



Top 10 Expectations of a Summer Play Program Leader

Being a Summer Play Program Leader is about creating a safe, welcoming, and fun environment where every child can learn, grow, and make lasting memories. The following expectations outline the professional standards all leaders should strive to meet throughout the summer.

1. Be On Time and Prepared

Arrive on time each day, ready to lead activities with the supplies, plans, and positive attitude needed for a successful day.

2. Put Children's Safety First

The safety and well-being of participants is always the top priority. Follow all program policies, supervise children closely, and report any concerns immediately.

3. Welcome Every Child and Family

Help every participant feel included, respected, and valued. Greet children and families with a friendly attitude each day.

4. Participate with Enthusiasm

Be actively involved in games and activities. Your energy and excitement encourage children to participate and have fun.

5. Be a Positive Role Model

Demonstrate kindness, patience, honesty, and respect. Children learn by watching your actions as much as your words.

6. Communicate Respectfully

Speak professionally with children, parents, volunteers, fellow staff, and community members. Listen carefully and communicate clearly.

7. Work as a Team

Support your co-workers, share responsibilities, and help create a positive work environment. Great programs are built through teamwork.

8. Keep Learning and Ask Questions

No one is expected to know everything. Ask for help when needed, be open to feedback, and look for opportunities to learn and improve.

9. Leave Personal Distractions Behind

Keep personal phone use to a minimum and stay focused on the children and activities. Participants deserve your full attention.

10. Help Create a Memorable Summer

Every interaction matters. Your encouragement, creativity, and leadership can make a lasting positive impact on a child's summer experience.



Summer Play Program Registration Form SAMPLE

Participant Information

Child's Full Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Age: _____

Grade Completed: _____

Home Address:

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent/Guardian #1

Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Parent/Guardian #2 (Optional)

Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact

(Someone other than a parent/guardian if possible.)

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone: _____

Medical Information

Does your child have any allergies?

☐ No

☐ Yes (Please describe)

Does your child have any medical conditions, behavioural considerations, or additional needs that staff should be aware of?

Does your child carry any medication (EpiPen, inhaler, etc.)?

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, please explain:

Family Doctor (Optional): _____

Health Card Number (Optional): _____

Authorized Pick-Up

Please list anyone authorized to pick up your child. (Include name, relationship and phone number).

Anyone not listed above will **not** be permitted to pick up your child without prior authorization from the parent/guardian.

Program Permissions

Please check all that apply.

- ☐ My child may participate in all program activities.
 - ☐ My child may use playground equipment.
 - ☐ My child may participate in outdoor games and activities.
 - ☐ My child may walk to nearby parks or facilities under staff supervision.
 - ☐ My child may be photographed for promotional purposes.
 - ☐ My child **may not** be photographed.
 - ☐ I give permission for sunscreen to be applied if supplied by the program.
 - ☐ I will provide sunscreen and understand staff will assist with application as needed.
-

Washroom Independence

My child is:

- ☐ Independent in using the washroom.
 - ☐ Requires occasional assistance or reminders.
 - ☐ Requires additional support (please explain):
-

Additional Information

Is there anything else you would like staff to know to help your child have a positive experience?

Parent/Guardian Agreement

I understand that participation in the Summer Play Program involves outdoor play, physical activity, and recreational programming. I have provided accurate information regarding my child's health and emergency contacts and agree to notify program staff of any changes.

I understand that every reasonable effort will be made to ensure the safety of participants; however, participation involves inherent risks associated with recreation activities.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Office Use Only

Date Registration Received: _____

Program Fee Paid: _____

Payment Method:

☐ Cash

☐ Cheque

☐ E-Transfer

☐ Other _____

Staff Initials: _____



Sample Daily Schedule

Every Summer Play Program is unique!

Use this schedule as a guide and adjust activities to meet the needs of your participants, your community, and the weather.

Time	Activity	Examples
9:00 – 9:15 a.m.	Arrival & Welcome	Greet participants, attendance, free choice activities, colouring, Lego, board games, outdoor play.
9:15 – 9:30 a.m.	Morning Circle & Ice Breaker	Welcome everyone, review the day's schedule, discuss expectations, birthdays, weather, announcements, and play a quick icebreaker or team-building game.
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Active Recreation	Cooperative games, relay races, obstacle course, tag games, sports skills, playground time, nature walk, scavenger hunt.
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Snack Break	Healthy snack, water break, quiet conversation.
10:45 – 11:45 a.m.	Creative Programming	Arts and crafts, LEGO building, drama activities, music, painting, science experiments, cultural activities.
11:45 – 12:00 p.m.	Transition Activity	Trivia, charades, stretching, story time, mindfulness activity, clean-up.
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch & Free Play	Lunch followed by supervised free play, reading, colouring, playground, or quiet indoor activities.
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Afternoon Adventure	Theme day activities, guest presenters, water games, park visits, community scavenger hunt, gardening, nature exploration, field trips

Time	Activity	Examples
2:00 – 2:15 p.m.	Afternoon Snack & Hydration	Water break and snack.
2:15 – 2:50 p.m.	Choice Time	Participants choose between stations such as sports, crafts, board games, reading, building challenges, or outdoor free play.
2:50 – 3:00 p.m.	Closing Circle & Dismissal	Review the day, recognize positive behaviours, preview tomorrow's activities, tidy up, and dismiss participants safely.

Programming Tips

- Plan a mix of **active**, **creative**, **educational**, and **quiet** activities each day.
- Alternate high-energy activities with calmer ones to help maintain engagement.
- Always have a few backup activities prepared in case plans change due to weather or participant interest.
- Build extra transition time into your schedule—moving between activities often takes longer than expected.
- Stay flexible! Some of the best moments happen when you adapt to the interests and energy of the group.

Summer Play Program Ideas & Planning Guide

Common activities + a simple planning worksheet for rural communities

Weekly Staples

- Park play days
- Craft days
- Water days
- Sports/games
- Free play

Community Visits

- Library
- Fire hall
- Seniors centre
- Local businesses

Special Events

- Carnival day
- Water Olympics
- Talent show
- Movie day

Outdoor/Nature

- Nature walks
- Scavenger hunts
- Fort building
- Picnics

Summer Play Program Planning Worksheet

Use this page to map out a simple, realistic program for your community.

Community Spaces We Can Use:

Potential Community Partners:

Simple Weekly Schedule Idea:

Low/No-Cost Activity Ideas:

Special Event or Highlight Day:

What We Already Have (materials, equipment):

What We Still Need:

Sample Weekly Planner:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

50 Community-Engaging Summer Play Program Ideas

Practical, low-cost ideas for rural communities

Using People in Your Community

- “Teach Us Something” day (invite a local with a skill or hobby)
- Guest storyteller (senior, parent, community member)
- Community helpers Q&A; (non-traditional roles)
- Local artist-led craft session
- Farmer visit (equipment, crops, animals discussion)
- “Day in the Life” shadow visit
- Fitness instructor or coach leads a session
- Local musician mini-performance and workshop
- Volunteer-led game day
- “Guess the Guest” mystery visitor

Using Local Places

- Library scavenger hunt
- Fire hall visit and water play
- Park exploration day
- Walking tour of the community
- Visit a local business (behind-the-scenes)
- Arena or rink behind-the-scenes
- Seniors centre visit
- School playground games day
- Nature trail walk
- Community garden visit

Bringing the Community to You

- Pop-up community picnic
- Invite families for a “join in” play day
- Community showcase (kids perform or share)
- Outdoor movie night
- Open house for the public
- Mini fair or carnival day

- Community game night
- Invite local vendors for a mini market
- Talent show
- End-of-week celebration event

Creative and Interactive Ideas

- Cardboard build or arcade day
- Community mural (temporary or permanent)
- Sidewalk chalk art around town
- Photo challenge (capture your community)
- Create a “Welcome to Our Town” display
- Build and decorate birdhouses
- DIY obstacle course
- Nature art day
- Skit or mini theatre production
- Build-your-own games day

Community Connection Activities

- Random acts of kindness day
- Make thank-you cards for local workers
- Community clean-up (park, streets)
- Adopt-a-space (care for a small area)
- Deliver notes or treats to seniors
- “Then and Now” history day
- Interview a community member
- Create a community map or poster
- Scavenger hunt using local landmarks
- Community challenge week (team-based activities)

You don't need to do all of these. Choose a few that fit your community and build from there.