



Guide to Being a Nature Rangers Counselor in Training (CIT)

What is a CIT?

CIT's are 5th-8th graders who are learning how to take on more responsibility. They will be working alongside the Director or Supporting Facilitator, assisting them in their duties. A CIT's primary function is to help with smaller "bite-sized" tasks while also learning how to be a positive leader through daily discussion, activities and practice with the kids and staff. They will not assume large responsibilities such as leading a hike or leading a lesson, however if those are personal goals, our staff will help each CIT throughout the week to build the foundational skills to meet them. A CIT will get to play a great deal with the kids, helping them to safely explore, climb and do arts & crafts, while staying within the voice or visual range of the Director or Supporting Facilitator.

Nature Rangers Leadership Training

Each day, you will learn a new leadership skill that will help you to better problem solve, teach you how and when to take charge, earn the respect of those you are leading, and learn several nuances of effective leadership that will serve you into adulthood. You will get the opportunity to practice each skill throughout the day as you assist the Staff members and play with the children.

What does a day at Nature Rangers look like?

- 9-9:30: Arrival and Setup while kids Free Play
- 9:30-9:45: Morning Circle (Icebreakers, Story, Activity Forecast)
- 9:45-10: Tag Game
- 10-10:15 Snack
- 10:15-11: Interactive Learning Activity
- 11-11:45: Optional Art Activity or Free Play
- 11:45-12:15: Lunch
- 12:15-1pm: Craft Activity
- 1-1:30 Cleanup while kids Free Play
- 1:30-1:40: Gratitude Circle
- 2pm: General Pickup



CIT Core Responsibilities

1) Keeping Children Safe

- Make sure you do a headcount every few minutes during free play.
- Never, ever let a camper out of sight at any time for any circumstance.
- Always accompany children to the bathroom and check the stalls before entering. Wait outside while children are inside before going back to the basecamp.
- Never go to the bathroom with a child without alerting the Director.
- Whenever the group moves from one place to another, the Director will lead and the Supporting Facilitator will be at the very end with any CIT's in the middle.
 - If the group gets too spread out, please call to the Facilitator to slow down.
 - If crossing a street, wait until the entire group is ready and then cross safely as one unit with the same protocol with one Staff member in front and another in the very rear.
- Always be in communication with the Director as to what you are doing.

2) Help the Director to Keep Camp Running Smoothly

- Try to perceive any group needs based on the Director's announcement for the next activity. Help to get any needed supplies ready for arts & crafts etc.
- When you're not engaged in something, please ask how you can be helpful. The answer will often be to just go play with the kids!
- When the Director is speaking, making announcements or leading an activity, please move towards disruptive children and put your hand on their backs to let them know you are there which will help them better focus. You do not need permission to quiet kids or to refocus them, you are encouraged to help keep disruptions to a minimum.

3) Make it Fun!

- Your demeanor should be playful and very fun! Smile a lot and show you are enjoying yourself while playing with them!
- Model kind communication at all times
- When a child seems to be sad or overwhelmed with emotions, go up to the child and chat with them. You are encouraged to sit with them, ask if they would like to play a game or do some art together, or if they would like you to find them someone to play with.
- When calling to kids, use the animal calls (coyote = come back, crow = respond)
- When on the trail and someone wants to pass, sing the "Share the path" song



CIT Leadership Training

Task 1: Qualities of a Good Leader (Complete Before Arrival on Monday)

- Read through the Qualities of a Good Leader below
- What is the quality you would most like to develop this week?
- Write your thoughts below on what the difference might be between being a boss and being a leader and how you can practice being more of a leader today?

Quality I would most like to develop: _____

Boss v. Leader: _____

Qualities of a Good Leader

1. **Self-awareness:** A good leader recognizes their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth. They have a clear understanding of their own values, goals, and aspirations.
2. **Resilience:** Good leaders face setbacks and challenges with resilience. They bounce back from failures, learn from them, and maintain a positive attitude in the face of adversity.
3. **Empowerment:** A good leader empowers others by recognizing and fostering their strengths. They inspire confidence, encourage independence, and provide support to help others succeed.
4. **Initiative:** Leaders take the initiative to identify and pursue opportunities for growth. They are proactive in initiating projects, generating ideas, and inspiring action.



5. **Effective decision-making:** Leaders make thoughtful and informed decisions. They consider different perspectives, gather relevant information, and weigh the potential consequences before making choices.

6. **Mentorship:** A good leader seeks to mentor and support others. They share their knowledge and experiences, offer guidance and feedback, and help others develop their skills and potential.

7. **Adaptability:** Leaders adapt to changing circumstances and embrace new ideas. They are open-minded, flexible, and willing to adjust their strategies and approaches when necessary.

8. **Emotional intelligence:** A good leader has emotional intelligence. They understand their own emotions and the emotions of others, and they use that understanding to build positive relationships, resolve conflicts, and motivate their team.

9. **Effective communication:** Good leaders possess strong communication skills. They express themselves clearly, actively listen to others, and are able to convey their thoughts and ideas effectively to a variety of audiences.

10. **Accountability:** A good leader takes responsibility for their actions and decisions. They hold themselves accountable to high standards and encourage accountability within their team or community.

11. **Collaboration:** Leaders recognize the power of collaboration and teamwork. They foster a cooperative environment, value diverse perspectives, and encourage cooperation among team members.

12. **Passion and enthusiasm:** Good leaders demonstrate a genuine passion for their goals and inspire others with their enthusiasm. They bring energy and motivation to their endeavors, which helps drive the success of their team or project.



Task 2: Leading by Example (Complete Before Arrival on Tuesday)

- What does leading by example mean to you? Write below how you can practice it today.
- Let's look specifically at **helpfulness**, **kindness** and **positivity** in your role as a CIT: Write below how demonstrating these qualities can benefit the group as a whole. Discuss each individually and give examples of ways you can start to lead in these areas.

How I can lead by example today: _____

Helpfulness: _____

Kindness: _____

Positivity: _____

Task 3: Active Listening (Complete Before Arrival on Wednesday)

- What do you think active listening is?
- What types of facial expressions, body language and eye contact would help to demonstrate that you are active listening?
- What types of things can you say when someone is talking to show you are listening?

How I can practice active listening today: _____

Task 4: Assertive Communication (Complete Before Arrival on Thursday)

- What do you think aggressive communication might be?
- What about passive-aggressive communication?
- Write below how you can practice assertive communication today:



How I can practice assertive communication today: _____

Task 5: Respect and Trust (Complete Before Arrival on Friday and Bring to Camp)

- How are respect and trust related and why are they important?
- What are some ways that you can earn trust from your trainers and the kids?

Earning trust from Director: _____

Earning trust from children: _____

These lessons can serve as a foundation for leadership development at Nature Rangers and beyond! Remember, leadership is a continuous journey of growth and learning, and by practicing these, you can make a positive impact on those around you!



CIT TRAINING COMPLETED

CIT Name: _____

Date of Completion: _____

Director Signature: _____

