

Camp Safety Training: Facilitator's Guide

Playground Safety & Programming at Camp

Discussion Questions

- What incidents could happen on the playground?
- How do we keep actively engaged on the playground?
- What do we need to do prior to taking campers to the playground?

Activity #1

Name of activity: Give Me Five

Length of activity: 10 minutes

By simply brainstorming the takeaways from the Playground Safety & Programming at Camp training together, you can both encourage reflection and discussion, and also get a sense of staff learning styles and retention. This will give you a sense of what learning will need to be reinforced.

Objectives:

1. Staff will be able to reflect on common hazards and risks on the playground.
2. Staff will be able to communicate what needs to be done prior to taking kids on the playground.
3. Staff will reflect on the importance of active engagement on the playground.

Materials:

Markers, sticky note pads and large chart paper or white board located in front of group.

Instructions:

1. Break into small groups. Write five takeaways together (five minutes) – one on each sticky note.
2. The facilitator can prompt the groups by asking what they remember, what specific actions they would now take differently, and what they think are the most important lessons. It's a good idea to also ask how the role of lifeguard and camp counselor, or staff member, are different.
3. Each group shares sticky notes with the whole group. Write or have someone scribe on sticky notes what the group comes up with.

Activity #2

Name of activity: Blind Spots and Playground Equipment

Length of activity: 15 minutes

Every playground is different. This activity will allow staff to explore their specific playground—looking to apply the learning from the video by identifying specific blind spots or potential hazards.

Objectives:

1. Staff will explore the playground, learning what to look for during an equipment inspection.
2. Staff will identify blind spots and begin developing proactive strategies to make sure these areas remain under supervision.

Materials:

Playground – it's a good idea to set up a few hazards such as a slippery piece of equipment or water bottles under the swing/end of slide, trash on the playground, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Have staff in small groups tour the playground.
2. Ask them to inspect it, looking for equipment failures or hazards.
3. Encourage them to look for blind spots, and discuss how you might adjust supervision to account for them. For example, staff rotations; eye contact; verbal engagement; proximity; look up, down, under, around.

Activity #3

Name of activity: Active Engagement on a Playground

Length of activity: 15 minutes

Active engagement is one of those concepts that's easier to experience than to talk about. This activity is designed to help staff directly experience what active engagement does and doesn't feel like, and how to deploy strategies that can help facilitate active engagement. It will also allow staff to see the playground through the eyes of a camper, potentially spotting hazards they might not otherwise have seen.

Objectives:

1. Staff will identify proper placement on the playground.
2. Staff will learn games to use on playground.
3. Staff will learn how to actively engage through eye contact, verbal and non-verbal communication.

Instructions:

1. Lead your group onto the playground.
2. Ask a few staff members to pretend being campers using the playground.
3. Post other staff throughout the playground (whatever number you need to meet typical ratios) and ask them to practice watching campers, where to stand, where to look and how to engage with campers.
4. Be sure to switch so everyone has a turn to be a camper and staff member if time permits.