

# **Couch to Resident 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 Resident Camp document, the Couch to Day Camp is a separate document on the Camp Staff Page.**

## Camp Schedule

Middle and Big Shots Camp is designed with young kids and teenagers in mind. In recent years we have moved from campers in pre-assigned groups to hosting 8-10 activities each day for campers to travel to. For example, campers have a 2-hour window in the morning to participate in fishing, soccer, craft, and cooking class. If a camper is not interested in craft, they do not have to go to that activity. Certain programs like Diabetes Education or Cooking Class are mandatory.

Swimming/ water activities, special speakers, meals, and snacks are also included in each day. 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.

We will host Staff Orientation either a few hours before or the day before campers arrive, depending on which session you attend. After campers have left, we will host one last Staff Meeting with the Directors and Counselors before you leave camp.

## 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 each day and try not to plan any activities the day after camp is done. Consider making sure your sleep schedule allows you to do your best when working with several excited kids and teens. Recreation Unlimited offers a variety of items for each meal as well as coffee. You are welcome to bring any extra snacks, drinks, etc. with you so long as they are hidden from campers. There is limited space in cabin fridges, so don't plan to use it while at camp.

DYS works hard to ensure staff can take care of themselves at camp, so we have established a 45-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

The full camp packing list can be found at: [dys4kids.org/camp/camp-staff/](https://dys4kids.org/camp/camp-staff/) scroll down and locate the Resident Counselor Packing List. DYS will provide you with a Camp Shirt for the first and last day of camp, as well as a nametag and folder with handouts and schedule. **It is a camp rule to wear your nametag!**

## 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 ask you 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 Resident Camp, we utilize phones to take pictures and videos of campers that will be sent to the Camp Director to share with parents. 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.

Select staff will have 2-way radios on their person to share important messages to groups spread around camp. If you are in possession of a radio please make sure to keep it charged and safe. Do not allow campers to use a radio except in an emergency.

### 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](http://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.

Resident Camp 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 back everything where you found it!

ITEM	LOCATION
Scissors/ Tape/ Pens	Cabin Tote in Main Room, OR in Life Center Meeting Room 'Office Supplies' Drawer
Extra Adhesives/ Vet Wrap for Medical Devices	Adhesives Drawer, located in Life Center Meeting Room OR in Nurse Med Case
Activity-Specific Supplies (ex rubber bands for tye dye)	Life Center Meeting Room, Activity Drawers are labeled by day and have all supplies in/nearby
Cabin Cleaning Supplies/ Toilet Paper	Cabin Closet (when entering bathrooms look to your left and slide door open)
Cleaning Supplies Throughout Camp	Ask Camp Director if you need anything while at activities. Bathrooms/ hand-washing stations are spread throughout camp
Counselor Meeting Snacks	Life Center nearby supply drawers
Camper Low Bag Snacks	Life Center Lifeskills Room (when entering from Dining Hall it will be the first room on your right)

Getting Around Camp

A majority of the time counselors will walk with their group from spot to spot. Some medical staff as well as the Camp Director and Dietician will have golf karts that can transport injured campers. There is a gate separating the front side of camp and lakeside that needs a 4-digit code to open and close. It's very important to close this gate behind you- even if another group is within eyesight unless they are right behind you close the gate. Do not share the code with campers, and shield you putting it in from campers' view.