

Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model

Background Information

This document was developed by using a variety of internal and external sources. For this research project, the focus is on developing a competency model that includes core competencies, a competency definition, and key actions for each.

Definitions

Some definitions are helpful before reviewing this information:

- *Competencies*-observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance
- *Core competencies*-“the ‘demonstrated capacities’ that forms a foundation for high quality performance in the workplace”; this workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio.
- *Competency title and definition*-a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified
- *Key actions*-general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency

Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies

Initial research identified the following set of 15 competencies, presented in alphabetical order.

- 1) Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge
- 2) Communication
- 3) Cultural Awareness
- 4) Health, Wellness, and Risk Management
- 5) Personal Commitment
- 6) Professional Development
- 7) Professionalism
- 8) Program Planning
- 9) Role Model
- 10) Self-Direction
- 11) Supportive Relationships
- 12) Teaching and Facilitating
- 13) Teamwork and Leadership
- 14) Thinking and Problem Solving
- 15) Understands Organizational and Camp Environment



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Epley, H.K. 9/2014

Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competencies
(These are not listed by importance)

Competency	Definition
Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge	<p>Understands youth and their needs, along with the ages and stages of youth development; has an understanding of behavior management techniques and guidelines; puts knowledge to practice.</p> <p><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates awareness of various learning styles and camper needs and abilities related to ages of campers by engaging appropriately in conversation. • Demonstrates awareness of various physical needs and abilities of campers. • Plans activities and programs appropriate for camper ages, stages, and abilities and not counselor interests; adjusts the rules and objectives for these activities as needed. • Demonstrates awareness of different behavior management techniques by redirecting campers or managing situations calmly and confidentially. • Explains rules to campers to ensure an understanding of expectations and how it relates to camp.
Communication	<p>Communicates effectively with others using a variety of methods including active listening, observation, direct conversation, and public speaking, in both individual and group settings; has conflict mediation skills.</p> <p><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; captivates the audience when speaking. • Uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message. • Speaks directly to individuals on their particular level. • Demonstrates effective listening skills; listens to others, shows interest in what they are saying; checks for understanding. • Uses communication tools, methods, and attention grabbing techniques based on the situation and need of recipients. • Addresses conflicts that may arise and resolves the issue by effectively communicating with others.

Competency	Definition
Cultural Awareness	<p data-bbox="581 268 1464 380">Understands and accepts differences in others; appreciates different talents; relates and connects with diverse groups of people including but not limited to various cultures, special needs and backgrounds.</p> <p data-bbox="581 415 737 451"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="630 491 1464 898" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 491 1464 632">• Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, sexual orientation, and opinions or ideas; embraces the differences. <li data-bbox="630 640 1203 676">• Address the situation if a bias is observed. <li data-bbox="630 684 1430 751">• Seeks out individuals who have different backgrounds from themselves and expands their own awareness. <li data-bbox="630 760 1430 898">• Welcomes others who are different with a positive attitude and makes sure all individuals are involved regardless what their difference is; makes adaptations to activities to include everyone.
Health, Wellness, and Risk Management	<p data-bbox="581 934 1464 1157">Is watchful and knows what to look for regarding potential health and safety concerns and how to deal with and react to situations; has knowledge of emergency procedures and the protocol to take if they arise; has knowledge of how to manage their own stress, support the physical and emotional well-being of the camp community and basic first aid skills.</p> <p data-bbox="581 1192 737 1228"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="630 1268 1464 1604" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 1268 1464 1379">• Addresses safety issues or threats that may arise by preparing the environment for safe success; keeps camper safety at the forefront of their mind. <li data-bbox="630 1388 1464 1499">• Has an understanding of safety protocols and what to do in an emergency situation; reacts to the situation according to these protocols. <li data-bbox="630 1507 1422 1575">• Recognizes the seriousness of an event, behavior, or action and calmly and appropriately reacts to the situation. <li data-bbox="630 1583 1273 1604">• Knows when to seek help and report violations.

Competency	Definition
Personal Commitment	<p>Is committed to the philosophy and goals of camp and devotes themselves to the position; has a sense of selflessness; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact they have on the program.</p> <p><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes every decision with the best interest of the campers in mind, creates an environment for the campers to enjoy, and puts the campers’ needs first. • Attends trainings and planning meetings, spends extra time preparing for camp and is engaged in all aspects of camp, not just what one likes; makes camp a priority. • Has a positive outlook on camp, desires to work as a team to have a positive impact on the program.
Professional Development	<p>Has a willingness to be coached and challenged; accepts feedback and guidance from adults and peers; seeks opportunities to continually improve knowledge, skills, and capabilities; develops job-seeking skills (including completion of an application, references, screening, and selection process).</p> <p><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks and utilizes critiques and performance feedback from peers and staff members. • Evaluates self and understands why some things did or did not work. • Makes a connection between being a counselor and later when applying for college or jobs and develops the skills that will assist in performing well (e.g., completing application, interviewing, reflection). • Seeks out opportunities and extra training to directly impact and enhance their role in the camping program; sets goals and pushes themselves to learn something new.

Competency	Definition
Professionalism	<p>Demonstrates behaviors that reflect high levels of maturity, responsibility, flexibility and adaptability, honesty and trustworthiness; has an appropriate sense of humor; has a positive attitude; energetically shares knowledge; avoids a sense of entitlement; is engaged and respects people and things; demonstrates customer service and maintains confidentiality.</p> <p><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates maturity by differentiating between being a camper and a counselor; does not get defensive when their ideas are challenged. • Demonstrates appropriate language, actions, and behaviors while at camp and also outside of camp (school, church, fair, etc.). • Adjusts roles willingly if plans change. • Maintains confidentiality regarding medical needs, special conditions, or incidents that may arise. • Engaged with campers, counselors, and staff members. • Treats others with respect; is inclusive of all individuals. • Does what needs to be done with a positive attitude and is prepared for activities and events.
Program Planning	<p>Designs, creates, and plans for appropriate programs and workshops to engage all participants; is prepared to implement these programs.</p> <p><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes meaningfully to committees, brings ideas, and voices opinions when planning events. • Generates ideas that are new or creative but incorporates an educational component to these activities or programs. • Thoughtfully plans lessons, generating and understanding a detailed list of steps while keeping in mind the ages of campers, available location and timeframe, and the finances and resources needed while relating activities to the goals of camp. • Works to plan and create program with a team and includes resource people as needed.

Competency	Definition
Role Model	<p data-bbox="581 275 1448 342">Is someone who others aspire to be like; models, demonstrates, and teaches positive values; has fun in a positive and responsible way.</p> <p data-bbox="581 384 737 415"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="630 457 1464 751" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 457 1464 525">• Maintains positive image and acts appropriately in all areas of life (online, school, church, sports, etc.). <li data-bbox="630 531 1432 598">• Better others around them by giving credit to peers or staff and enabling campers to succeed. <li data-bbox="630 604 1390 672">• Leads by example and has fun while following the camp rules. <li data-bbox="630 678 1393 745">• Is engaged and shows respect for all persons, places, and things.
Self-Direction	<p data-bbox="581 793 1416 898">Takes initiative and does things from start to finish with all the details and without being asked; works unsupervised; admits and recognizes mistakes when they are made.</p> <p data-bbox="581 940 737 972"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="630 1014 1455 1423" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 1014 1406 1119">• Identifies what needs to be accomplished and takes action before being asked; looks into the future to prepare the setting. <li data-bbox="630 1125 1442 1230">• Takes initiative to generate ideas or play games during transition or down time; includes teachable moments as they arise. <li data-bbox="630 1236 1412 1268">• Is prepared to lead an activity but changes plans if needed. <li data-bbox="630 1274 1432 1341">• Performs with minimal supervision or direction and follows through on assignments or tasks without being reminded. <li data-bbox="630 1348 1451 1415">• Is willing to take ownership for successes and failures; works toward achieving group (and not individuals’) success.

Competency	Definition
Supportive Relationships	<p data-bbox="581 268 1398 373">Is accepting and empathetic toward others, caring and kind, and responsive to needs; creates a welcoming environment and puts campers first.</p> <p data-bbox="581 415 737 447"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="630 491 1435 747" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 491 1435 596">• Attentive to the needs of others (e.g., illness, preparation for activities, accident) and treats them as they would like to be treated. <li data-bbox="630 604 1435 667">• Is empathetic toward others (e.g., homesick, struggling, not included); acts accordingly to engage them. <li data-bbox="630 676 1435 747">• Creates a welcoming environment for campers and their parents; makes them feel like they are special.
Teaching and Facilitating	<p data-bbox="581 785 1430 858">Teaches and leads activities with ease; interacts with, engages and motivates children; facilitates hands-on or experiential learning.</p> <p data-bbox="581 900 737 932"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="630 976 1435 1341" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="630 976 1435 1039">• Involves all youth in activities through motivation or guided direction while creating a fun and engaging environment. <li data-bbox="630 1047 1435 1110">• Is enthusiastic while encouraging youth, regardless of what the task may be. <li data-bbox="630 1119 1435 1224">• Takes time to practice and prepare before leading an activity or session and is willing to research ideas as needed but is able to be spontaneous and alter plans as needed. <li data-bbox="630 1232 1435 1341">• Employs a variety of teaching methods including demonstration, visual, and hands-on learning; relates the activity to life outside of camp.

Competency	Definition
Teamwork and Leadership	<p data-bbox="586 268 1445 449">Effectively participates and works as a member of a team; is supportive of peers and other staff; is approachable and has organizational skills, the ability to lead or follow, and sees the “big picture” or goals of camp; understands and follows directions; serves in a supervisory role.</p> <p data-bbox="586 491 737 525"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="634 567 1445 894" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="634 567 1445 667">• Supportive of others ideas and allows individuals to be in a leadership role and assists them to be successful; shares the workload to provide opportunities for all individuals. <li data-bbox="634 678 1445 743">• Identifies the strengths and weaknesses in the group and draws upon the strengths to achieve a common goal. <li data-bbox="634 753 1445 819">• Assumes the leadership role when appropriate but does not always need to be in charge and allows others to lead. <li data-bbox="634 829 1445 894">• Develops constructive and cooperative working relationships with others.
Thinking and Problem Solving	<p data-bbox="586 932 1445 1079">Acquires information and uses thinking skills including creativity and critical thinking to prevent and solve problems; exercises fairness and moral integrity and makes sound judgments; anticipates consequences of actions.</p> <p data-bbox="586 1121 737 1155"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="634 1197 1445 1604" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="634 1197 1445 1304">• Identifies potential problems before they occur and takes action to prevent or handle the threat; works with others to solve problems if needed. <li data-bbox="634 1314 1445 1413">• Uses creativity to plan activities or solve problems and is not afraid to plan something (e.g., theme, event, game) that has never been conducted before. <li data-bbox="634 1423 1445 1488">• Reflects upon performance, experience, and activities; alters ideas as needed. <li data-bbox="634 1499 1445 1604">• Employs sound judgment when faced with confrontation or potential breaking of rules; strives to ensure fairness for all participants.

Competency	Definition
Understands Organizational and Camp Environment	<p data-bbox="581 268 1382 451">Understands the 4-H organization and philosophy; has a sense of community and citizenship within the camping program; is knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) that is the focus of the camp; lives within the camp routine.</p> <p data-bbox="581 489 737 525"><i>Key actions</i></p> <ul data-bbox="634 562 1370 976" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="634 562 1370 636">• Identifies needs of self and campers and learns what is expected of them. <li data-bbox="634 640 1370 714">• Understands that camp is a special place and can make a difference in a child's life. <li data-bbox="634 718 1130 753">• Is focused on the job as a counselor. <li data-bbox="634 758 1305 831">• Understands the philosophy, purpose, and desired outcomes of the 4-H camp experience. <li data-bbox="634 835 1349 976">• Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them (e.g., withdrawing from cell phones or other technologies).