



At camp this summer we will have kids who have experienced some kind of trauma. Statistics show that 1 in 7 kids in the US experience child abuse of some kind in the last year. This is so sad often affects a child in ways we can't even understand. Often a kid who is being naughty has been hurt and needs help to regulate their feelings. Our desire is that counselors and staff at camp would watch for these kids and know how to love them well while they are here.

Please watch this video at the link below then read the rest of this article. Thanks!

<https://youtu.be/FWScSJKin1A>

Our desire with these hurting kids is to show the love of Jesus in a powerful way. Below are some ways to practically connect, empower and correct them when necessary. If you have a child who is being difficult, not following rules, or is not engaging well in activities or with other people, please tell us about that camper at our morning staff meeting so we can all be on the lookout to show love and care for them well.

Ways to Connect:

FORM A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CAMPERS

- Be consistent (and if you say you will do something do it!)
- Share the schedule and routine
- DO NOT make promises
- Praise their character and use their name
- Remain calm
- Engage them in PLAY (Especially seek out these kids and give them attention when there is free time. If they are being difficult and asking for attention at the wrong times and in the wrong way at chapel or small group time give them attention they need outside of that time.)
- Match behavior (if they are excited, be excited. If they are sad, approach them with empathy and sadness)

- Talk less and listen more

Empower:

WHEN A CAMPER FEELS SAFE AT CAMP

- Make sure sensory needs are being met (Make sure they eat at meals and aren't eating a lot of candy and pop, make sure they have all the bedding they need for their bunk ect... you can even ask them if they need anything.)
- Helps the brain worry less and engage in the present
- Appropriate touch (fist bumps, side hugs, high-fives, hand on their arm when you talk to them on their level)
- Take breaks (go get some water and talk if they need to be pulled out of a situation)
- Offer fidgets or weighted objects (there are fidget toys in the sound closet at camp that you can use and put back)
- Remind of the schedule
- Transition warnings (10 minutes, 5 minutes, 1 minute) - For example they may need you to give them a heads up before leaving swim time.
- Campers who seek touch may need sensory input
- If they ask "why" answer it. (give reasons don't just say "Because I said so")

Correcting:

BALANCE STRUCTURE AND NURTURE

- Respect
- Redos "Let's try that again with respect"
- Ask them to use your words (ask them how you can help them) Ask them if they are telling you something or asking for something)
- Compromise
- Give 2 choices – For example: "We are going out to play soccer, do you want to put on your tennis shoes or sandals?"
- Be gentle and kind
- Take time to coach them through things.
- Always remember to regulate, connect, and teach