



## WHAT IS CAMP PROGRAM?

**Program in camp is everything that happens to the campers while they are there.** The core of program is built around being in the outdoors. The activities alone never make good program. Camp program is something that can be done only in camp or can be done with a different perspective than in an urban setting. Every effort should be made to infuse every camp activity with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience including the three keys; Discover, Connect and Take Action.

Program includes the whole experience of living in an outdoor environment; getting to know each other and the group; progressing in skills learned and attitudes developed. Even the food eaten and staff members' attitude is part of the program.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF DAY CAMP PROGRAM

1. **SPORTS, GAMES, AND FITNESS ACTIVITIES:**
  - a. Team or group sports – volleyball, soccer, softball, and so on. May also include lead-up games to specific sports.
  - b. Individual or dual sports – archery, track and field.
  - c. Active or running games – tag, dodge ball, relay races, cooperative games and initiatives.
  - d. Fitness activities – aerobics, lap swimming, dance, jump rope activities, and speed football.
2. **OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:**
  - a. Hiking, backpacking, and orienteering, compass use.
  - b. Camp craft skills, outdoor cooking.
  - c. Nature study, ecology, conservation.
3. **ARTS, CRAFTS, AND HOBBIES:**
  - a. Drawing, painting, printmaking
  - b. Macramé, weaving, basket weaving
4. **MUSIC, DRAMA, DANCE**
  - a. Singing, homemade instruments, singing games.
  - b. Skits, puppets, storytelling, charades.
  - c. Folk dances, square dances, popular music dances, and aerobic dance.
  - d. Talent shows.
5. **SOCIAL RECREATION**
  - a. All-camp events including carnivals, picnics, campfires, cookouts, scavenger hunts, etc.
  - b. Getting acquainted games, socials.
6. **MENTAL, LINGUISTIC, AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES:**
  - a. Mental games, paper and pencil games, problem-solving, special interest groups, board games such as “Trivial Pursuit,” or “Pictionary.”
7. **SELF-ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES:**
  - a. Personal grooming, kapers, housekeeping.
  - b. Values clarification, getting to know yourself games, getting to know others games.
  - c. Free time for private thought and growth.

8. SOCIAL SERVICE FUNCTIONS:
  - a. Service projects, teaching other groups.

## HOW CAMP PROGRAM EVOLVES

1. The Stage is set with:
  - a. the Girl Scout Leadership Experience as a basis of all plans
  - b. facilities outdoors
  - c. tools, equipment, materials
  - d. staff adequate in leadership skills, experience, numbers and age
  - e. needs and desires of girls
2. Pre-Camp Training Acquaints Staff with Possibilities of:
  - a. site
  - b. Girl Scout program and standards
  - c. campers as individuals and as a camp group
  - d. rest of staff, their responsibilities, their interests and skills
  - e. the camp's ways of working
3. Staff makes Program Plans for the First Day or So:
  - a. to help girls get acquainted with each other and the camp
  - b. to get settled in
  - c. to begin planning program
4. Girls and Staff Together Consider:
  - a. program possibilities of site
  - b. help from resource people – theme of the specialty unit (if any) or camp
  - c. time they will be in camp
  - d. interest of girls
  - e. jobs that need to be done

**QUALITY** is evident when we begin to see these questions answered in a positive way, and when we begin to see girls living comfortably in the out-of-doors...taking part in new adventuresome activities.

*Quality is shown in happiness, excitement, growth, and security.*

## PROGRAM SCHEDULING

After selecting a variety of program activities for your unit, you begin the challenging process known as program scheduling. Putting your plans on paper can often be a difficult chore, but if you try to follow these simple guidelines, your program should be a success.

**Pre-Scheduling:** Many of your unit activities will be a part of a daily routine...schedule these activities first. They may include flag ceremony, lunch/snacks, swimming times, and all-camp programs. Activities that require a special consultant (archery) or program area (arts and crafts) should be scheduled next.

**Balance:** Alternate times of activity and rest, learning and play, etc.

**Tempo:** Be sure to provide adequate transition time of campers from one program area to another. Remember to allow ample time for such procedures as dressing and cleaning up.

**Variety:** Choose activities from each of the Key Elements of Day Camp Program. This not only helps with variety, but also with balance. Try to use several different methods of teaching activities.

**Flexibility:** Camp should be a place with a relaxed atmosphere, so don't etch your plans in stone. Make room for change and spontaneity in your schedule.

**By following these simple guidelines, you should be able to design a creative, high quality program. (See document titled Section 7: Outdoor Program Progression Chart).**

## **DAY CAMP GOVERNMENT**

The same systems that are used for decision-making in troops are appropriate in a camp unit setting. You may choose from:

### **BROWNIE RING**

This is a circle in which each girl shares in planning, problem solving, and decision-making in her group. Sometimes a note is needed to make decisions, and sometimes committees may be formed to develop plans.

### **TOWN MEETING**

Similar to the Brownie Ring, this system is used by Juniors when everyone in the unit participates in decision-making and leadership. Usually, one of the girls is chosen as a moderator to lead the discussion.

### **PATROL SYSTEM**

In this system, the unit is divided into small "patrols" of five to eight girls. Each patrol usually chooses its own name and a patrol leader. The patrol leaders meet with the unit leader to determine those things that need to be discussed within the patrol and to share the opinions of the patrol members. Patrol leaders see that patrol meetings run smoothly and cover the appropriate topics. Often kapers are divided according to patrol groups and, again, patrol leaders see that all tasks are performed effectively.

### **CAMP COUNCIL**

Many camps have a Camp Council, which plans for the programs that involve the entire camp. The Camp Council usually includes the Camp Director or Program Director, representatives from each unit (two girls from each is preferable) and other camp staff. The Camp Council may only meet once or twice during a one-week session to decide on campfire program, theme days, all camp menu or other activities. The plans are then shared with the units and often carried out under the direction of the Camp Council.

## **SOME FOUNDATIONS OF SUPERVISION OF CAMPERS**

1. Give clear and complete instructions so the camper knows exactly what to do and how to do it. Express confidence in her ability.
2. Run through the expectation step by step and emphasize the key points.
3. Let the camper do the task with friendly supervision. Communicate! Let them know how they are doing. Provide feedback as they learn.
4. Give credit and praise when due. Compliment campers on their progress. Reinforce correct behaviors. Provide recognition.
5. Allow them to do things on their own (supervised by staff, of course). Check with them to see how it is going.

6. Involve campers in decision-making/problem solving. While there are some decisions/problems that can only be handled by staff, there are others that the whole group could handle together. Learn to tell the difference between them. Make it a practice to help your campers grow and feel important by involving them.
7. Maintain an open door. When you are easy to approach, your relationships with your campers and your ability to spot problems early on will be enhanced.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW**

A common counselor concern is how to maintain discipline with a group of energetic and excited young children. The best discipline technique is to prevent the situations which bring out misbehavior. Most children want the attention and approval of an adult who is as important as their counselor. Most children do not want to misbehave.

*Used from the very first meeting, the following suggestions will establish a climate which may prevent most discipline problems.*

- \* Use high-energy and quieting activities, as appropriate, to help to control energy levels.
- \* Setting ground rules for behavior gives the campers a set of expected behaviors, even though they may need frequent repetition. Rules may be changed at a later time to suit the abilities of the children, but it is more difficult to set stricter rules than it is to agree to more relaxed rules.
- \* Have a signal or signals for requesting the attention of the group. Use the quiet sign (raising your right hand) or other signals. "When everyone is sitting with their hands on their laps, I will begin."
- \* Become involved in the group activities, so you can help to establish a group feeling.
- \* Get group involvement in decisions. If campers help to make decisions, they will be more likely to follow them.
- \* Do not take your personal feelings and prejudices out on the campers.
- \* Be consistent.
- \* Remember, "The tongue is the only keen-edged tool which grows sharper with constant use." Do not nag, bluff, or be pushy. Watch your attitude when dealing with children. Most children do not understand the concept of sarcasm yet, so don't use it.
- \* Try to see their side of the question. Explore it with them verbally until you understand it fully. Even if the camper was wrong in her actions, she will appreciate your effort at understanding her.
- \* Don't "pick" on "every little thing" a camper does. Sometimes it is wiser to overlook some things.
- \* Follow up with all campers who you have disciplined. Be certain that you still have the respect and confidence of the camper.
- \* Be sincere in your work, and set a good example yourself. A picture tells a thousand words.
- \* Do not judge misconduct solely by how much it annoys you.

- \* Do not offer choices if there really are no options. Say “We're going to sing a song,” instead of “Do you want to sing a song?”
- \* Avoid making threats. To some children, the words, “If you do that one more time, I'll...” are a signal to misbehave just to see if you'll carry out the threat.
- \* If you make a mistake, admit it, but don't dwell on it. An apology is welcomed by any child, if given sincerely.
- \* Laugh often with campers, but NEVER at them. Step in quickly if you see campers laughing at another camper.
- \* Try to get every child involved somewhat equally. The child who never talks needs you to open the door occasionally with a comment like “What would you like to do?” The over-talkative child needs to be encouraged to give up the floor to others. While that child talks, the attention of the others will wander.
- \* When there is a need for a new rule, encourage the campers to decide what it needs to be. Rules they set will be more readily enforced by the group.
- \* Try to treat all children fairly. Children who are favored may misbehave to keep the counselor's attention, and children who are not favored may misbehave to attract anyone's attention.
- \* Give lots of encouragement and praise when things are well done. These positive reinforcements will go a lot further in keeping discipline than many more words given as corrections or reprimands.
- \* Offer choices of action. If a camper's bed needs to be made, tell the child, “You can either make your bed now and I will help you, or you can make it later by yourself.” The objective of discipline is to accomplish a task or better the situation, **NOT TO PUNISH**.
- \* Do not get into an argument with children. Restate your request calmly as many times as it takes until the camper realized that you have set an expectation and that you will not bend the rules for her.
- \* Never reprimand a child in front of her peers. This only leads to resentment and a loss of positive feelings toward the counselor. It may also lessen the camper's self-esteem.
- \* Remember, the kid that bugs you the most, needs you the most.

## DISCIPLINE DO'S AND DON'TS

Don't	Do
1. Don't discipline a child in front of a group. This only hurts her ego which means you've lessened your chances of "getting through" to her, and strengthened your chances that she will retaliate.	1. Do get the child away from the group as soon as possible. Make sure you are out of earshot.
2. Don't start out lax. You can't firm up the rules once you've lost control.	2. Do start out firm. You can loosen up as the campers grow and learn to work together and with you.
3. Don't trap them. Children react to being trapped by lying or clamming up.	3. Do allow them an "out" when disciplining them. Be careful not to back them into a corner.
4. Don't do a lot of the talking, and don't assume things.	4. Do ask them questions. Have them talk about the problem. Use your questions to get to the heart of the problem.
5. Don't raise your voice, call them names or over-react.	5. Do keep your cool. Calm, cool voices that get quieter as the problem gets worse are far more effective.
6. Don't cover up your mistakes.	6. Do admit to and apologize for your mistakes. The girls will think more of you, not less. And besides, what better way to teach them to admit to and apologize for mistakes than by doing it yourself.
7. Don't dwell on the bad or negative. It tends to encourage misbehavior, as does excessive or sharp criticism.	7. Do accentuate the positive. Find something good about each girl as soon as possible and praise her for it. Minimize criticism. Children bloom with praise.
8. Don't talk "over" noise in hopes that the girls will be quiet and listen. After a while, they'll just ignore you.	8. Do stop, wait for them to stop talking before you begin. They can't pay attention with their ears when their mouths are engaged.
9. Don't use threats. Ever. If your girls are to see you as a person to trust, a person who says what she means, then you can't use threats. If you threaten them with some dire punishment, then you must carry it out so they'll see you as a person who keeps her word.	9. Do phrase things so you don't need threats. Instead of "If you don't stop...I'll..." try "This must stop because..." Giving them a reason why something is "good" or "bad" because you'd have to uphold helps them to establish their own value system.
10. Don't be insecure, unprepared or indecisive. If they can't trust and believe in you, they will have no security. They need you as a role model.	10. Do be self-confident, relaxed, and prepared. Sometimes being well prepared is the best antidote for insecurity and self-consciousness. They came to you because they needed someone like you in their lives. Be the person they believe you to be.

## **PROGRAM RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM COUNCIL**

**Audio visual, program, and outdoor equipment and materials** may be borrowed from the council and are signed out through the council office. Call in advance to reserve them for the dates you will need them. **Leaders should be considerate of others who wish to use these resource materials. Please use them with reasonable care and return them promptly.**

## **RESOURCE LIBRARY**

**Program Kits:** The Program Kits created by staff at GSEP contain all the instructions and supplies necessary to carry out the described activities within each kit. It is important to read through the materials ahead of time to determine the need for supplemental equipment and for the leader to familiarize herself with the procedures. Availability of kits vary from service center to service center, but may include the following:

**Archaeology Kit** – This kit was created as a Gold Award project by a Senior Girl Scout to help girls learn to appreciate the importance of archaeology as a career used to help us understand our history and heritage. Originally created to investigate the long past of Camp Helena, this kit can now be used to earn an Archaeology badge for Juniors and ordered through the Council office.

**CityScope Kit** – This kit contains most of the materials you will need to complete activities in the CityScope Plan-It. The kit includes the book *Stellaluna*, magnifying glasses and geology materials.

**Compass Kit** – This kit contains all the necessary equipment needed to teach girls the fine art of finding their way through the use of a compass and map reading skills. Games help to make the learning process more fun and can help the girls to earn the awards in the different level handbooks concerning orienteering.

**Discovery Kit** – Brain teasers, tricks, symbols, codes and science activities are just a sampling of the many possibilities presented as the girls learn about science and technology.

**Dramatics Kit** – Resource books and a tape, Pretend to Be, supplement the many program activities in this kit which introduces the girls to the theater. Try some of the easy-to-lead pantomimes, charades or mirror stunts, plus many more activities.

**Earth Adventure Kit** – This fun activity kit packed in a Treasure Chest is filled with activities that deal with environmental issues specifically geared to an audience of Daisy/younger Brownie level Girl Scouts.

**Girl Scout History “Decade Kits”** – Eight kits, each focusing on one decade in the history of Girl Scouting, include The Beginnings, The Twenties, The Thirties, The Forties, The Fifties, The Sixties and The Seventies. Girls can explore history with vintage uniforms and handbooks and activities of that time.

**Girl Scouting in the USA Kit** – Contains resource materials for completing requirements for the badge.

**Girl Scouting Around the World Kit** – Contains materials for completing the badge requirements.

**Lemmi Sticks Kit** – This kit contains enough Lemmi Sticks for a troop of 16 to participate in this traditional song and rhythm activity from New Zealand. The kit includes the words and written music.

**Juliette Low Birthday Bash Kit** – This kit contains the materials you need to host a Birthday Bash in honor of Juliette Low. Activities include a Promise and Law Daisy, a play about Juliette Low, Kim’s Game (using items about Juliette Low’s Life), a Juliette Low Cheer and a Birthday Cake Candle Ceremony.

**Music Kit** – This kit can be used to complete many different music activities including making your own instruments and exploring careers in music. Activities can fulfill requirements for both Brownie and Junior Girl Scout Awards.

**My Body Kit** – Check this kit out to complete the “My Body” Try-It. Components of the kit include stethoscopes, reflex hammers and mirrors.

**Puppetry Kit** – What can you use to make puppets? How can you make an inexpensive puppet theater? This kit contains many samples and ideas from hand puppets, finger puppets and paper plate puppets to more complicated marionettes. Tapes are included to provide background music and stories to help the girls act out their puppet stories.

**Talking with T.J.** – An exciting video program developed by the Hallmark Corporation for kids in grades 2-4 about working and playing together.

**Water Wonders Kit** – This kit will help Junior Girl Scouts to complete the Water Wonders Badge. Activities focus on the water cycle, water as a resource, water life and the aquatic food chain. (Gold Award Project/Darylann Villard)

**Nature To Go Activity Bags** – This kit consists of eight different bags containing all the materials needed to help girls understand and appreciate the natural world and the impact that humans have on that world. Each bag deals with different environmental issues and activities. Below are brief descriptions of the focus of each bag. Be sure that you request the bags by name. You may borrow no more than two at a time.

**Earthwalks** – Take the girls on a magical trip into the world of nature through the eyes of a child. Activities include Basement Windows, Gardens of Lilliput, Leaf Slides, Rainbow Chips, The Underworld and a story called Jumping Mouse.

**NatureScope** – Your girls will love the fun, interactive ways they learn about serious environmental issues and interesting wildlife phenomenon as you tell the story of The Lorax, play Fill the bill, Nose Know How, They’re Bouncing Back and Watch for Walking Sticks. End the activities with the poem “Away on the Bay”.

**Nighttime Activities** – Have you ever wondered what to do with girls once the sun begins to set and you’re all cleaned up from supper? Try some of these activities and you won’t wonder anymore! Here Come ‘Da Bugs, Flashlight Freeze and Hide and Go Beep are just 3 of the many provided.

**Project Wild** – The games in this kit are meant to encourage active participation while dealing with the concept that all living creatures need food, water, shelter and space in order to survive. Join the girls as they play: How Many Bears Can Live in this Forest?, MuskoX Maueuvers, Quick Frozen Critters, Oh, Deer and The Thicket Game. To tie everything together, end with Habitat Lap Sit.

**Rainy Day Activities** – Use these activities when it’s raining and you can’t go outside. But remember, the girls won’t melt and it’s lots of fun to play in the rain! The Web of Life and the Environment Game, along with two plays, “Insects on Stage” and “The Awful Eight” are just some of the fun activities included.

**Scavenger Hunts** – Several different activities are provided to increase the girls observational skills as they search for various signs of nature but don’t actually collect anything that might harm living things.

**Sensory Awareness** – Enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world doesn’t require identification of every tree, flower, bird or insect. Sitting quietly and just observing is a good skill for girls to learn. Magnifying glasses, bug boxes, blindfolds and paper and pencil are provided to help the girls through this process.

**Sharing Nature with Children** – These games are intended to bring a better understanding and appreciation of the natural world in a gentle, fun-loving way. The 5 games included are Animal Clue Game, Bat and Moth, Sounding Off, The Un-Nature Trail and What Animal Am I? End with the wonderful song, “The Birds of the Air”.