



Fostering Excellence in Camp Leadership, Programming & Safety Since 1941

C a m p D i v e r s i t y & I n c l u s i o n T o o l k i t

Your Camp has a formal Inclusion Statement and/or states a commitment to inclusion within the Camp's Mission, Core Values Statements which reflects a description of the camper and staff that are welcome to your Camp's community.

Your Board of Directors should consider, with-in the context of your Camp community's Core Values and Mission, to what extent your Camp's Inclusion Statement can and will seek do its best to accommodate persons with special needs and other under-represented population groups that traditionally have not participated in summer overnight camping at your Camp. Your Board will also have to make these considerations within the necessities required to provide for the health, safety and security for all your campers and staff in an overnight live-in camping environment.

Your Camp's Inclusion Statement / commitment to inclusion is published on your Camp's website, social media and/or included in written materials, such as annual reports, brochures and registration forms.

Staff and volunteers are trained and knowledgeable of inclusive practices and how to apply these practices at your Camp in order to create an inclusive and welcoming camp culture.

Your Camp's programming is structured as much as possible to be inclusive of all people.

Your Camp staff, to the best of their abilities with-in the constrains of a limited 6 to 7 day camp session, identify (formally or informally) the strengths and interests of children with disabilities and children from other population groups with other individual or special needs, and creates a plan for including the children from these groups in program activities.

Your Camp solicits feedback from campers and their parents and guardians so as to strengthen your Camp's inclusion efforts.

Your Camp makes an effort to reach out connect with with community and government organizations which are woking with children with disabilities, special needs and other



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under-represented and marginalized population groups in the province in order to explore opportunities for their population groups to attend your Camp and to explore what staff or resources those organizations provide to help support your outreach initiative and/or train your staff.

For example:

- Contact the NS & PEI Institute for the Blind, <http://www.cnib.ca/en/ns-pei/Pages/default.aspx>, to explore opportunities for visually impaired children to attend your Camp.
- Contact your local NS hearing and speech centres, <http://www.nshsc.nshealth.ca> , to explore opportunities for hearing and speech impaired children to attend your Camp.
- Contact your local Mi'kmaq tribe or resources centre, <https://novascotia.ca/abor/aboriginal-people/community-info/>, to to explore opportunities for Mi'kmaq children to attend your Camp.
- Contact your local DCS offices, <https://novascotia.ca/coms/departement/contact/ChildWelfareServices.html>, to explore opportunities for children from low income families to attend your Camp.
- Contact the Immigrant Association of NS (ISANS), <http://www.isans.ca>, to explore opportunities for immigrant children to attend your Camp.
- Contact The Youth Project, <http://youthproject.ns.ca>, to explore to explore opportunities for LGBTQ2+children to attend your Camp.
- Click [here](#) for the *Guidelines for Supporting Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Students* from the NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- Make your Camp's facilities and programmes more accessible for persons with physical disabilities. Here are some links for design guidelines and best practices:
 - ➔ <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/designm/>
 - ➔ <http://inclusionnl.ca/inclusive-workplaces/accessibility-checklists/>
 - ➔ <https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/>



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The following are some helpful suggestions ¹for your Camp staff on communicating with campers who have special needs. These suggestions also provide very good insight on communicating with all peoples from different cultural, ethnic, religious, age or gender identity population groups that help staff see the camper as a person:

- Speak of the person first, then the child's disability (e.g., a child with Down syndrome, instead of the Down syndrome child).
- Emphasize abilities, not limitations (e.g., Cody is a wonderful artist, instead of Cody uses crutches).
- Do not label people as part of a disability group (e.g., Dorlissa who likes dancing, instead of Dorlissa, the blind teenager).
- Remember that a person is not a condition (e.g., identify Shelby as Shelby, the 8-year-old, instead of Shelby, the epileptic).
- Don't give excessive praise or attention to a person with a disability; don't patronize them (e.g., Would you want to be praised for something that you do every day, like go to work?).
- Avoid treating people with disabilities as if they want to be the recipients of charity or pity. They want to participate equally with the rest of the community (e.g., ask Jasper if he wants to play, instead of saying how sad it is that Jasper needs help with lots of things).
- Let the person do or speak for herself as much as possible (e.g., if one child asks why another uses a wheelchair, let her answer for herself, instead of answering for her).
- Don't assume that an individual with a disability needs help. Offer assistance, but wait until your offer is accepted before you help (e.g., ask an individual with a disability if he would like you to hold the door open for him, instead of assuming that he needs you to do it for him).
- Be respectful of personal space and assistive devices. Assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids and assistance dogs are part of a person's personal space and should not be interfered with unless assistance is requested.
- Remember that a person who has a disability isn't necessarily chronically sick or unhealthy (e.g., a person with mental retardation is not sick or unhealthy, she may experience difficulty in learning at times).



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- Make certain that activities are accessible, both architecturally and programmatically, to all participants (e.g., programs, as well as buildings, need to be welcoming and accommodating).
- Remember that a disability is a functional limitation that interferes with a person's ability to walk, hear, talk, learn, etc. A handicap is a situation or a barrier imposed by society, the environment, or oneself (e.g., an inaccessible facility is a handicap to the individual with a disability to participate in an activity at that facility).
- Relax! Don't be embarrassed if you use common expressions such as "see ya later" or "gotta run," to an individual who has a visual impairment or uses a wheelchair, respectively.

For other great diversity and inclusion resources go to:

- <http://www.snipsf.org/tips-tools/>
- <http://canspei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/20140910-CCDI-Report-DI-Strategy-Toolkit.pdf>
- <http://canspei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2016-diversity-toolkit.pdf>
- <http://canspei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/senior-serving-organizations-toolkit-for-inclusion.pdf>

Notes:

1. Special Needs Inclusion Project 2010, Support for Families of Children with Disabilities 1663 Mission Street, 7th floor, San Francisco CA 94103. (from A Community for All Children)