



As parents we balance our roles of helping our children grow with keeping them safe. In particular we struggle with the question of who we put in positions of influence in their lives. At camp we do this three ways.

1. **People.** Our founder used to say that he could run a great camp in the desert, if he had the right staff. He was right. Finding the right people is the most important thing we do. Of course we start with people we know, and most of our staff began with us as campers, so we know them very well. The others are usually recommended by people we know. Those who love camp the most find staff ready to love camp the best.

It is worth noting here that we are not a sports camp. Sports camps hire staff with the priority of skill development. Traditional camps hire staff with the priority of youth development. We do this through skill development that is stronger than many sports camps, but we are not willing to hire skill apart from character.

2. **Policies.** Even though we hire people we know very well, rigid hiring policies are also important. Of course we run criminal and sex-offender checks on everyone, and we run driving records on any who might drive, but we believe the most important filter is a rigorous and consistent interview process. We also check references and verify volunteer and work histories as appropriate.

3. **Program.** Depending on their role at camp, our staff training is between four days and two weeks, and it is among the most rigorous we are aware of. We also require all of our counselor staff to receive training consistent with the program provided by [Ministry Safe](#). You may find this a good resource for your family as well. More importantly, we've designed our program to have multiple staff involved with campers in every part of their day. Great counselors do their best work serving in teams. We also have guidelines for campers' time with other campers. You can read more about all that [here](#).

Finally, if your son is joining us at camp this summer, we would ask that you do the following things:

1. Please do not allow your camper to connect with their camp staff after the season. We are proud of our counselors. We believe we know their character, not just their conduct. We also know many of their families and we stay in touch. But camp is a special environment where we



live in a closed community and see each other's best qualities. As a result our staff are instructed to not connect with campers outside of camp, including on social media. In short, we do not believe it is appropriate for any adult to have one on one contact with a child, at camp or when they return home.

2. Please have these two conversations.

- a. Before camp, ask your camper to tell a counselor if any adult or camper says or does something that makes them uncomfortable. You may also want to give them some description of what is appropriate behavior.
- b. After camp, please call John & Catherine if your camper expresses any concerns from their time with us.

These are tough conversations, and of course they are different with each age group, but we believe that clear communication is an important part of keeping our children safe. We also want to encourage you with the reminder that a great camp experience should be one of the most important growing opportunities in a child's life. We promise to work hard to make that the case for your camper, just as it has been for ours.

Growth Through Friends and Adventure!
John & Catherine

Join us.

