

## Volunteer Tips for Successful and Fun Social Interaction at Camp Escapades!!!!

As many of you know, our campers look up to the white shirts. You are the people that make camp fun and exciting. Many of our campers struggle with appropriate interactions. As role models, white shirts should be showing campers the *right* thing to do and the *fun* way to play. So the following tips will help you help your campers have a fun and social summer.

**Get down to their level:** Sit on the floor with them, play with them, become one of them, and sit down with them at snack. It can be very intimidating to have an adult standing over you. Playing with the camper and putting yourself in their shoes gives you a better understanding of what they are really experiencing.

**Age:** Keep in mind the age of your camper (especially those of you with Lime Green Lizards and Dark Green Frogs). Treat them how you would want to be treated at that age. If your camper is over 10 years old, hugging them may not be appropriate. Give them high 5's. It's okay to tell them "We're too old to hug". Offer to make a secret handshake instead.

**Teach them the rules:** Many of our campers have a hard time understanding the social rules of games or interaction. Take time to explain the rules.

**Example:** If a camper is having a hard time understating why she can't go to the moon bounce, explain to her why she can't. Her friends may not be playing at the moon bounce and we need to stay together. Show her the schedule and tell her when **she can go** to the moon bounce. If she is still upset, have her ask the group leader when she can go to the moon bounce.

**Making friends:** its fun to play with your camper, but pull in another camper that may not be playing. Camp is about making friends and a friend is someone your own age. So, introduce your camper to another camper. Some fun ideas:

- Start a game with two or more campers.
- Make camp "buddies" with kids that are alike. Encourage them to stick together.
- If your camper asks you to play a game, ask them to **find a friend** to join you.

**Participating:** A lot of our kids prefer to play alone or with white shirts. Being part of a group and working together with friends can be very rewarding. Encourage your camper to participate with the rest of the group. Some campers do not want to do exactly what others are doing. They can still be part of the group in different ways.

- Have your camper in charge of saying "**ready, set, go**" to get a race started.
- At Sport, your camper can **pass out water** if they don't want to be in the sun.
- If your camper would rather sit and watch, have them **cheer on their friends**.
- If they don't want to eat snack, have them **pass out snack**.
- Have them take turns with **follow the leader** in the moon bounce
- Have **races** (with group members) over the wall and down the slide of the moon bounce.

**Be a helper not a doer:** Many of the campers can do a lot of activities on their own. It makes them feel good about themselves to do things on their own. As a helper, you can give ideas, wait for the child to ask for help, and give a lot of compliments.

**Safety!** Above all, keep your camper safe! Stand close enough to the campers to make sure you can keep them safe. Do not stand so close that the camper relies on you for help.