

Day Camp Director Certificate Overview

Welcome to the Day Camp Director Certificate Course!! If you currently hold (or maybe hope to hold) a Day Camp Director position in a youth program, the new knowledge you learn and the skills you develop in this course can help you feel more confident and qualified as you function in this position or consider one of these jobs in the future. So get ready to enter into your own world of learning and professional development!

General Course Description

This certificate course is specifically designed for people who are working as a newer day camp director in a day camp or some other kind of youth setting like afterschool. The term “day camp director” can be a broad job title that includes owners, administrators, directors, and afterschool directors.

However, you all share the expectation that you often have responsibilities for the management of your operations and programs, supervisory expectations for other staff, administrative responsibilities, and overall responsibility for training and evaluation efforts undertaken by your program. Some of you may be full-time, year-round employees; others of you may be year-around part-time employees; and still others of you may be seasonal employees.

This course is an intensive 20 hour course built around the ACA thirteen core competencies. It has been designed to provide you with some of the most typical skills and activities encountered by day camp directors. At the end of the course, you will have completed learning experiences that enhance skill and knowledge development common to day camp directors so you can:

- 1) Be a better administrator and supervisor to your staff
- 2) Better meet expectations of your job performance, and
- 3) Enhance your own professional development

Course Expectations

The online format of the course leaves much of the responsibility for learning and assessment to the integrity of the individual learner. The following list of expectations is important for the learner to accept:

- We assume that each of you has an interest in becoming more skilled in working with youth and fulfilling your job responsibilities.
- We expect that you will complete all the required activities in the lessons.
- We expect you to communicate with your boss or seek out a professional who can act as a mentor for you as you work through this course.
- We expect you to keep a course notebook (paper or digital - it is up to you).
- We expect you to complete the self-assessments with honest, thoughtful effort.
- We expect you to be responsible for your own learning, which means that you will seek help from appropriate sources if necessary.

Assignments and Evaluations

A Word about the Assignments....

Generally, you will be asked to read articles, watch short video clips, or listen to audio files. Many times you will be asked to respond to a set of questions in a notebook or the online learning journal, talk about what you learned with a mentor, or to just reflect on the information. At times, you will be asked to complete tasks common to day camp directors (design a training, analyze a budget, etc.), and sometimes you are asked to complete a process that you will likely encounter in your job as a day camp director. We strongly encourage you to access your organization’s specific forms, processes, trainings, policies, etc. to add relevance and authenticity to the activities designed for each competency. We also believe that learners should be encouraged to complete the optional and/or “Just for Fun” activities. While not required for certificate completion, these optional activities offer learners additional valuable, often more in-depth, experiences that extend the learning of that competency.

A Word about Evaluation...

Remember that assessment is about learning. We expect that adult learners are responsible for self-reflection and critical self-assessment that reflects your understanding of a topic or subject. The required assignments for each lesson are designed for the learners to complete as self-reflection in your course notebook or journal, through quizzes, and checklists. As you complete the self-assessment at the end of each competency module, it is important that you recognize not only the new level of skill you have gained, but that you are also ethically accountable for these new skills. Upon completion of the entire Day Camp Director certificate course, you will have the opportunity to receive a certificate of completion for the course as well as a digital badge.

Course Schedule

This certificate is an intensive 20 hour course. Each learner will work through the lessons for each competency at their own individual pace. There is a recommended order to the course, because some competencies build on knowledge and skill development and learning experiences from earlier assignments.

Course Outline

1. Youth/Adult Growth & Development
 - Understand and apply to the camp experience how youth and adults learn and develop in physical, social, emotional and cognitive domains.
 - Adopt a systematic approach to embrace inclusive positive youth development practices in the camp experience.
 - Create staff training tools by assembling resources that align with current youth development practices.
2. Learning Environment and Curriculum
 - Identify critical environmental and individual influences that affect learning and development in children.
 - Apply relevant aspects of nature play to the day camp setting.
 - Engage staff in designing, implementing, and evaluating curricula intentionally targeted to improve youth (and/or adult) developmental outcomes.
3. Program Planning
 - Define outcomes and intentionality and describe why they are important.
 - Create a logic model to target a specific outcome.
 - Design an effective activity sequence.
 - Brainstorm ways to adapt activities to meet various physical, social, or logistical needs.
4. Evaluation
 - Explain their day camp's mission, purpose, goals and brand promise.
 - Identify their day camp's specific youth outcomes for evaluation.
 - Implement an evaluation plan using data collection strategies.
 - Design an assessment system to evaluate day camp staff behaviors that contribute to positive youth outcomes.
5. Professionalism & Leadership
 - Examine the Camp Director's leadership style and role at camp
 - Examine and/or articulate the camp's organizational structure and vision
 - Learn to support the professional development of their staff as well as themselves
 - Identify resources that will benefit their continued professional development while also benefitting camp
6. Health & Wellness
 - Design a day camp health care policies and procedures plan
 - Analyze and respond to a variety situations common to the day camp setting
 - Describe current camper and staff health and wellness considerations
 - Identify ways to integrate health and wellness practices within their day camp community
7. Risk Management
 - Interpret key concepts and terms associated with risk management.
 - Analyze risks within their day camp.
 - Identify resources and subject matter experts to help reduce risk and mitigate loss.

- Assess their current emergency procedures and revise if needed.
- Construct a risk management plan for their day camp.

8. Cultural Competence

- Discuss the value of diversity within the day camp setting.
- Increase their sense of cultural self-awareness.
- Create an action plan that supports cultural competence in all aspects of their day camp.
- Identify 3 specific resources to apply when fostering a sense of cultural competence within their day camp community.

9. Family and Community Connections

- Compare select demographics of children and families that represent their program's clientele.
- Design a component of staff training that helps staff learn about the influences of the community/families on the youth attending their day camp program.
- Help families understand and appreciate camp outcomes.
- Devise ways to better connect and include families in the camp programming in meaningful ways.

10. Nature and Environment

- Describe the developmental benefits for children in nature.
- Develop a personal practice with nature in your home community.
- Describe opportunities for their day campers to interact with nature.
- Locate day camp community resources, opportunities, and partners that promote nature connections with children.
- Create a plan for nature-based experiences and learning to use in their day camp program.

11. Business Management and Practices

- Explain your organization's job responsibilities of staff supervised by the day camp director.
- Understand your present market to be able to provide better customer and consumer services.
- Articulate the process by which campers sign up and experience the day camp program.
- Examine responsibilities for day camp director related to financial reporting and monitoring (i.e., award camper scholarships, make purchases, pay staff, etc.)
- Evaluate measures taken by the organization for managing and safeguarding the organization's operational financial risks.

12. Human Resource Management

- Identify best practices used in their day camp's hiring process, including knowledge and implementation of relevant local, state and federal laws.
- Establish a plan on how to train staff for their roles in personnel evaluation that includes a list of content to cover and the protocols, forms, and timelines used for personnel evaluation.
- Articulate the process and best practice for termination of employment for all types of staff they have at camp (including at-will, salaried, and volunteer staff, minors and adults).

13. Site and Facility

- Supervise the management of the physical site and where required, successfully assess, evaluate, prioritize, and plan for facility and site needs, which may include capital improvements.
- Understand the importance of developing a site/facilities budget that maintains and improves facilities while sustaining fiscal responsibility.
- Manage the employment, supervision, and coordination of staff engaged in the maintenance and improvement of the camp's buildings, equipment, and other facilities.
 - Coordinate the evaluation of food service performance for quality and budget compliance (outsourcing/contracting, in-house)
 - Coordinate the evaluation of transportation programs and equipment
- Support the performance of all site, facility, food service, and transportation staff in accordance with prescribed regulatory compliance guidelines, including local, state, and federal guidelines as well as American Camp Association accreditation standards.