

Showing Respect

(This is the second in 4 articles on the "Four R's" that we stress at Camp Champions)

As you might have seen in a previous article, we focus on the "Four R's": showing Respect, taking reasonable Risks, Reaching out to others, and taking Responsibility. This article talks about what we do to stress showing respect.

We want our campers to respect each other, their surroundings and themselves. We do this using a variety of different techniques.

One of the most obvious is our tradition of saying "sir" and "ma'am". Every camper and every counselor is referred to by his or her first name with a sir or ma'am tacked on. For example, our directors are Tricia Ma'am and Paul Sir. This is typically one of the traditions our parents are most likely to misunderstand. Some think that it smacks of a military or excessively formal approach. Let me assure you that this is not the case. Our intention here is to verbally express respect for each other and it becomes second nature. In fact, even when camp is not in session, I call my children Wiley Sir, Liam Sir, Terrill Ma'am and Virginia Ma'am. They call me Daddy Sir or Steve Sir. I know this sounds stifling, but it is really pretty fun.

Respect might start with our language, but it continues in all we do. We teach our campers to appreciate and respect the beauty of the land and lake.

We help them with their listening skills (which is important when you are in a cabin of 12). One of the best ways to do this is to model it. Our counselors are good listeners to your children. We hire people who are naturally good listeners and then we hone these skills during orientation.

We emphasize respect for competitors. Our Trojan-Spartan (which occur three times each term) are most notable for 2 reasons: the intensity of the competition and the respect for the competitors. Our campers come to understand that the quality of team is defined by the quality of its competition and by its respect for its competitor.

We also hold dear to the believe that each of us is glorious, each of us has a special life that only we can lead. It is our hope that by believing this about each camper, they will begin to believe it about themselves. When this occurs, they learn to respect themselves.

Steve and Susie Baskin