
Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge



Help Papers Series
SUPPORT MATERIALS for Parent/Child Programs

TOPIC:

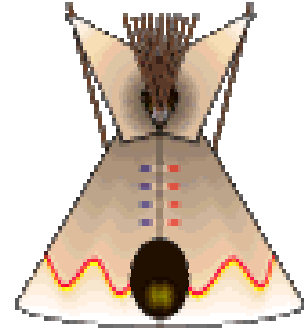
Successful Campouts



Great Lakes Region – Help Papers Series – Successful Campouts

SUCCESSFUL CAMPOUTS

Longhouse campouts are perhaps the key events in a program year, and therefore everyone wants them to be successful. By simple advance planning, all can go well. On the following pages are some proven guidelines that, if followed, things should go smoothly.



This paper generally refers to a campout held at a traditional camp with lodging and dining facilities, etc. A campout planned for a more primitive (tent style) location and lacking in facilities may present a more challenging task in the scope of planning. At the same time, don't be afraid of that either. Campouts are all different, including the length of the event, so modify these guidelines as necessary and use what applies.

Certain steps are necessary to insure the success of all campouts. ***Be aware that the time frames presented are for reference only and may need to be altered depending upon your situation or method of selection & planning.***

TASK	TARGET / TIMEFRAME
Reserve camp or camp sites	ASAP Up to one year in advance
Release dates to the program membership	ASAP Up to one year in advance
Gather basic information	8-12 weeks in advance
Develop the program	6-8 weeks in advance
Costs and Task Assignments	6-8 weeks in advance
Event Announcement	8 weeks in advance
Registration and follow-up	2-4 weeks in advance
Lodging Assignments and Ideas	1-2 weeks in advance
Pre-Event Follow-up	1-2 weeks in advance
Campout day	The day you've worked towards arrive
Feedback and review	1-3 weeks afterwards
Tips and Hints	

Reserve Camp or Camp Sites:

If you are selecting a new camp facility for you next campout, the search for a camp facility should be conducted as soon as possible. A year in advance is not too soon. Many camps have standing reservations with returning groups and it is sometimes difficult to get an open date. Campgrounds also should be given the same consideration. Many campgrounds have only limited group areas or groups of individual sites that could be reserved. Make a list of potential sites and visit them. Settle on a facility of choice ASAP. If a contract or deposit is required, complete this business also ASAP. In many cases, the deposit must be in the hands of the camp for the reservation to be secured.

Release Dates to the Program Membership:

Whether the campout is to be held at a new facility or returning to the previous facility, these dates, once secure should be released in the program calendar up to one year (as far) in advance if possible to allow people to keep these weekends open as best as possible.

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Gather Basic Information

This is best done by one person. Start by reading the camp's reservation policy and rules and regulations policy. Contact or visit the camp and verify the following details.

- Expected dates and times at the camp are still available to your group.
- Any contracts to be signed? Are any certificates of insurance required?
- Any additional fees inside of camp? (Such as crafts, trail rides, etc.)
- Are liability release forms required?
- Approximate number in your group.
- How are fees determined? What about late-comers and no-shows?
- Camp payment details. Is an advance deposit required to secure your dates? Balance required to be paid when?
- Will your group have exclusive use or shared use of the camp.
- What facilities will be open to your group, shared, or off limits?
- Which meals will be provided? Are the menus planned by the camp or by the Longhouse?
- Are any snacks provided?
- What are the sleeping arrangements? What gear is necessary?
- What duties must campers do? Set tables, serve food, clean floors?
- Any nearby attractions: mini-golf, caves, amusement parks?
- Directions to the camp and a map of the camp for distribution of materials to membership.
- Which program areas will the camp staff help with? (Archery, nature, crafts, etc.).

If you've not been to the camp before, it is important to visit the camp and get a feel of where things are, especially for the sake of activities planning. If you're returning to a previous camp and are familiar with the facilities, then much of this can be taken care of over the phone. It is advisable to develop a detailed planning checklist to track the progress of all the advance work to be done so nothing is overlooked as time draws closer the event date.

Develop the Program

It is advisable to do this with a group of old and new participants to get a good exchange of ideas. Some things are traditional, but don't get caught in the groove of doing the same thing over and over. It must be kept exciting to maintain interest at those multiple year participants.

Start with the known things, such as meals, and build from there. An example is shown of a weekend campout that would begin Friday early evening and end Sunday at noon.

<i>Meals</i>	<i>Basic Events</i>	<i>Other Events</i>
Snack (Fri eve.)	Opening, flag raising	Swimming, hikes, games, crafts
Breakfast (Sat.)	Campfire (Fri.)	Songs, skits, stories
Lunch (Sat.)	Parents meeting	Horseback riding, contests, treasure hunts
Dinner (Sat.)	Campfire/Ceremony (Sat.)	Camaraderie time
Breakfast (Sun.)	Chapel	Awards, thank-you's, goodbyes
Lunch (<i>not std</i>) (Sun.)	Closing	

Note: Meals are added or removed depending on the length of the campout (number of days)

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Some thoughts on basic campout events:

Official Opening: A must for a quality event. It provides a focal point for all else to happen. Do it before the first activity whenever possible. Do a flag raising at the same time. Every camp should have a flagpole. The opening provides a time to welcome everyone, to go over the schedule, to cover rules and regulations, and to stress the fact that this is a time to enhance that parent-child relationship. It gives officers visibility and is an ideal time to gain everyone's attention for announcements.

Campfire & Ceremonies: Can and should be the highlight of the weekend. This is a great opportunity for fellowship, singing, laughter, stories, and skits. It's a time to introduce officers, hold induction or graduation ceremonies, and present special awards. Ceremonies should be meaningful and carefully thought out. Care should be given to include all present in the festivities no matter how small a part. You may have a ceremonial Chief or team that will plan the bulk of this activity.



Parent Meeting: This is an important, relatively short, but very informative meeting. A great time to get information out to the masses, as well as gain some of their input. Also an ideal time to appeal for volunteer officers, talk about the state of the program, take ideas for and discuss upcoming events, projects, changes in procedures. All of these can be discussed since you should have the majority of your membership there. If the camp staff is not supervising the children at this point, make sure to have one adult stay in each sleeping facility with the children in case of an emergency. This is important.

Chapel: A relatively short (20-30 minutes maximum) non-denominational service. This activity lends itself to recognizing and appreciating the Great Spirit's work in forest, field, stream, and each other. The observance and care of natural things, love of family and others, and the ability to work and play together are typical themes. Traditionally it consists of maybe a few songs, Bible reading, short story with a meaning, a collection possibly for Longhouse charitable activities, and closing prayer. The camp staff may offer to conduct this service.

Closing: An official end to campout. Just as a tribe meeting should close with a blessing, it's good to thank everyone for attending and participating, reflect on the great time we all had together and wish a safe journey home. This is also a time to present awards, prizes, patches, and any special acknowledgments that are necessary and may have not been presented at the main campfire/ceremony. Right before the final meal together will work well.

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Important Points in the Development of the Program:

1. The meals and basic events serve as a skeleton. Then other events can fill in the gaps. Here are some things to keep in mind.
2. This is a parent-child activity. Activities should be designed to involve both parent and child together, and whole tribes together when possible.
3. A more structured campout is usually welcomed by first time campers, particularly younger ones. Fall campouts, because of brand new members, is usually better being a bit more structured.
4. A less structured campout works well if there are a variety of attractions at or near camp.
5. Saturday lunch and early afternoon activities may not be fully attended due to soccer games, Little League games, etc. Survey this an advance and plan accordingly.
6. Many people will depart after breakfast on Sunday, even if lunch is part of the program. Retention is higher if a full schedule of activities is planned.
7. Not all parents and children are competitive or skilled in athletics. Try to select activities that all can enjoy regardless of skill level. Stress participation, not winning.
8. The unique setting at a camp lends you to do activities that people would not normally do at home. Use the environment of the camp to your advantage
9. Any instructions or scripts should use the K.I.S.S. philosophy (keep it simple and short). Gear directions to the children and be very clear.
10. Always have a Plan B. Weather may not be cooperative, a tribe may not show up, or one might that isn't registered. Be ready!
11. Keep tribal prizes simple. First in line at next meal, seconds on desert, get their table set.

Costs and Task Assignments

The program is set, now you must determine cost before you put out the announcements.

The elements of a budget are simple, consisting of a few meals, lodging, program supplies, patches, etc.

Meals -- are you cooking your own or is the camp catering the meals? If the camp is doing it, it is usually included in the quoted cost. If you are going to be doing the cooking, plan and budget carefully. Meals are your biggest expense.

Lodging -- your second largest expense. This is included if you're quoted one price from camp. Sometimes you are given the prices piecemeal and you must add them up.

Program supplies, patches, awards, etc. -- plan these in advance. It normally takes six to eight weeks for custom patches to be made. This time frame may even be longer if you intend to hold a contest for the design. Another possibility is to check with the camp to see if they have a patch in there souvenir store and the stock needed if you decide to use this. Don't wait until the last moment on this.

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Once you have these figures, you'll be able to come up with a campout price. Try to set your price at a fee for parent-child pair and then a fee for an additional child.

A tip on pricing: do not make exceptions for those who come late or leave early. Set one price and stick with it for everyone. It will be simpler in the long run and encourage membership to attend the whole event.

List all the activities that require assistance from tribe members. List what's required to be done at those areas, and then make it into a sign-up sheet. Give the tribes the opportunity to volunteer for duties before deciding to assign them. Be sure you have something for each tribe to do and each tribe doing something. This is important to get involvement. These assignments will need to be posted at campout and people reminded at opening so that people are where they are supposed to be at the proper time. It's worth the extra effort.

Event Announcement (Information Release):

You now have all necessary information. Put it together attractively on a flyer(s) and circulate it to all members. Use your already established channels of communication (i.e. newsletter or website) as well. The announcement should include the following information:

1. Longhouse name, spring/fall campout, and year
2. Dates of campout and name of camp (date previously released in program calendar)
3. Schedule of fees: Base rates, additional children, additional fees at camp, etc.
4. Registration deadline and procedures
5. Directions to camp and emergency phone number
6. Schedule of activities, especially opening time and closing time
7. Refund policy

Be sure everyone finds out about it. Go that extra step to help boost attendance.

Registration

Registration can be done either by tribe or individually. How you've done it in the past might determine how you'll do it this time. It is recommended that since you ask tribes to work together all year long, registration by tribe is the best. Give the tribe chiefs the responsibility of collecting all the registrations (and fees) for their tribe. That way there are fewer people to deal with as far as money is concerned. If you've not done it like that before, the first time through will be rough, but in the long run, it will work fine.



Set a registration deadline with enough time to inform the camp of a firm number and make all necessary plans. Two weeks before your campout date is usually plenty of time. The camp may dictate this (deadline) timeline. Hold as firm as possible to the deadline date. Once you bend, people will want you to bend for all sorts of exceptions. Once they know that you are going to hold firm to the registration deadline, the registrations will be in on time. This takes training, but is worth it.

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Lodging Assignments and Ideas:

When placing tribes in sleeping units (cabins), keep tribes together as much as possible. Can a tribe of eleven be squeezed into a cabin for ten? Can a bed be borrowed from a partially filled cabin, or should someone bring a cot? If this is a tent (campground) event, consider placing tribal site markers. Encourage the tribes to display their banners and shields outside for all to see.

Pre-Event Follow-up:

Now is the time to check up on all those folks who volunteered to do things. Just a friendly check is all that's required, but can save a lot of embarrassment at campout if someone forgets something. Other things to follow up on are:

1. Is everything still set with camp?
2. Has the property keeper been notified of what Longhouse property to bring?
3. Program materials and patches ordered or in hand?
4. Scripts, inductions, chapel things all set?
5. Have all tribes been personally contacted?
6. Can people car pool to the camp site?

Campout Day

If you have gone through all the above steps, the campout should be a very enjoyable time. Someone should greet people as they arrive and check them off on an attendance sheet. This gives a record of attendance for billing, etc. A map of the camp and the activities schedule should be posted in each cabin and at a couple other locations around camp. Copies should be available to hand out to all parents. The camp map and schedule could be printed as a single page (both sides) pass-out.



Upon greeting, arrivals can be directed to their place of lodging and told of things that are or will be happening right then. As the campout progresses, activities should flow along with no one person being overly burdened.

Remember that this is a parent-child event. Things should be organized with that fact in mind. People responsible for activities ought to be able to involve their children as well. This is what the whole program is about.

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Feedback

Be sure that an evaluation sheet is done on the campout. How was the camp, food, sleeping facilities, etc.? What did people like best? Where were the problems? If doing it again, what would you do differently? Discuss this evaluation at the first council meeting that follows the event.

All planning sheets and the evaluation should be turned over to the longhouse for the records. It certainly will help next year's planning and hosts. Also, a follow-up letter to the camp is nice, expressing your thanks for their efforts, if appropriate.

All in all, planning a campout can be a very rewarding experience for a tribe. Although it seems like a lot of work, it isn't. Remember to keep in mind you are doing it so that others may participate in a rewarding and memorable experience with their child.

Tip and Hints:

- Draw upon the experience and wisdom of the program elders as advisors in planning the event. These elders may also serve as backup when a major oops occurs.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Do not be drawn into the trap of trying to do it all yourself.
- Dates to avoid if possible: Yom Kippur, Halloween, Palm Sunday, Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Weekend.
- With the campout announcement, send a list of things to bring and what to expect camp rules, etc. (especially important to first time campers). Reinforce this with tribal chiefs as the time draws closer to the event.
- Be sure all special arrangements for movies, public address system, etc., are made in advance with the camp. Do not assume anything.
- Assign tribes to tables in the dining hall. Place a small placard with the tribes name and head count on each table.
- Keep all members outside the dining hall before mealtime until tables are set and the meal is ready. Otherwise, you will have children running around and people beginning to eat early. When ready, open the doors and watch the cattle-drive begin.
- Keep announcements at meals very few and short. Talk loud enough for all to hear.
- Dismiss people all at once.
- Plan and say a grace before each meal.
- Have your group clean up the place before they leave camp. Tribes should be responsible to clean up their cabins / areas. All fires should be extinguished.
- The program person in charge should perform a final walk-through of all lodging facilities, then check out with the camp.

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SAMPLE CAMPOUT SCHEDULE

TIME	ACTIVITY
FRIDAY	
6:00 PM	Check in, find cabin assignments, settle into cabins
7:00	General meeting in dining hall, activity sign up's as necessary
8:00	Tribal skits in activity lodge
9:00	Special Activity in activity lodge.
10:00	Snack in dining hall.
?	General Campfire at cabins
SATURDAY	
8:15 AM	Hopper call (2 people from each cabin report to dining hall)
8:30	Breakfast
9:00 – 9:15	Camp Store Open
9:30 – 10:45	Waterfall Hike (meet at the dinning hall flagpole)
9:30 – 11:30	BB Guns open
9:30 - 12:00	Archery open, Obstacle Course open
9:30 - 12:00	Trail Rides (as assigned in advance)
12:15PM	Hopper Call
12:30 - 1:15	Lunch
1:15 - 1:45	Camp Store Open
1:30 – 3:30	Craft in dining hall. TIE-DYING, bring or buy light color shirts / clothing
1:30 – 3:30	Trail Rides
1:30 –4:00	Canoeing open, Challenge Course open (dads must accompany kids)
2:00 – 3:30	Waterfall Hike (meet at the dinning hall flagpole)
4:15 – 5:15	Hike (meet at basketball courts)
5:15	Hopper Call
5:30 - 6:15	Dinner
6:15 - 6:45	Camp Store Open
6:15 - 7:30	Quality (free) time Hayrides: 6:30 – 7:30
7:30	prepare for ceremony
7:45 - 8:00	pictures
8:00 - 9:30	Ceremony at Fire Circle, Sing-a-long
9:45	Activity in Dinning Hall
10:15	Snack in dining Hall
SUNDAY	
8:15AM	Hopper Call
8:30 - 9:15	Breakfast
9:30 –9:50	Non-denominational Sunrise Service at outdoor Chapel
9:30 - 11:00	BB Guns, Archery (all open)
10:00 - 11:00	Hike (meet at basketball courts)
11:00	Clean-up, Depart from Cabins



RETURN HOME WITH LOTS OF GREAT MEMORIES!