

**“Creating an Inclusive  
Summer Horseback Riding Camp”**

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**Logistics:**

- I. Summer Outlook
  - a. How many weeks of camp in the summer?
  - b. Days of the week?
  - c. Hours in the day?
- II. Campers and Camp Culture
  - a. How many each week. Can this be a variable number or does it need to be set?
  - b. How many groups – camper to staff ratio?
  - c. Is the camp open to only those with a diagnosis? Siblings? Anyone?
  - d. Age limits?
- III. Staff
  - a. How many needed?
  - b. What are their roles and responsibilities?
- IV. Volunteers
  - a. How many needed and when are they needed?
  - b. What are their roles and responsibilities?
  - c. Counselor-in-Training (CIT) volunteers?
- V. Advertising
  - a. Where and when?
  - b. Brochures, posters, sandwich board, facebook, community publications, fairs.

**Staff (Examples from Little Bit TRC):**

- I. Staff roles
  - a. Coordinator/Director. Assistant Coordinator/Director if needed.
    - i. Oversees the logistics of camp
    - ii. Hires
    - iii. Schedules
    - iv. Interacts with parents
    - v. Able to fill in for counselors as necessary
  - b. Counselors
    - i. Directly interacts with campers, facilitates activities
    - ii. Assists instructor with mounted activities
    - iii. Manages volunteers
  - c. Certified Instructor
    - i. Teaches the mounted lessons
    - ii. In charge of horse choice and oversees the tacking of horses
    - iii. Manages volunteers during mounted lessons
- II. Requirements
  - a. Background of working with kids and people with disabilities
  - b. College training in education, physical or occupational therapy, or psychology desired
  - c. Two years of riding and horsemanship experience
- III. Recruiting
  - a. Make sure to start recruiting staff early!
  - b. Posters, facebook, word of mouth, other barns, local organizations

- IV. Interviewing
  - a. Variety of questions – emphasize management and team player skills
  - b. Teaching demonstration? Role playing questions?
  - c. Ensure that staff *ARE* available the weeks that you are hiring them for
- V. Staff Training
  - a. Staff training manual
    - i. Why are we here?
    - ii. How to work with and manage volunteers
    - iii. Schedules and Activities
    - iv. Policies and procedures specific to your center
    - v. Working with campers
    - vi. Appendices- Sample schedules, info on horses, in depth info on activities

**Campers (Examples from Little Bit TRC):**

- I. Registration
  - a. Forms – what information is necessary?
  - b. Do new campers need an assessment?
  - c. Make sure to have a cancellation policy
  - d. Having an excel sheet with all registration info is helpful!
    - i. Include name, age, height, weight, payment, phone, email.
- II. Staff read camper information prior to camp week
  - a. Note specific assistance needed with mobility, bathroom, dietary restrictions, behavioral issues, etc.
- III. Organize campers into groups based on
  - a. Age
  - b. Riding ability
  - c. Diagnosis – because the overarching theme is inclusion, I highly recommend grouping those with and without diagnoses together

**Volunteers (Examples from Little Bit TRC):**

- I. Volunteers needed to assist each group for all camp hours
  - a. Decide how many are needed based on the campers you have coming
  - b. Assign them to groups based on their strengths
- II. Extra volunteers needed for riding lessons as leaders and sidewalkers
- III. Counselors-In-Training
  - a. Come for a specific training at the beginning of the summer to better assist counselors
  - b. Automatically builds a population of volunteers that you can hire counselors from in later years
  - c. Great resume builder for high schoolers

**Scheduling, Supplies and Activities (Examples from Little Bit TRC):**

- I. Theme weeks
  - a. Activities based around the theme
  - b. Able to cater to riding levels
  - c. Examples – Western Week, Games Week, Horse Show Week
- II. Scheduling - see “Sample Schedule” for a day long schedule
  - a. All activities other than the riding lesson are flexible
  - b. Activities are scheduled fairly close together to keep campers interested and entertained
  - c. Plan in breaks for water, bathroom and snack
  - d. Add in an optional activity time where campers make the decisions on what to do
  - e. Have a list of activities that can fill down time

- III. Supplies
  - a. Have a list of supplies needed for each day
  - b. Store your supplies for each day in separate boxes
  - c. Get all of the supplies out at the beginning of each day so that you are prepared
  - d. Keep an extra supply on crayons/pens and coloring sheets for down time!
- IV. Unmounted Activity Ideas:
  - a. Anatomy and Horse Painting
  - b. Bathing
  - c. Braiding
  - d. Camper Barrel Racing and Pole Bending
  - e. Catch and Release – Haltering in an open area
  - f. Crafts
  - g. Decorating Horseshoes
  - h. Exploring Feed
  - i. Gaits
  - j. Get to Know the Horses
  - k. Horseshoe Hunt
  - l. Horseshoe Toss
  - m. How Tall Are You? – Horse height measuring
  - n. Leading
  - o. Roping
  - p. Scavenger Hunt
  - q. Stable Management
  - r. Tack Cleaning
  - s. Treat Feeding
  - t. TPR/Weight
- V. Consider starting a blog to update the parents daily on what their campers did
  - a. Include a letter and photos.
  - b. Helpful for campers that are not able to vocalize what they did!

**End of Camp**

- I. Be sure to hand out a survey on how to improve for next year!
- II. Debrief with staff at the end of the summer

Want more info?

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