

Couch to Day Camp: What A First Time Counselor Needs to Know

Camp Mission

Hot Shots Camp transforms the lives of campers by giving them the ability to engage in independent diabetes management, connect with a unique community of peers, and develop in mind, body, and spirit through our camping programs.

Camp Vision

Hot Shots Camp aims to promote positive human development in a safe atmosphere. We welcome young people from diverse backgrounds to grow together and continue to become the best version of themselves.

For a moment, think to yourself, “Where Is It Okay to Fail?” Chances are you can think of a few places, but not many. As Hot Shots Camp Staff, we invite you to invest in the Mission and Vision camp brings. You have a unique opportunity to become part of a space where **it’s okay to fail**.

The following is a great resource for new camp staff to refer to before their counselor orientation. **Please note this is the Day Camp document, the Couch to Resident Camp is a separate document on the Camp Staff Page.**

Camp Schedule

Little Shots Camp is designed with short attention spans in mind. We typically have 4 groups rotate through activities each day. The activities are typically broken into 4 groups: Cooking Class, Diabetes Education, Recess, and Craft. Mixed into each day we also break for lunch, snack, playground and/or swim time, and special visitors. You will be given a copy of the schedule for each day detailing what is happening and when, but keep in mind camp will not always be on schedule. Things will run late, or early, or not at all. **And that’s okay**. In order to succeed at camp you must be able to go with the flow and understand things happen.

All camp staff are expected to arrive on-site by no later than 7 AM the first day of camp to help setup, and 8 AM the remaining days. We will have a sign-in sheet each day for you to complete. If you are running more than 10 minutes late, please reach out to the Camp Director via phone to let her know you are running behind. Failure to notify staff or repeated tardiness issues will result in a one-on-one meeting and possible dismissal from camp.

Camper checkout runs from 3:45-4:00 PM (Little Shots OH) or 2:30-2:45 PM (Little Shots MI). After all campers leave, the Camp Director and counselors will hold a small meeting to review the day’s activities, any issues with campers, and break sign-up for the next day. This is typically a short meeting- around 15 minutes tops. If you have a person picking you up you can plan for them to be at camp by 4:15.

Exceptions to this include the last day of camp, where DYS hosts a Family Picnic and Award Ceremony for all campers. We will provide food for all staff, as well as host a face painter and other entertainment.

Staff Downtime and Breaks

Camp is a marathon, not a sprint. Even the most active staff will be tired after the end of the week. Plan to give yourself time to relax after each day and try not to plan any activities the Friday after camp is done. Consider making sure your sleep schedule allows you to do your best when working with several small, excited children. DYS will provide meals, snacks, and coffee each day but don't forget to eat a filling breakfast and dinner to keep your energy and mood up.

DYS works hard to ensure staff can take care of themselves at camp, so we have established a 30-minute break for each counselor each day of camp. At the end of each day, the Camp Director will pass out a sign-up sheet where all counselors have the opportunity to sign up for a break slot the following day. If you do not want to take a break, that is okay. However, we highly encourage you to take a few minutes to relax and disconnect from a hectic atmosphere. Lead counselors will get priority on scheduling their breaks as they have limited windows where they are not busy. We realize you may need more than one break during the day, if so please communicate this with your fellow counselors and Camp Director. It is key that we know where everyone is in the event of an emergency. Please do not abuse this policy to take excessive breaks each day.

Staff Packing List

Please bring to camp each day with you:

- *Camp Shirt (first and last day of camp)
- *DYS Camp Nametag
- Good pair of sneakers/ secure sandals
- Reusable water bottle
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen/ bug spray
- Any extra coffee/ energy drinks for yourself
- Fully charged phone (for picture taking)
- Positive Attitude

*Provided by DYS

It is a camp rule to wear your nametag! Most staff will leave their nametag at camp to avoid forgetting it at home. If your nametag breaks ask Camp Director for a new one.

A good way to test appropriate footwear is lift the heel of your foot, if your heel separates from your shoe it is not ideal to wear. Good examples of sandals include Chacos/ Keens/ Tevas.

Dress Code

Most staff wear T-shirts, athletic shorts, and sneakers to camp. Keep in mind we are working with kids at camp, not going out with friends. We will send you home to change if you are wearing the following:

- Excessively tight, loose, see-through clothing (spandex, pants sliding down, pants that reveal underwear when bending, etc.)
- Inappropriate footwear- heels, winter boots, flip flops, etc.
- Spaghetti strap, halter, crop, or other revealing tops
- Pajamas for daytime use
- Crocs
- Swimwear that is not appropriately fitted/considered 'too revealing' in a camp setting.
 - **All staff are asked to wear a one-piece swimsuit.** We recommend wearing your swimsuit beforehand to ensure it fits well when swimming.
- Clothing that shows political affiliation of any kind, inappropriate language, gestures, etc.

Diabetes Youth Services staff reserve the right to have you change any clothing deemed inappropriate.

Communication at Camp

Camp Staff are allowed to have phones on their person throughout the duration of camp. At Day Camp, we utilize phones to receive important messages from the Camp Director as well as communicate with camp staff. However, if DYS Staff see excessive phone usage in front of campers (texting, playing online games, watching videos, etc) then the Camp Director is allowed to confiscate a staff member's phone until the end of the day. If you are worried about using your phone too much out of habit, it's a good idea to work on limiting usage at home to be proactive.

Please note that only full-time DYS Staff are allowed to post pictures of campers on social media and communicate with parents. You might encounter a parent who wants to get your phone number to check in with how their camper is doing. Instead, let them know they can get updates by reaching out to the Camp Director. Due to custody issues and general security of minors we need to be careful in who is communicating with parents/guardians.

Meet the Team

Hot Shots Camp is an amazing time for people from all walks of life to come together. We have been thankful to have an amazing group of staff at camp return every year for more fun. You can ‘meet’ other camp staff before Staff Orientation by visiting dys4kids.org and selecting your camp session(s). Scroll to the bottom to view all Camp Staff bios which can give you an overview of who is planning on attending camp. At Staff Orientation, we will do several ice-breaker activities as well as breakout groups so you will get to know your co-counselors before the first day. Keep in mind, that several staff return each year and therefore know one another. As such, it is normal to feel ‘left out’ initially. Don’t be afraid to jump in and ask any questions, everyone at camp is very nice and will not purposely isolate you! Before you know it, you will also feel like part of the larger group.

Camp Staff consist of Directors, Nurses, Lead Counselors, Regular Counselors, Interns, and Volunteers. Each staff member is there to ensure your and the camper’s success throughout the week. Lead Counselors are chosen staff who are seasoned counselors with extra responsibilities. They might not be assigned a group as they are helping set up, run, and tear down programs during the day. They are great leaders and can answer questions you have if the Camp Director is not available.

Hot Shots Camp Staff is primarily comprised of young adults living with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) themselves, licensed staff working in pediatric diabetes, or students looking to learn more about Type 1 Diabetes. If you are not diabetic/ do not have much knowledge on T1D, it is okay! Be open to learning and prepared for several myths to be busted about diabetes at camp. Don’t be afraid to ask questions, and don’t make assumptions about what someone with T1D cannot do, eat, or achieve. If you want to learn more about T1D before camp, ask the Camp Director for resources.

Little Shots Items and Locations

If you are not sure where an item is, don't be scared to ask a seasoned staff member.

Remember to put everything back where you found it!

ITEM	LOCATION
Scissors/ Tape/ Pens/ Batteries	Office Supplies Drawer, located behind dosing tables
Extra Adhesives/ Vet Wrap for Medical Devices	Adhesives Drawer, located behind dosing tables
Activity-Specific Supplies (ex: tye dye rubber bands)	Activity Drawers are labeled by day and have all supplies in/nearby
Recess Supplies (jump ropes, hula hoops)	Recess Bin, normally outside or right by door
Disinfectant Spray/ Wipes	Behind Dosing Tables
Broom/ Dustpan/ Mop	Little OH: Utility Closet in Kitchen Little MI: Back Half of Classroom
Extra Low Snacks	Little OH: Kitchen right behind breakfast nook, walk through main door and turn directly to your left Little MI: Other side of dosing table