing this Behaviour could include:

1. Teach calming strategies such as deep breathing and counting
2. If significant, remove the camper to a safe, quiet space, or remove the rest of the group to give the upset camper space to calm down
3. Negotiate or problem solve to find a reasonable solution
4. Make a plan for the next time a similar situation comes up
5. Having a meltdown takes a lot of energy, campers may need some quiet time before they are able to start fresh

4. Attention Seeking

With attention seeking challenges, a camper may experience:

- Running behaviours
- Or acting silly or disruptive

Why do these behaviours occur:
Typically a camper who has attention seeking behaviours has a difficult time participating. They often have a hard time learning the rules and expectations or keeping up with their peers because of learning disabilities or receptive language difficulties. When campers feel left out, they act out to get attention.

Here are some Prevention Strategies:

1. Remind the child how to politely get your attention - Raising a hand, using your name, etc.
2. Gives lots of social attention for appropriate behaviour
3. Give information in different ways - Lots of visuals, demonstrations, samples, etc.

Some tips on managing this Behaviour could include:

- Ignore minor behaviours if no one is at risk
- Use reward systems to promote expected behaviours

1 to 1 Support

At Royal City, we try very hard to accommodate each camper wherever we can. RCSC is committed to ensuring a successful camp experience for all campers. Unfortunately, our resources and staffing structure does not allow for 1:1 camper support. If a camper has an Educational Assistant (EA) at school that assists with behaviour concerns, they are required to bring a qualified support person with them to camp.
As a not for profit, RCSC is unable to provide this support so parents/guardians are required to make these arrangements. Full disclosure on the camper Registration Form is required at the time of registration so if you discover that a camper requires 1 to 1 support and they did not send a support person, contact head office right away.

Lesson #2 – Camper to Camper Conflict Resolution

A camper displaying undesirable behaviour is trying to communicate with you.

Steps to Camper to Camper Conflict Resolution

1. Have camper 1 share their side of the story.
2. Have camper 2 share their side of the story.
    - It is crucial to have both campers to share their side because: it is fair, ensures you gain a whole picture of the incident and helps to develop empathy, understanding and responsibility.
3. Ask campers for a solution. More often than not, campers will be able to come up with a solution themselves. Once campers have communicated their side and heard the opposing side, typically they will understand the error and the conflict will naturally de-escalate.
4. If the campers are not able to come up with a solution on their own, suggest one and have both campers agree to it.
5. Ask the campers what they should do next time to avoid this conflict from repeating.
6. Closely watch the campers for the next couple minute to ensure conflict is truly resolved.

If behaviour continues...

Your camper may be overwhelmed or overstimulated. Ask your Supervisor if they can take your camper to a quiet space, away from the group but within eye site as you don't want them to be 1 one 1 privately. Either take a blank piece of paper and some pencil crayons so the camper can quietly colour for a couple

minutes before returning to the group or just have a light conversation about things the camper likes get them in a good mood and calmed down.

Your camper may be bursting with energy. Similarly, ask Supervisor if they can take your camper to and area (within eye sight), where the camper can expend some energy (ex. dancing, doing jumping jacks etc.)

Your camper may be bored. Can you adjust the activity in a way to regain their attention? Does your camper need a 5-minute body break?

Lesson #3 - Strategies and Tips

Here are some strategies for leading a group of campers:

Relationship Building:

- Getting to know your camper's interests and hobbies early on is a great way of managing behaviours.
- If a camper feels comfortable around you, they are much less likely to show undesirable behaviour.

Create a Communication Channel:

- Find a way for all staff to communicate during the workday.
- If a camper needs to be temporarily removed from the group, talk to your onsite Supervisor.

Monday Morning Meetings:

Every Monday morning, have a quick meeting with your group of campers to discuss the following:

1. Explain the layout of the day as this will help ease nervousness and anxiety. Less anxiety means less undesired behaviours.
2. Share what their expectations are for the week (ex. throwing away garbage, being kind etc). Stick to these expectations all week.
3. Do a quick ice breaker based on the theme of the week. For example, during superhero week, they can share their name and their favourite superhero.

Find Opportunities to Restate Expectations:

- If you see a camper exhibiting poor behaviour, share a gentle reminder with the whole group without singling out the camper.
    - "Remember everyone, we are supposed to be including everyone in our game."

Grounding Method:

If your camper is experiencing anxiety or is overwhelmed, you or your Supervisor should bring them to a quiet place and try this grounding method.

- 5 things they can see
- 4 things they can touch
- 3 things they can hear
- 2 things they can smell
- 1 thing they can taste

Note: it does not matter which order the senses are in as long as the camper is naming things in descending amounts.

Reporting Behaviour:

When you are reporting behaviour, be very specific. You need to paint the entire picture to our Customer Support team at head office. Be very descriptive and ensure you are providing all the information so the staff receiving the report can act accordingly. When in doubt, call customer support with any questions or your concerns you may still have.

Lesson #4 Incident Levels and Reporting

There are 3 levels of incidents when it comes to camper behaviour: minor, moderate and severe. We'll explore each of these in more detail now.

LEVEL 1 MINOR Incident

This is a minor incident in nature that requires no action by staff beyond heightened awareness or is *quickly resolved* with verbal warnings.

Some behavioural indicators include but are not limited to:

- unacceptable use of language
- Disruptive or agitated behaviour
- Having difficulty following instructions
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Rough housing

Here are some appropriate actions for staff to take with campers showing minor behaviour issues:

- Use proactive and cooperative language. Ask questions to show you care.
- Come down to the campers level and make eye contact. Always be empathetic and respond calmly and confidently.
- Have the camper try deep breathing techniques
- Ask the camper if they would like to help keep them busy with a special job.
- Explain that if their behaviour continues you will need to speak with their parents
- Review the campers medical/behavioural information

Staff or Supervisor Action:

1. Submit an Incident/Injury Form to head office same day: circle 'minor'
2. Speak to parent/guardian at pick up.

At pick up, advise parents of the behaviour that occurred and let them know we want to work with them and discuss techniques that work for their child. Let them know that though currently a minor concern, continued behaviour will result in removal from camp. Be sure you are not ending the conversation on a negative note, speak to the parent about the positive moments their child had at camp.

LEVEL 2 MODERATE Incident

An incident moderate in nature that is resolved by staff after *some difficulty*.

Some behavioural indicators include but are not limited to:

- The continuation of a level 1 incident
- Repeated safety violations
- Openly hostile or aggressive behaviour towards a staff member, volunteer or camper
- Swearing or use of profane language including slurs
- Bullying or provoking campers
- Running away from camp

Staff or Supervisor Action:

1. Apply techniques from level 1
2. Give the camper a quiet place to calm down and allow them to re-join the group when ready
3. Give the camper a chance to correct their behaviour
4. Reassure the camper that we are there to keep them safe and want to solve their problem
5. Inform onsite Supervisor of the behaviour and who was involved.

Staff or Supervisor Action:

1. Submit an Incident/Injury Form to head office same day: circle 'moderate'
2. Speak to parent/guardian at pick up.

Contact head office to have a phone call placed to the campers parents. Maintain the safety of all campers and staff including the camper causing a disruption. Maintain communication with all staff and the camper. Discuss the continued problematic behaviour with parents at pick up. Advise parents this behaviour is not acceptable, and a third incident will result in removal. If possible, end on a positive note.

LEVEL 3 SEVERE incident

An incident that presents a *serious and immediate safety concern* for staff and/or campers.

Some behavioural indicators include but are not limited to:

- The continuation of a level two 2
- Threatening a camper or staff member with physical violence
- Damaging property belonging to the site, campers, staff or volunteer
- Violent, threatening, intimidating or disorderly behaviour
- Consistently rude or argumentative
- Physical assault of intent to injure
- Jeopardizing the safety of other campers and staff

Staff or Supervisor Action:

1. Apply techniques from level 1 and level 2
2. Attempt to calm the camper and persuade them to comply by explaining the consequences
3. Have another staff member try to calm the camper
4. Reassure the camper as they may be frightened by the incident
5. Maintain situational awareness

Staff or Supervisor Action:

1. Contact Head Office and speak to Customer Service Manager immediately.
2. Submit an Incident/Injury Form to head office same day: circle 'severe'

Head office will call parent/guardian and have the camper picked up as soon as possible. The camper will be removed for the remainder of the day, week or season depending on the situation.

Incident Reporting

Incident/ Injury Forms can be submitted to head office (during the same day it occurred) via 1 of 2 methods:

1. Complete hardcopy, take a photo and email it to info@royalsoccer.com
2. Complete a Google docs form available through Staff Internal Portal.

Lesson #5 The Camper Removal Process

Why do we have a camper removal process?

RCSC is dedicated to providing campers with fun, learning environment in a safe and inclusive environment. Camp staff do what is within their power to resolve conflict and behavioural issues at their site in the hopes of avoiding the removal of a camper. Unfortunately, sometimes it is necessary to remove a camper from the camp setting to prevent further safety concerns for the other campers in the program, the staff, volunteers or even the camper themselves.

The process for removing a child from camp is as follows:

1. Verbal Warning

Camp staff issue verbal warnings to the camper regarding their behaviour. An Incident/Injury Form is filled out describing the incident and steps taken by camp staff to resolve the situation. A copy of the Incident/Injury Form is sent to head office. The Supervisor on site at the time of pick up is responsible for discussing the incident with the parent/guardian at pick up that afternoon.

2. Behavioural Strategy

Camp staff have consulted parents regarding the behavioural issues and no improvement has been made by the camper following the initial incident. A second Incident/Injury Form is to be filled out describing the incident and steps taken by camp staff to resolve the situation. A copy is sent to head office. Head office contacts the parents to discuss the issues and implement a behavioural strategy or decide that the time has come for the child to be removed from camp.

3. Camper Removal

After implementing the behavioural strategy noted in step 2, a 3rd incident will result in a phone call to the parent/guardian where arrangements are made for the camper to be picked up from camp. The parent/guardian will be informed that the child has been removed for the reminder of the camp season and no refund will be provided. The parent/guardian or other authorized pick up person must pick the camper up as soon as possible and sign the camper out showing identification as per the pick up procedure.

Note: RCSC will not remove a child from camp without first notifying the parent and will always allow the child to remain at camp until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up by the parent or authorized pick up.

It is the policy of RCSC that campers will be sent home when...

1. They can no longer be reasonably managed by staff, volunteers and/or have consistently become a risk to other campers.
2. Their behaviour is consistently abusive towards staff, volunteers and/or campers.
3. They have been consistently rude to staff, volunteers, campers and/or have demonstrated a disregard for the rules of RCSC camp.
4. They have assaulted others and/or pose a significant health risk to staff, volunteers and campers.
5. The Supervisor on site indicates and head office agrees that everything has been done to manage the situation after providing opportunities for behavioural correction and no significant change has occurred.

We put these strategies, tips and information in this video so that you can return back to it any time you want.

You may only remember a fraction of this information the first time you watch it but the more you listen, watch and practice what you learn, the better you will get at it.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call at head office.