



How to Actively Supervise Campers – Info for Counselors

Active Supervision teaches how to *look, listen, and engage* in ways that create and promote a safe and healthy community for campers. These tips can be used to help prevent child sexual abuse at camp, including camper-to-camper and counselor-to-camper sexual abuse.

- **Position yourself** where you can clearly observe your group (where you can keep count of your campers and see and hear them). Depending on the activity you are supervising, you may need to adjust your position to keep all your campers within your **line of sight** and within earshot.
 - With larger groups work closely and in cooperation and coordination with other camp counselors/staffers to ensure all campers are accounted for and are being adequately monitored.
 - It's smart for you and other camp staff to be aware of certain campers that may be more likely to wander off or engage in risky or unsafe behavior. For example, you may have a camper with another sibling at camp who he/she wishes to see, or a camper who has a friend, boyfriend/or girlfriend who they want to meet up with. You may also have a camper or campers more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors that require closer supervision.
- **Do repetitive quick scans** of the group to ensure all campers are present. This is especially important when you are working with very young children or children at risk of wandering off from the group. It is critical to always confirm that everyone is present before transitioning from one activity/location to another.
- **Listening carefully** is extremely important. For example, you should be aware if a group of campers suddenly goes quiet, as it may be a sign that something is up and you need to check to see what caused the change in your campers. Or, alternatively by listening carefully, you may hear a conversation that is concerning requiring you to calmly intervene.
- Be **fully engaged** with your campers, **re-direct** their behavior whenever necessary. It is important to be fully present as a counselor, and ready to respond immediately when the situation requires you to do so. This will enable you to spot any unhealthy privacy or boundary pushing that may occur and intervene/re-direct the behavior before things escalate into something more serious. As an example, a cabin of 11-year-old boys, can get a little out of control during shower/changing time, and boys this age often like to tease and pull each other's towels off. This is an opportunity to engage the group and calmly, but firmly, re-direct this behavior, as well as follow-up at your next cabin meeting with a reminder about privacy and boundaries, including body boundaries.

Look, Listen and Engage with Campers to Create a Safe and Healthy Camp Experience!

(Adapted from *Active Supervision* | ECLKC ([hhs.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)))

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