

FREE AND ACTIVE PLAY



Free and active play is a self-directed activity that campers carry out individually, but with the supervision of a counselor. This type of play is spontaneous, and there are no official rules. The camper's imagination and curiosity dictate and create the play, based on individual preference, and the camper is free to vary the intensity of movement.

Why should I integrate free and active play at my camp?

Encourage autonomy and creativity among your campers.

Facilitate the development of social relations.

Allow campers to meet challenges that are achievable and explore personal limitations.

Maximize fun for each camper.

Allow the campers to vary the intensity of movement, based on their interests.

Foster a sense of belonging at camp.



Supervision of free and active play

Pssst! Some people think “free and active play” is synonymous with giving campers free rein to do as they wish. In free and active play the counselor plays a supportive role and provides a reassuring presence, allowing campers to explore and push back their limitations, at their own pace.

The right amount of safety to ensure a successful free and active play period

Free and active play requires the comforting presence of the counselor to reassure each camper in the event of minor injury (scratches, bruises, etc.) or possible discomfort (fear of getting dirty, etc.).

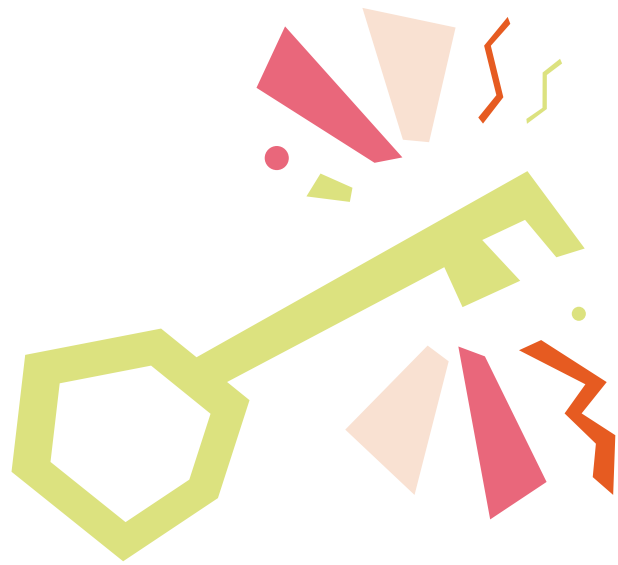
Offer a safe environment that encourages counselors and their campers to meet the challenge.

Make sure your counselors are well informed about their role in free and active play.

During your trainings, emphasize the following points.

Counselors must:

- ★ Participate in the activities.
(act as a player in the campers’ play activities)
- ★ Explain the guidelines.
- ★ Remove any danger.
- ★ Encourage the campers’ initiatives.
- ★ Support the campers’ needs.
(answer questions, offer reassurance, or stimulate their imagination)

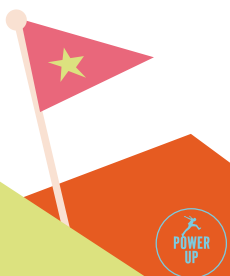


The key, in this case, is to establish the difference between a danger and a risk (challenge). Risk is represented by a challenge determined and undertaken by the camper in a safe environment.

For example, jump off a rock or climb down on all fours.

We encourage you to send a newsletter to parents explaining the importance of free play at your camp so that they understand what it involves.

Collaborators : Unité de loisir et de sport de la Capitale-Nationale
Alliance sherbrookoise pour des jeunes en santé
CIUSSSS Chaudière-Appalaches
Le lion et la souris
PLAYLearnThink



To learn more about free and active play:

FRENCH ONLY : Table sur le mode de vie physiquement actif. À nous de jouer ! Jeu actif et jeu libre pour le développement de l'enfant. (2018).