

# SUMMER CAMP SAFETY TIP SHEET

BEAU BIDEN



FOUNDATION

The Beau Biden Foundation strives to ensure that children are protected year-round. Since screening of camps and programs are critical to child safety, the Beau Biden Foundation suggests parents or caregivers ask the following questions to assess a camp's child protection policies.

## WHAT ARE THE SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM'S POLICIES AROUND CHILD PROTECTION?

- Does the summer camp/program have a stand-alone **Child Protection Policy**?
- Does the policy require all staff and volunteers to have a: finger print background check; sex offender, child protection, and adult abuse registry checks; and motor vehicle record check?
- Does the camp or program provide education for children around predator awareness, Internet Safety and bullying/cyberbullying?
- Does the camp or program require training for all staff and volunteers regarding their mandated reporter responsibility, recognizing abuse and neglect, and responding appropriately to suspicions of abuse and neglect?

## What safety measures are in place regarding interactions between adults and children?

- Are all interactions with children always interruptible and observable, whether in-person or virtual?
- Are online connections between staff/volunteers and children outside of camp programming prohibited (i.e. "friending" or "following" and online gaming)?
- What are the guidelines around appropriate vs. inappropriate touch?
- Who is the point of contact if there is an issue with child safety?



## Are interactions among children adequately supervised?

- Are older children responsible for supervising younger children?
- Are the hidden/secluded areas on-site assessed for safety?
- Is there a code of conduct for campers which prohibits bullying behaviors?



## What are the parameters for supervision and accountability?

- Are parents required to sign children in and out each day? Is this monitored by staff?
- Are children only released to pre-authorized individuals for pick-up?
- Does the camp's staff-to-child ratio account for the age and development of the children being served?
- What safeguards are in place for high risk situations and settings (such as: bath and changing rooms, application of sunscreen, naptime and field trips or overnight stays)?

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Reporting abuse and neglect can protect a child and get help for a family. Anyone can report suspected child abuse and neglect. In many states, **every adult is a mandated reporter.**

Other states require certain adults to report suspected child abuse and neglect; generally mandated reporters include adults who provide care for children, including camp counselors and volunteers.

All reports of child abuse and neglect should be made **immediately** to the state where abuse is believed to occur.

**[Click here](#)** to find the child abuse hotline number for your community.

## SUPERVISION RATIOS

**0–5 years:** 1 staff for each 5 overnight campers and 1 staff for each 6 day campers

**6–8 years:** 1:6 for overnight and 1:8 for day

**9–14 years:** 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day

**15–18 years:** 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day

## How are emergency situations handled?

- Are staff and volunteers provided a policy and prepared for an emergency? (i.e. missing child, medical emergency, disclosure of abuse, lockdown, or evacuation)
- Is there an established policy for communicating to parents or caregivers during an emergency?

## Guidelines for staff interaction with children should include:

- All interactions between adults and children should be observable and interruptible.
- Children should never receive gifts of any kind from staff or volunteers.
- Summer camp counselors or volunteers should not “friend” or “follow” children on any personal social media accounts. They should never have one-on-one electronic communication, such as texting or direct messaging, with staff or volunteers.
- All photos or videos require prior written authorization by a parent or caregiver and should not be posted on an adult’s personal social media accounts unless the image was made “sharable” on the camp’s social media platforms.
- Guidelines must be established to address appropriate versus inappropriate touch and positive discipline strategies to further protect children when away from home.
- Children should be treated equally with respect to gender, race, religion, culture, or ability. This policy should be upheld for peers, as well as staff members and volunteers.
- Children should never be transported alone or in a staff member’s personal vehicle.
- Employee or volunteer interactions with campers outside of camp must be addressed in policy.





## **WHAT PARENTS/CAREGIVERS CAN DO TO HELP ENSURE THEIR CHILD IS SAFE**

- **Read camp policies before enrolling your child to ensure child protection is a priority!**
- **Encourage your child to talk to a trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable or worried about something.**
- **Alternate pick-up/drop-off times when possible and observe your child interacting with staff/volunteers.**
- **Talk to your child at pick-up about their day by using open-ended questions.**



## **MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

For more information and resources, please visit [BeauBidenFoundation.org](https://BeauBidenFoundation.org).