

Staff – to – Camper Ratio

Each camp medical board or planning committee needs to carefully consider the number and qualifications of staff necessary to accomplish camp goals and provide a safe camp experience. Please refer to the *Job Tasks by Position* table located at the beginning of the staffing section to ensure adequate staffing by discipline. Several factors to consider include:

- **Severity of asthma** – Most camp programs aim to serve children with moderate to severe asthma. To ensure a safe and rewarding camp experience for campers and staff, recruiting efforts should be aimed at locating a strong representation of pediatric asthma specialists and health care professionals with interest and experience treating children with asthma. Doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists will function as the core of your health care team.
- **Capacity issues** – The number of campers, and in the case of residential programs, the gender mix of campers, is often determined by the facility size and program design.
- **Age of campers** – Staffing for specialty camps (non-mainstream) typically reduce the recommended ratio of campers for each staff member. The American Camping Association recommends the following staff-to-camper ratios for mainstream camp programs:
 - Ages 6 – 8: One staff member per six campers for residential programs, one staff member per eight campers for day camps
 - Ages 9 – 14: One staff person to eight campers for residential programs, one staff member per ten campers for day camps
- **Behavioral and emotional needs of campers** – In general, behavioral and emotional issues can be more difficult to staff for than the medical needs of campers. While training is critical for all staff in this area, having a specialist or qualified designee should be a fundamental component of all staffing plans. Recruiting volunteers with experience or specialized education in this area can greatly enhance the effectiveness of camp. Some individuals to consider recruiting may include:
 - Social workers
 - Child life specialists
 - Pediatric health professionals
 - School nurses
- **Type of camp** – Residential programs typically require a higher volume and more diverse set of staff qualifications due to the broad range of experiences offered to campers. Day camps, however, can often require a more conservative staff-to-camper ratio due to the aggressive schedule but may provide increased opportunities to involve medical students and lay volunteers.
- **Length of camp** – Longer camp programs, especially residential programs, can be greatly enhanced by recruiting full-time, contiguous staff. Scheduling part-time staff requires an increased attention to transition time between staff members, accomplishing education goals and an overall sensitivity for the varied experience and styles of a diverse group of individuals as they work to accomplish the overall program goals.