

Non-Participation 101

Step 1 – Identify Possible Causes of Non-Participation

Why aren't you joining in? Many times you will get the response: "it's dumb", or "I can't do this" or "I just don't want to". The real problem is most likely being hidden. Possible Causes:

- Self-Confidence – Does he/she feel embarrassed because he doesn't think he can do it?
- Attention – Seeking attention by not joining in?
- Fear of Failure – Might be very good at it, but afraid of messing up in front of peers?
- Physical or Mental Capabilities – Uncoordinated or dyslexic?
- Needs Specific Direction – Some kids hesitate if they don't know all the details.
- Needs Water

Step 2 – Ask Questions – (privately)

- Have you tried this before?
- Do you understand the rules/directions?
- Are you feeling ok??
- Do you need to see Drama-Mama?
- Are you drinking water?

Step 3 – Offer Encouragement

- I'll bet you'd be good at this!
- I'll bet you'd be good at.....(specific portion of the activity)
- Offer to team-up if he struggles with part of the activity.
- I was awful when I started, but now I'm getting better – let me give you some pointers
- Share your embarrassing moments – I fell down yesterday when I tried it!
- I can go to the infirmary with you to see if the nurse has a suggestion.
- If you try it, I'll ~~get you Lexie's phone #~~ give you candy!!!
- Check in with them at mealtime, flag raising, etc; call by name – let them know you care.
- Give accolades for even the slightest improvement - "You drank water!! Way to go!!"

Step 4 – Extreme Cases

- Bring the problem to the attention of your Family Group AC, Cabin AC and a Director
- Work with other AC's, JC's and D's to make sure he is not avoiding all activities
- Ask for suggestions from other JC's, AC's & D's.
- Watch for bullying and report any negativity to a Director
- Water Board

Non-participation can become an epidemic – more kids catch it, and pretty soon you have 4 kids on the sidelines, bringing the morale of the camp down. Be on the lookout for the non-participator – they can be quiet!! Don't let it happen!!!! Even if the kid drives you absolutely nuts! *Call for back-up; dig down deep for your inner-super-silliness, put on your super-happy-camper face, and get the kids back in the game!!! Camp gives an opportunity for life-time memories – be a positive life-time memory for your Camper!!!!*