

# City of Coral Gables Parks & Recreation

# SUMMER

# CAMP!



## *2016 Counselor Manual*

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## 1.0 Welcome & Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose & Values

The Coral Gables Parks & Recreation Department seeks to provide well-rounded recreational programs at all of its locations: Youth Center, Venetian Pool, Biltmore & Salvadore Tennis Centers & Contracted Programs. We emphasize safety, teamwork, friendships, sportsmanship, following directions, trying new things, and **FUN!**

**Mission Statement:**

*To enhance the quality of life for residents and guests of all ages through recreational and instructional opportunities, facilities and events that create memorable life experiences.*

**Vision Statement:**

*Creating an Exceptional Experience by Maximizing Our Resources*

**Values:**

*Passion, Fun, Dedication, Leadership, Honesty, Professionalism, Safety & Family*

### 1.2 You're here because you want to be...

The city hopes your employment will be an enriching and wonderful experience. Being a Counselor is one of the greatest jobs you will probably ever have—what other job can you get paid for playing games and going on field trips? But it is hard work too and you are ultimately responsible for the wellbeing and safety for each child assigned to your care. When parents drop off their children at camp keep in mind that they are entrusting you with their most prized and irreplaceable possession! To be a good Counselor, you need physical and emotional stamina, superhuman patience and most importantly you need to care and want to be here.

### 1.3 Quality of Camp Depends on Quality of Staff

The quality of a camp is determined by the quality of the staff. An effective program has staff that is caring, supportive, and appreciative. Working together with your peers will make the summer an even more enjoyable experience for everyone.

Keep in mind that poor leadership, bullies, gossip and high stress environments can quickly lead to a toxic work environment. Always model good behavior, build your own reputation and do great work no matter what! Motivate yourself by motivating those around you!

## 2.0 Role of a Counselor

### 2.1 Role Model

Children look up to you—always remember you are a role model! A comment you say today, may be repeated at the dinner table tomorrow. So, please watch what you say to campers and the other staff even when you think they can't hear you. As their role model, you have the ability to improve their self-confidence, teach them emotional control, and provide them with a sense of achievement. These children want to come to camp because of the field trips and their friends, but they also look forward to seeing their Counselors. *(See characteristics of children for more on the topic of children's behavior.)*

### 2.2 Part of a Team

As a Counselor, you're part of a team whose mission it is to provide enjoyable quality programs. Each of you have different experiences, strengths, and weaknesses that will draw certain children to you. For example, a loud, bubbly Counselor named "Missy" may be able to get the groups' attention in just a few seconds. While "Ben", a soft-spoken Counselor may be able to get the shy children (who may feel overwhelmed by Missy's energy) to speak to him.

### 2.3 Basic Responsibilities

- i. Stay alert at all times. ANYONE found sleeping while on the clock, will be awakened, asked to clock out, and terminated.
- ii. Each counselor is responsible for the 10 children assigned to them. Responsible means making sure they are constantly accounted for, are having a good time, are safe, have eaten their lunch and snack, have gone on frequent water and bathroom breaks, changed in and out of bathing suits, and been escorted to any of their scheduled extra-curricular activities (Gymnastics, Soccer, Swim lessons etc...). Remember a row call should be completed every thirty minutes and any time you move from one location to another.
- iii. **Participation: Counselors are required to participate at all times with children in activities.** If a Counselor is not participating with children in activities, this is grounds for dismissal.
  - When your group is in an activity that is taught by another instructor (art, gymnastics, etc.), it is not your "Free Time." You are still

responsible for your children and may be asked to assist the instructor or should be planning the next activity.

- Make sure that the children are playing with the equipment properly, using appropriate language, and not sitting on tables, destroying equipment or the facility.
  - If a child does not have someone to play with, please make them feel welcome by introducing them to other children or playing a game with them.
  - Children not actively participating in an activity will either find a way to get themselves in trouble or will go home thinking of their day at camp as boring.
- iv. Maintain facilities & equipment. Maintenance is everyone's responsibility!!! (*See Maintenance of Youth Center & Equipment*)
  - v. Encourage children to wash their hands before eating and after using the restrooms!!

## 3.0 Employee Logistics

### 3.1 Work Schedule

- i. **Schedule:** Employees will be assigned a monthly or bi-weekly work schedule from their immediate Supervisor at least one week prior to their scheduled shift. Any employee's schedule, duties, responsibilities, and hours may be changed at the Supervisor's discretion.
  - All Counselors work on an as-needed basis. If the Supervisor feels that there is no work for you to do, you may be sent home.
- ii. **Clocking in/out:** All employees must clock in and out each day. Clocking in for another employee is grounds for dismissal. All employees must bring their timecards for every shift. Make sure the clock blinks and beeps when you swipe in and out.
  - If, when you clock out at the end of the day, you notice a problem notify your Supervisor to make the proper corrections. Clocking in and out is one of your employment responsibilities.
  - If you fail to bring your timecard, you must complete a time card correction form to log your hours. Excessive abuse of the time card correction form will result in disciplinary action.

- Staff is required to be with their group—NOT clocking in—at the scheduled time. Clock in five minutes before to ensure you are ready to go at the scheduled time.
- iii. **Lunch:** It is your responsibility to provide your own lunch. Remember, you are being paid for a working lunch since you are responsible for watching the children during this time. Counselors are not to leave their groups during lunch time; this is not a “break” but a working lunch. Before eating your own lunch make sure every camper has their lunch.

### 3.2 Illness & Tardiness

- i. **Illness:** Sick leave absences must be reported in writing to the Supervisor prior to 8:00pm the night before to allow for adequate coverage of your shift.
- ii. **Tardiness:** *Three unexcused tardies may result in dismissal.*
  - If you will be late for work, contact your Supervisor or the office immediately. A reason for your tardiness must be disclosed.
  - For employees working the morning shift, notice must be given at least one hour before your shift.
  - For employees scheduled for the afternoon shift, notice must be given at least three hours before your shift.

### 3.3 Dress Code

- i. **Shirts:** Staff shirts must be worn every day and tucked in at all times.
- ii. **Shorts/Pants:** Hemmed walking shorts, baseball-coaching shorts or solid colored pants are to be worn by staff at all times. Jeans, yoga pants, leggings, cut-offs and baggy basketball shorts are not allowed. The acceptable colors are black, navy, hunter green and khaki and must be a **SOLID** color.
- iii. **Shoes:** Socks and sneakers must be worn at all times. The only exception will be sandals for water-related camps or field trips.
- iv. **Swimsuits:** Girls are to wear a one-piece bathing suit that is appropriate for swimming. Swimsuits and board shorts should be a solid color.
- v. **Hats:** The only hat or visor which are permitted are those issued by the City of Coral Gables P&R.
- vi. **Sunglasses** are encouraged when you are outdoors but are not permitted inside of the facility.
- vii. **Piercings:** The only body piercing allowed are ear piercings.
- viii. If you are not dressed in the proper staff uniform, you will be sent home without pay for that day. The second improper uniform infraction may result in termination.

### 3.4 Main Office use

**The office is only to be used by coordinators for business related activities.** If an employee receives a phone call, a message will be taken and relayed at the end of their shift; unless in the event of an emergency. When an employee is not on duty, they may use their telephone in the designated breakroom-all other phones are for business only. Children are not permitted in the main office except to call a parent and must be accompanied by a counselor.

### 3.5 Paychecks

Paychecks are issued every other Thursday. Counselors must sign for receipt of their check at the end of their shift when they clock out.

### 3.6 Cell Phones

Employee use of cellular phones during the work day is prohibited. The only exception will be the Supervisors and Coordinators while on a field trip and in case of an emergency. **CALLS ARE NOT ALLOWED WHILE ON SHIFT!**

### 3.7 Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all park facilities, parking lots, and on field trips. Any staff member observing patrons smoking should politely ask the person to refrain from smoking.

### 3.8 Parking

Staff is allowed to park their car in the parking lots farthest from the facility entrances as those adjacent to the entrance should be left for patrons of the facility. Between the hours of 6:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., all staff shall adhere to these locations. Illegally parking along the curb or driveway of each facility entrance is strictly prohibited and will result in the car being stickered or towed.

### 3.9 Public Relations

- i. Smile! As a public employee, you represent the City of Coral Gables. Your comments and conduct should always reflect a positive and competent image. Always be courteous and pleasant especially in difficult situations.
- ii. **Complaints:** If you cannot handle a complaint professionally or have trouble talking with an irate person, turn the matter over to the next higher Supervisor.

Complaints should be solved at the Coordinator's level. If the Coordinator cannot fix the complaint, then refer them to the next higher Supervisor.

- iii. If you do not know the answer to a parent's request, refer him or her to the person who does know the answer. Say, "Let me get the person who can help you because I do not know that answer." You won't know everything, but you can at least know where to find the answers.
- iv. If a member of the news media approaches you, they are to be directed to the Park & Recreation Director. Camp staff and employees cannot comment to the media about any situations without prior approval. Please be respectful and politely say, "I am not authorized to comment but can direct you to my Director."
- v. It is against the law to release any information regarding minors, medical conditions or any other personal information. The office staff will have all information regarding whom is allowed to receive what information. If you are unsure please direct them to the main office for assistance.

## **4.0 What Goes on at Camp: Schedule & Logistics**

### **4.1 First Day of Camp**

The first day of camp is hectic for everyone. It is imperative that each staff member makes an effort to be cooperative with other staff, parents, and children. Remember, first impressions are the ones that last. So, listen, maintain eye contact, be positive, and smile. All Counselors are to introduce themselves to each parent and camper they are responsible for that arrives to camp. Introduction means standing and shaking the parent's hand and saying something to the child. This is also the time to answer any questions or take notes on what the parent has to say (their child can't swim, scared of the dark, etc...).

During the first day or week, campers may be shy or lost. It is the Counselor's responsibility to introduce each child to other campers. Some children may have never been to camp before and don't know anyone. Although camp is fun for most children, it can also be overwhelming. Be considerate and try to get them involved.

### **4.2 Daily Program Schedule**

- i. Each age group is provided with a daily program schedule. Counselors and parents will be given notice of the summer schedule and notice of any changes to the schedule.

- ii. It is imperative that the Counselor follows the program specifically. The only time alterations will be allowed is due to rain and will be issued by the Coordinator, Program Assistant, or Recreation Specialist. Any change to the schedule must be made to the Lobby Schedule for the particular group.
  - If for some reason a group is not where they are required to be, each counselor will be written up on an 'Employee Disciplinary Form.'
  - Children are not to hang out in any area that the Counselors and group are not in.
- iii. Unless specified, all children will participate in field trips. At the beginning and end of the day, Counselors should remind campers and parents about the upcoming field trips. Tell them the proper attire, sun screen, lunch, beverage, etc. For example, "Tomorrow we are going to Venetian Pool so bring your bathing suit, sunscreen, and towel. Tuesday is Ice Skating, remember to dress warm."

#### **4.3 Announcements**

The Program Assistants and/or Recreation Specialist will make daily announcements at 9:00am. It is your responsibility to make sure the children are sitting down and quiet at this time.

#### **4.4 Rainy Days**

In South Florida, rainy days are to be expected during camp. The Supervisors will have an alternate schedule for rainy days. When storms are approaching, it is imperative that Counselors take immediate action to bring campers inside.

No one enjoys having to remain inside during storms, especially if it is for the entire day. Be creative and make sure the kids are having fun in a safe environment.

#### **4.5 Restroom & Water breaks**

All campers **MUST** be accompanied by a counselor when going to the restroom or water fountains. Please wait just outside the door of the bathroom to ensure the safety of the children inside and to hear whether the children are playing in the bathroom in your absence. Remind the children to wash their hands after using the restroom.

#### **4.6 Record Keeping**

As a Counselor, accurate record keeping is very important. The forms you will use most often are an Incident/Accident Form, Daily Roll Sheets, Sign-in/Out Sheets and

Disciplinary Forms. If a child is misbehaving, it is your responsibility to complete a Disciplinary Form. *(See Discipline for more information.)*

Doodling and decorating your roll book, sign-in and sign-out sheets is a great big NO-NO. Occasionally staff must take these forms into court – they must look professional and be accurate at all times. Remember these are potentially legal documents, so any adjustments and changes to these forms must be initialed and dated. Once an updated form has been printed keep both old and new forms together. DO NOT DISCARD THE OLD FORM.

#### 4.7 Bus Rules & Procedures

- i. **General Bus Rules:** Children are not to get up and move about while the bus is moving. All children must face forward on the bus. Children are not to put their hands out the windows or throw objects out the windows of the bus. No screaming or loud voices on the bus. No radios are allowed on bus. Make sure **you** and the children follow the rules of the bus.
- ii. When loading/unloading children on/off the busses during rain, escort the children in-groups of 2 or 3, per Counselor with an umbrella.
- iii. **Bus Procedure**
  - **Getting on:** Counselors are to line children up at the front door of the bus. Once the driver has opened the door, children are to fill the bus from back to front-no exceptions. If you let them chose seats, it will take much longer to load the bus as well as cause hurt feelings with who can sit with whom. The Counselor located at the front door should assist younger children onto the bus to avoid injuries.
  - **Supervision:** As Counselors, it is your responsibility to spread yourselves out to provide maximum supervision. This means a Counselor in the back, front, and middle of the bus to watch the children. Counselors are not to leave the bus at any time while children are still on the bus.
  - **Before you leave:** Once the children have boarded the bus, each Counselor is to call roll **AND** perform a head count for their group. When all children are accounted for, the Field Trip Counselor will instruct the bus driver to leave. If children are not accounted for, the Field Trip Counselor will take appropriate action to locate missing children.
  - **Getting off:** When unloading the bus, always look both ways and expect traffic at any time. Unload children from the front of the bus to the back. One Counselor should be leading the line and another Counselor at the end

of the line. To make sure all belongings are taken off of the bus, check on and under the seats before getting off of the bus.

- **When you arrive at your destination:** Once children have lined up, a roll call is to be taken again. The Field Trip Counselor will then give an OK to the bus driver when he/she may move the bus.
- If the bus is to be more than 15 minutes late, have the bus driver radio the bus company. The bus company will then call the Youth Center to notify staff of the delay.

#### 4.8 Field Trips

- i. Remember to tell parents to label EVERYTHING sent to camp with the child's name i.e. lunch, shirts, book bags, etc.
  - **Very Important**---If the children are to bring their lunches on a field trip, make sure that all of the lunches get on the bus and the empty containers all get back to the Youth Center.
- ii. Prior to leaving for field trips, all Counselors must report to the Field Trip Counselor the exact number of children that will be going on the field trip for that day. Counselors need to make sure they have all of the children on the attendance sheet and to **DO FREQUENT HEAD COUNTS & ROLL CALLS!**
- iii. The Attendance Book, Band Aids, and Schedules must be with the Counselor at all times.
- iv. If a parent drops a child off at a field trip site, the Counselor must add that child to the attendance sheet. They must also notify all Counselors in the group and the Field Trip Counselor. On the other hand, if a parent signs their child out at the field trip site, his/her Counselor must check out the child. It is then the Counselor's responsibility to tell the other Counselors and the Field Trip Counselor that the child has been picked up by a parent at the field trip site.

### 5.0 What goes on at camp: Equipment & Activities

#### 5.1 The Book Of Fun & Facts & The Bag Of Balls

Each counselor will be issued a bag of equipment and a Book of Fun and Facts to help you introduce a new game, song, sports, etc. You **MUST** have both of these with you each and every day! This equipment is your responsibility that you must have to

complete your daily job responsibilities. This is just like your uniform; don't come to work without it.

## 5.2 Maintenance of your Facility

Each facility has a variety of activity areas: Youth Room, Teen Room, Gymnasium, Classroom, Field, Theater, Playground, etc.... Maintenance is everyone's responsibility and it should be an ongoing process throughout the day. If you notice a maintenance or safety problem, notify a Supervisor right away to address the situation.

Prior to each camp day, the facility will have been cleaned and ready for the day's activities. Each Counselor is responsible for assisting their group with cleaning up after themselves. THIS MEANS PICK UP GAMES, GAME PIECES, THROW OUT TRASH & PUT THE GAMES BACK WHERE THEY BELONG. When camp has lunch or snack, Camp Counselors are to make sure there is absolutely no trash left when their group leaves. At the end of your shift, make sure that your area is clean.

## 5.3 Equipment

- i. **Equipment Rooms:** Along with the equipment bag issued to Counselors, there are other games and equipment that can be used for camp activities. This equipment must be checked-out by the Coordinator/ Counselor in charge of their group. DO NOT allow the children to take the equipment themselves.
- ii. **Additional Equipment:** Some equipment and supplies, including resource materials and a/v equipment (radio, TV/VCR, CD player, projection screen), are kept locked. Program Assistants/Supervisors are responsible for getting this equipment to different groups.
- iii. **Cleaning up:** Counselors must reinforce picking up the games when the children are done playing. This means returning game pieces to the correct boxes so it will be ready for the next child who wants to play with it. Before you leave your room/area should be ready for the next day or group.

## 5.4 Games

Organized games are one of the most important activities in camp. There are always all-time favorites but remember there are enough hours in the day to play the favorites AND something new.

There are three factors that a Counselor must understand when teaching games. First, do the children have the ability to play the game? Second, do the children know the

goal of this new game? The goal should be well defined. For example, in the game Four Corners, the last child whose corner was not picked, is the winner and that child is now the “counter.” Third, is the game safe? Make sure that the children are in a safe environment and that the game is safe for the age group.

Children should be given the opportunity for leadership in play. Certain assignments can be given to a child who has been behaving well or to get a reluctant child to participate. These assignments may include score keeper, handling the equipment, or even as a referee. During the game, it is your responsibility to help campers to follow rules, accept decisions of the official/team captain, and to be good sportsmen.

**ALWAYS** offer encouragement, cheer on campers, and help the children improve their skills.

Remember simply organized games and relays can be fun for everyone. Many games can be adapted to suit playing space, equipment, or to include a large number of participants. For example, the game ‘Red Light, Green Light’ can be adapted to be more challenging by having the children ‘crab walk’ or hop on one foot instead of running. Or have the children play tag by running backwards. **Games that are NOT allowed include:** Burn ball, dodge ball, wrestling and any game that makes fun of a child or Counselor will not be permitted. **No games that involve throwing, kicking or batting a ball are allowed on the patio.**

## 5.5 Arts & Crafts

All children will participate in art & crafts activities. This is one of the most exciting activities of camp. Children can take home something they made at camp and always have a visible reminder of the fun they had at camp. This is not a time when Counselors work on their own projects. Counselors will walk around the room, help children with their projects, accompany children to the restroom, assist in distribution of supplies, make sure the children’s name is on the project, and be encouraging. In the event a previous group has not finished when your group arrives, please wait outside.

Keep the work area as clean as possible. Help clean up by closing all paint, glue, or glaze containers and by rinsing brushes in water. Remember that children will imitate the people they like. Food and drink are not allowed inside ANY ROOM by staff or children.

## 5.6 Swimming

Going swimming is an awesome part of camp. Kids can relax, cool off, play in the water, and exercise. However, swimming also involves risk. No matter how strong of a swimmer a Counselor or camper is, there is always danger. Make sure that you let your coordinator know if you are not comfortable in the water before any water-related field trip/ activity.

**Pool guidelines:** Counselors must review pool rules with campers prior to entering a swimming facility. Keep in mind, swimming facilities do not all have the same rules so check at each site. All Counselors must be in the water playing with their group while one Counselor will stay with the camp's belongings. The life guards are there to assist you in case of an emergency - NOT TO WATCH YOUR CHILDREN.

### **Pool rules:**

- No running, diving, shoving, or horseplay permitted
- No chewing gum
- Children that **can't** swim should be watched very closely by at least one Counselor per 10 children in the shallow end
- Campers that are not strong swimmers may wear a life jacket while swimming
- Do not climb in the lifeguard stands
- Do not bother lane lines
- Only one person on a diving board at a time if permitted
- First sight of lightning-clear pool and take cover immediately
- Take a head count often and do a row call every 30 minutes or any time you move from one location to another
- You are there to watch your children-**not** to sunbathe or to watch the good looking girls/guys.
- OBEY LIFEGUARDS AT ALL TIMES

## 5.7 TV/Movies

Television is not an option! Movies will primarily be used on rainy days. It is not an activity for Counselors to utilize to fill empty space when the Counselor is having difficulty occupying the children's time. Only G rated movies whose content is approved by the Recreation Supervisor are allowed. It is imperative that Counselors adhere to this. Also, if a program is determined to be inappropriate by a Supervisor-it will be turned off.

While watching movies, the Camp Coordinator/ Program Assistants are the only individuals permitted to touch audio equipment. **NO VIDEO GAMES ARE ALLOWED TO BE PLAYED.**

## **6.0 Communication: Verbal & Non-verbal**

### **6.1 Verbal**

Being attentive to what parents, children and staff say to you is very important. Think about your reactions when you are involved in a conversation with someone. Do you respond to what that person just said or do you switch the topic to what you did Saturday night? Parents and children want to know that they are being heard and their concerns are being addressed. It is frustrating when you feel you are being ignored or not taken seriously. All staff members should make every effort to verbally convey they understand what they are being told and should also, in turn make sure they are communicating clearly so customers understand what they can and cannot do.

### **6.2 Non-verbal**

So much of communication is nonverbal, about 50% actually. Nonverbal communication is sometimes more significant than what is actually said. We have all heard, "It's not WHAT you say it's HOW you say it." Make sure that your tone and body language mirror the point you are trying to get across. Are you making eye contact? Chewing gum? Leaning on a counter or chair, or facing/walking away from someone? Before addressing a parent or child, make sure you are focused and aware of how you look so as not to confuse your message. If you are sitting down and a parent approaches you the first thing you should do is stand up and greet them to acknowledge their presence.

When you are working with young children who are just beginning to master verbal communication, non-verbal cues are important. We need to be aware of how sensitive children are to the nonverbal cues that we give. Imagine, a child asks you if you think they are smart. You roll your eyes when you tell them "absolutely." Which response are they more likely to believe?

## 7.0 Campers & Their Parents

### 7.1 Camper's Dress Code

- i. Campers must dress in comfortable clothes such as shorts and a t-shirt. Campers must wear their camp shirt or rash guard to camp, on Field Trip days and in the water when visiting a pool.
  - Parents will be asked to purchase another shirt or rash guard in the event a child comes to camp without a camp shirt on days the group leaves the premises.
  - Counselors are to remind parents and children when clothing adjustments need to be made for Field Trips (i.e. ice-skating, swimming, or a dress rehearsal)
- ii. Any clothing items that are offensive to staff or campers will not be allowed at camp. Such items should be brought to the attention of the Camp Supervisor, Recreation Specialist, or Program Assistant. Examples of inappropriate content include foul language, obscenities, addressing a racial group, or risqué attire.

### 7.2 Characteristics of Children

Each child who comes into camp is unique with individual needs. Genetics, heredity, environmental influences, and cultural differences affect the child's adjustment to camp. A child who has had many social experiences with friends, family, and neighbors will probably adjust more easily to camp than a child who has not had much exposure to social interaction. Cooperation and open communication enable the parent and Counselor to work together in helping the child make a smooth transition from home to camp.

- i. **Specific Common Problems**
  - Non-participation from some children
  - Bullies/ bullying behavior
  - Bad language
  - Fighting
  - Leaving the group
  - Not listening to counselors
  - Stealing
- ii. **Suggestions for Building Children's Self-Esteem**
  - Let children know they are appreciated
  - Use a child's name when addressing them
  - Include children in activities, problem solving, and decision making

- Tell children their strengths
- Treat children with respect and honesty
- Do not compare one child to another
- Do not belittle or shame
- Be sensitive and responsive to their needs
- Encourage and support independence
- Avoid sarcasm
- Praise achievements
- Show understanding
- Appreciate their feelings
- Never promise something you might not be able to deliver

### 7.3 Discipline

- Dealing with discipline in children:** Let the children know what is expected from them and what they can expect from you as a Counselor. *If you have a problem/issue with a child:* Separate the child from the group. Do not discipline them in front of the group/other children.
  - Identify the problem.
  - Listen to the child's side of the story.
  - If necessary, talk with the others involved.
  - Discipline the guilty child (sit out of an activity for 5 minutes, see the Director, etc.). Use time-outs for discipline. Do not use exercise as punishment—it may have been tolerated when you were a camper, but is totally unacceptable today.
  - If you have constant minor problems with several different children, review your activities, they may be bored.
  - Use the peer pressure method- "We can't start the movie until everyone is sitting down quiet."
- Recording disciplinary problems:** Each group will have a daily sheet to record the child's name and the disciplinary problem. The sheet will have a place for the child's name, problem, date, and how it was handled (see form).
  - This is to be used as a communication log between early sign-in Counselors and the afternoon Counselors. However, it may be used for the Director to show to the parent that a pattern of misbehavior has been occurring. SO, make sure that the language you use is not offensive to the child and that the spelling is correct. Just the facts!
  - The City of Coral Gables P&R does not tolerate fighting! If a child gets into a fight, they are to be written up along with the other child and all children involved brought to the Camp Director immediately. Their parents will be called.

- iii. **If a problem repeats...**Each child will get two chances before they are brought to the Camp Director. On the third infraction, the child should be brought to the Camp Director along with the disciplinary sheet containing the needed information about the child.
- Depending on the severity of the problem, the Camp Director may issue a Disciplinary Form, which is completed by the Supervisor and sent home for a parent signature. The Camp Director will talk with the child about the behavior and the parents will be called and informed.
  - If, after these measures are taken, there is still a problem, the child is to be brought to the Recreation Specialist or Recreation Leader and the parent will be called to pick up the child.
  - Following the second consecutive Disciplinary Form and if necessary and approved by the Parks & Recreation Director, the child will be suspended from camp with a last chance agreement before being permanently removed from camp.
- iv. **Counselors are never to call the parent; all calls will be conducted by the Camp Supervisor/Coordinator.**

#### **7.4 Dealing with Parents**

Each Counselor is responsible for the 10 children assigned to them. Remember that the parents entrust the Counselor with his or her child!

Always greet parents when you see them by shaking their hand and saying hello. Your communication with the parents should be daily and focus on the good behaviors that the child has exhibited throughout the day. When the child misbehaves, tell the parent, but be tactful. Your dialogue should be truthful and honest. Make sure that parents understand we are not responsible for their children's belongings. Remind parents to mark their children's belongings. All unapproved toys and games (Game Boy, trading cards, etc.) will be taken away from the children and only returned to a parent or guardian at the end of the day.

Any problems or concerns relating to families and campers shared by the staff during meetings or conferences are considered confidential and must remain that way.

#### **7.5 NEVER, NEVER, NEVER! (rules for your own good)**

1. **Never touch a child.** Do not ever touch/grab a child by any part of their body.
2. **Never transport a child in your car.**
3. **Never, ever fall asleep while you are on the clock and responsible for a child.**
4. **Never leave your group or any child unattended.**

5. **Never talk back to a parent or patron.** Even if they are rude to you or wrong. If you are furious with someone (and it will happen) say, "I'm sorry you feel that way" and direct them to your Supervisor.
6. **Never be alone with a child behind closed doors.** This is for your own protection. If a child says you did something inappropriate, it is your word against theirs. And you could lose your job.

## 8.0 Health & Safety

### 8.1 Accidents & First Aid

- i. **Attending to the child:** If an accident occurs, have another counselor monitor the rest of the group and attend to the injured child immediately. Have the Camp Supervisor call the child's parents and notify the Facility Supervisor of the injury.
  - **The only First Aid we administer is to flush the injury with water or to provide a bag of ice from the Equipment Room.** If the injury warrants anything else call for a Fire-Rescue Unit and a Supervisor. NOTE: You must dial 9-911 on any facility building phone.
  - You are not allowed to give children any type of over-the-counter medicine, such as aspirin, etc... If a child must take medication, the camper must be able to administer it themselves, with exception of an Epi-pen.
  - Do not attempt to move a child who is on the ground; ask them if they can get up by themselves. If the child cannot move, send for the Camp Supervisor immediately and call Fire-rescue if necessary.
  - An injured person will take their cue of how serious the injury is from you so act calm.
- ii. **Accident/Incident Reports:** You must record one for every accident or incident. It must include the person's name, address, phone number, nature of injury, how it happened, time of day, location, what specific body part was injured, witnesses, and type of First Aid administered. **FACTS ONLY!** Immediately return the report (*See form*) to the Camp Supervisor and write it on the sign-out sheet for the sign-out counselor to notify parents.

### 8.2 Communicable Diseases

- i. The City of Coral Gables Parks & Recreation Department maintains high health and safety standards at all times. Therefore, faced with health issues such as

communicable diseases (pink eye, chicken pox, and head lice and/or nits (eggs)), the following procedures will be followed:

- The parent will be contacted by a Supervisor and informed of the situation by phone and must immediately pick up the child from the camp.
  - The child may not return to the camp until a Doctor's release form has been presented.
- ii. **Head lice overview:** Head lice are a communicable disease and are not a sign of dirtiness.
  - **Symptoms:** itching and scratching of the head. However, many affected people have no symptoms.
  - **Head lice spread by...**
    1. By direct contact with someone's head or hair. This means playing with a child's hair or allowing them to play with yours.
    2. Indirectly by placing clothing of an infected person in contact with the clothing of an uninfected person.
    3. Indirectly by sharing combs, brushes, hats, caps, scarves, wigs, pillows, and/or bedding.

## 9.0 Emergency Procedures

### 9.1 Power Failure

- i. All staff will utilize flash lights and assist in making sure all are safe.
- ii. Staff will immediately check on patrons unattended or in an unsupervised area and provide assistance.
- iii. All patrons must cease activities that require light for safety reasons, (i.e. fitness center and indoor gymnasium)
- iv. All corridors and exit lights are equipped with secondary power and will remain lit in the event of power failure.
- v. The Supervisors will designate someone to call the electric company to determine approximate length of the power failure and determine if patrons need to be evacuated.
- vi. In the event of a power failure and/or emergency situation requiring evacuation, the Supervisors will use a bull horn to notify the staff and patrons of the emergency situation and how to proceed.

### 9.2 Lost Child – CODE AMBER

- i. Participant safety and security will always be the foremost concern and priority in addressing emergency situations.
- ii. Staff will have an accurate and up-to-date class list of the participants under their care.

- iii. Once staff recognizes a child is potentially missing they will have 60 seconds to be able to confirm the child is not in the immediate area and who the missing child is along with identifiable clothing, etc.
- iv. Once a child is confirmed missing staff will secure the remainder of the group in a safe location with appropriate number of *staff : participants* (per the required minimum activity ratios). Staff will complete a head count, roll call of all remaining participants and simultaneously notify facility supervisory staff within 3 minutes of missing child confirmation.
- v. Facility supervisory staff will follow the listed position chain of command:
  - i. Facility supervisor, assistant supervisor, recreation specialists
  - ii. Program assistants, office manager, office staff, reception staff
- vi. Facility supervisory staff will then initiate the “Code Amber” by calling over the Fire Alarm Emergency Announcement system: “Attention Facility Patrons and Staff. We are initiating a Code Amber, all additional staff please report to the reception area. Staff will repeat this message in its entirety 3 times.
- vii. All supervisors, coordinators and facility personnel that do not have direct child supervision tasks will report to the reception area. The facility supervisor on duty will then give staff a description of the child and assign areas to search. This primary search will last no longer than 5 minutes. Once the primary search of the assigned areas is completed, staff will return to the reception area for further instructions.
- viii. If the child is not located within the primary search a secondary search (*slower, more deliberate search of the area*) will be initiated along with activation of the emergency response system.
- ix. Once child is found staff must notify the City’s emergency response team (9-1-1, police, fire, facility supervisors, etc.) The office staff will announce over the paging system “Code Amber – all clear” 3 times.
- x. All staff will follow procedures regarding the management of their program participants. Roll calls and head counts will be performed upon the arrival to and the departure from an activity area. During transport of the group from one area to another, staff should maintain position at both ends of the transport line to account for all of the program participants.
- xi. All program participants should be identifiable through established identification measures including clothing and/or wristbands.
- xii. All staff must be aware of their surroundings as they move through the facility. If at any time, a child with identifiable clothing or wristbands is seen away from their program group please approach that child immediately and ask which group they are with and why they are not with their group.
- xiii. After child is approached, staff will escort child to the Supervisor on Duty.
- xiv. The Supervisor on Duty will return child to program group and will complete an incident report.

- xv. The Supervisor-on-Duty will then notify the Director who will examine the incident video (if available), and complete the necessary follow-up with participant or the participant's parent.
- xvi. After a review of the incident, proper disciplinary measures will be taken with staff/contractors responsible.

### 9.3 Evacuation Procedure

- i. Plan of Action
  - a. The staff and patrons of the facility will immediately evacuate the building if a potentially dangerous situation should occur.
  - b. Any staff working with handicapped patrons will offer assistance to ensure a timely and safe evacuation.
- ii. Evacuation Routes
  - a. The staff and patrons of the Coral Gables Youth Center who are located in the following areas will exit through the main entrance: Reception, Toddler Room, Men's Restroom and 1<sup>st</sup> floor Men's Locker room.
  - b. The staff and patrons of the Coral Gables Youth Center who are located in the following areas will exit through the West Field Entrance: Youth Center Office, Women's Restroom and 1<sup>st</sup> floor Women's Locker room and all 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Offices.
  - c. The staff and patrons of the Coral Gables Youth Center who are located in the following areas will exit through the North Patio Emergency exit: Theater, Ceramic room, Art room, Patio, Classroom, Teaching Kitchen and Adult Activity Room.
  - d. The staff and patrons of the Coral Gables Youth Center who are located in the following areas will exit through the West Emergency Gym Doors: Gymnastics Center, Basketball Gymnasium, Teen Room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor patio bathrooms, Maintenance area and Equipment Room.
  - e. The staff and patrons of the Coral Gables Youth Center who are located in the following areas will exit through the West Stairwell: Dance Studio, Fitness Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Men's and Women's Locker rooms.
- iii. Evacuation Plan
  - a. If all of the exits are blocked or determined unsafe, then alternative exits will be the closest accessible window. If individuals must exit through windows, staff will calmly assist patrons in exiting.
  - b. In case of fire or power failure, do not use elevator for evacuation.

### 9.4 Fire Procedure - CODE RED

- i. In case of fire, pull the nearest fire pull station to activate the alarm system, close the door to the area and evacuate. **Dial 9-911.**

- ii. Notify the front office staff of the presence and location of fire. The front office staff will calmly notify all at the location, by page or traveling room to room with: Attention, code red (and location) three (3) times. Example: "ATTENTION CODE RED, GYM".
- iii. Only staff trained to use fire extinguishers may be dispatched and attempt to extinguish the fire. Do not endanger your life or the lives of others. If the fire appears life threatening: DIAL 9-911 and notify fire department of the location of fire. Assist others in evacuation of the building.
- iv. All patrons will be instructed to evacuate the building through the appropriate exits and not use elevators. Please review the evacuation plan.
- v. Fire Alarm going off
  - i. In the event of a fire alarm going off, staff will begin directing patrons to the nearest appropriate exits.
  - ii. A staff member will be dispatched to the fire location according to the fire alarm panel to confirm if fire or smoke is present. Staff member will use extreme caution when checking facility for fire or smoke.
  - iii. All participants in registered programs will exit the facility and precede outdoors. Upon arrival head counts and roll calls will be taken. All participants must be accounted for.
    - a. *\*\*If children are missing from roll calls, Code Amber is initiated*
  - iv. If a false alarm is reported and confirmed, supervisory staff may silence alarm and notify 9-1-1 of the false alarm and await instructions before notifying patrons to re-enter facility.
  - v. When it is determined the facility is safe to re-enter, supervisory staff will initiate the all-clear procedures:
    - 1. Staff will use the emergency intercom system and staff radios and announce 3 times, "Code Red all clear".
    - 2. Staff will escort patrons back into the facility.
    - 3. Staff will conduct head counts and roll calls for all participants in registered programs.
      - a. *\*\*If children are missing from roll calls, Code Amber is initiated*

### **9.5 Bomb Threat - CODE ORANGE**

- i. Plan of Action – Receipt of a Bomb Threat
  - a. If a bomb threat is received by phone, staff member will signal another staff member without interfering with the caller. Remember, Delay! Ask where, when, what type and why?
  - b. When a bomb threat is received staff will notify first available Supervisor.
  - c. Supervisor will initiate an evacuation and immediately call 9-911.
  - d. The facility staff and patrons will evacuate the facility in a calm and orderly fashion. Staff will insure that any handicapped clients will be offered

- assistance in order to insure a timely evacuation. Evacuation will proceed according to Evacuation Procedure. Please review Evacuation Procedure.
- e. The Supervisor is responsible for assisting Emergency Personnel in a systematic search.
  - f. If a suspicious package or object is discovered, the staff will notify the authorities.
  - g. Staff and patrons are to remain off the premises until The Facility Supervisor will notify staff of an ALL CLEAR.
- ii. Bomb Search Technique
- a. Ideally, the person who assists in a search of an area of the facility should be familiar with the area being searched.
  - b. Items that seem out of place or strange should be noted. It is extremely important that persons conducting a bomb search do not touch or move any strange or suspicious items. A bomb can be in any form. For example, a letter bomb or pipe bomb.

#### **9.6 Disorderly Person or Emergency Assistance - CODE ASSIST**

- i. Disorderly Person in Facility
- a. If a person/persons are acting in a disorderly or threatening manner, the facility staff shall notify the Supervisor who will make their presence known and ask them, calmly, to leave the facility.
  - b. The Supervisor will determine whether the Coral Gables Police Department should be notified.
  - c. If the person refuses to leave and offers resistance the Supervisor will attempt to contain the person in an area which will not interfere with normal operations until law enforcement arrives.
  - d. If violence erupts, do not place yourself in jeopardy.
  - e. The Supervisor initially in contact with the disorderly person will complete an incident report immediately.
- ii. Emergency Assistance
- a. If a staff member requires physical assistance with a patron, they are to notify all staff with a page of "Attention, Emergency Assistance" and the location of where physical assistance is required. This page will be announced three (3) times. Example: "Attention, Emergency Assist in the gym, Attention, Emergency Assist in the gym, Attention, Emergency Assist in the gym."
  - b. The Supervisor and staff will immediately respond to the area to provide assistance, reporting in a calm and orderly fashion.
  - c. Involved personnel will determine if medical assistance is required and phone for emergency assistance.

- d. If medical assistance is required, involved personnel will stabilize the patron, making them as comfortable as possible until qualified emergency assistance has arrived.
      - e. The Supervisor will complete an incident report immediately and follow-up appropriately.
  - iii. Off-Premises Disorder – should an off-premise situation involving violence be observed by staff member and patron:
    - a. Staff and patrons are to remain in the building or secure area.
    - b. If the disturbance moves onto the premises:
      - 1. Lock all Doors (if applicable)
      - 2. Do not permit entrance into area by unknown persons.
    - c. Call the police then, notify supervisor and facility staff.

### **9.7 Deterring and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

- i. Staff member who suspects child abuse or neglect shall complete an incident/accident form, which can be found in the main office.
- ii. Staff member is to report information to supervisor promptly for action.
- iii. Staff Supervisor will review report with Parks and Recreation Director for signature.
- iv. Supervisor will contact the Coral Gables Police Youth Resource Unit and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) promptly for investigation.
- v. Additional instructions will be followed if provided by authorities.

### **9.8 Camp / Program Audit Policy**

- i. Supervisor (unannounced) will enter the room/facility area where a specific camp/program is taking place.
- ii. Supervisor will observe the camp/program for a period of time between 5-15 minutes. This will depend solely on the activity of the group.
- iii. Upon completion of the observation period, the Supervisor will complete a Camp/program audit form. This form will include the following items:
  - a. Camp/Program name
  - b. Number of participants/ number of staff
  - c. Short description of activity (activities)
  - d. Notes on positives/negatives
  - e. Suggestions
- iv. After the audit has been completed, the Supervisor will meet with the staff involved with the camp/program to review the audit and address any areas of concern. If concerns are significant and require immediate action, a 2<sup>nd</sup> audit will be scheduled with same camp/program. If concerns are not addressed- staff training must be completed before camp/program continues.
- v. Audits will be performed on a random basis during the fall, spring and summer sessions. They will remain on file in the office of the Youth Center Supervisor until completion of specific camp/program.

## 10.0 Summary

### 10.1 Summary of Grounds for Dismissal

- i. If a Counselor is not participating with children in activities, or is constantly told to stop sitting and get involved.
- ii. ANYONE found sleeping while on the clock, will be awakened, asked to clock out, and then subject to immediate termination.
- iii. Clocking in for another employee.
- iv. Three unexcused tardies.
- v. Improper uniform attire more than once.
- vi. Failing an audit or losing a child.

### 10.2 Conclusion

Working with children is a rewarding experience. It is a chance for challenges and accomplishments. The best Counselors are warm, enthusiastic, have initiative, and sincerely enjoy interacting with their campers. Please use this manual as a reference tool and if you have any questions or suggestions, speak with your Supervisor.

**Remember: You are a Role Model. What you say to them now, they may remember in twenty years!**