



Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Handbook for Girl Scouts



Welcome to Girl Scout camp!

We're excited to have you as part of Girl Scouts' counselor-in-training (CIT) program.

The CIT program has two levels—CIT 1 and CIT 2—which typically take about two weeks each to complete, giving you hands-on experience and training to become a Girl Scout camp counselor. Throughout, you'll fulfill the CIT program requirements and explore what it takes to be a counselor at camp, from caring for campers to leading activities. The requirements aim to build your skills in different areas of leadership within the camp setting—and this CIT handbook contains information to help you meet each one. Along the way, we hope you learn a lot, make new friends, and have some fun!

Your time as a CIT will be filled with good times, challenges, and opportunities for growth. A few things to have in mind at every turn:

- **You are still a camper and under the supervision of camp staff.** You should never be left alone with minors.
- **Girl Scouts are always prepared.** You will learn camp rules, emergency procedures, and the role you play in maintaining safety at camp.
- **Communication is key!** How you present yourself verbally and non-verbally (e.g., how you dress, your body language) matters and is an opportunity to show your leadership skills in action.
- **Personal boundaries are important for you and younger campers.** Displays of affection and physical contact are discouraged.



CIT Level 1

CIT 1s explore what being a counselor at Girl Scout camp is all about. As a CIT 1, you'll learn how to engage campers of all ages. You'll interview, observe, and assist camp staff; lead group activities including songs and games; and make a difference with other CITs. You'll be a role model for younger campers as you develop your leadership skills.



CIT 1 Program Breakdown

Purpose	Requirements
Prepare to become a camp counselor by being a role model to and assisting with group activities for younger campers	1. Live and work in a camp community by role modeling, fostering a sense of belonging, and taking care of yourself. 2. Interview, observe, and assist camp staff throughout five activity sessions, in order to understand different areas of camp. 3. Practice and lead songs and games daily with campers. Work with your CIT unit to develop a resource outlining songs and games. 4. Do a service project with your CIT unit. Leave your camp a better place than it was before, for example by pulling weeds, building a new buddy bench, or reorganizing an area of camp. 5. Reflect on your experience through daily self-reflection, group reflection, and staff evaluation at the end of camp.
Skills You'll Develop	
■ Positive behavior modeling ■ Game and activity leadership ■ Teamwork ■ Problem solving ■ Accountability	

1. Live and Work in a Camp Community

At camp, you're living, working, and having fun with others: in community with other CITs, as a role model supporting different camp units and camper activities, and as part of the camp-wide community.

This requirement emphasizes acting as a role model, working well with others, and helping to build an inclusive camp community no matter what you're doing—all while making sure you take care of YOU!

Camp Traditions

Traditions such as the Girl Scout Promise, final campfires, and other time-honored practices help shape the Girl Scout experience at camp. They can nurture a sense of togetherness and belonging among campers, CITs, and camp staff. As a CIT, you're responsible for helping carry out your camp's traditions. What are some traditions at your camp?



Being a Role Model for Younger Campers

Remember, other campers look up to you! Throughout the summer, campers will be observing what you say and how you act. You can show them how to have a great time at camp by:

- **Focusing on the fun.** You can show campers that often, no matter the circumstances, we can find something fun or enjoyable about an activity we're participating in. Focus on what's going well over what's not going well. If you demonstrate this perspective, campers are apt to as well.
- **Offering support and comfort.** You can help other campers feel safe and secure. When they see you handling a situation calmly, it can reassure and help them keep their nerves in check.
- **Following instructions.** When you listen to your camp counselors and staff, you set a powerful example, and other campers are more likely to do the same.
- **Working collaboratively.** We all need to work together as a team. When other campers see you cooperating with others, it reinforces their sense of unity and safety.
- **Showing patience and understanding.** Taking time to, for example, explain things to campers in age-appropriate ways that they can follow is worth a lot.

Building a Culture of Belonging

At camp, various situations may arise that require good communication skills to address conflict, uncomfortable feelings, or even happiness. Camp staff often create community contracts or circle practices to foster communication that supports a culture of belonging.

Community Circles

A community circle can be used for all different purposes, including to debrief an activity or project, share favorite moments, process an event, or even, in the case of restorative circles, resolve an issue. Everyone in the group has a role to play in circles, which might take place daily as a way for the group to touch base on events, challenges, and/or successes. Circles can vary in how they look and function, with group members sharing in sequence or following a popcorn or fishbowl style.

Community Contracts

A community contract is a set of guidelines a group agrees to follow. In the context of camp, it lays out expectations and establishes standards for accountability among campers and staff. After a community contract is made, it should be posted where the group can refer to it as issues arise and periodically to see if it needs to be updated.

Did You Know?

Team building helps build campers' (and your own!) communication skills. You'll learn more about this and find team-building and camp-wide activities and ideas on page 14.

Caring for Yourself at Camp

Two major skills that can help you care for yourself this summer are:

Coping Skills

Coping skills ground us in the present and can help us manage stressful situations. When done regularly, the behaviors become habits. Though what works best for you may vary, here are some techniques to try:

- **Use a coping toolbox.** Carry a set of small objects to help in times of distress. You might include objects such as fidgets, scented hand sanitizer, textured stickers, a small notebook, menthol lip balm, and puzzles. Noise-canceling headphones may help those who are sensitive to sound.
- **Try a 5-4-3-2-1 mindfulness exercise.** Take one or two deep breaths. Use your senses: list five things you see, four things you hear, three things you feel, two things you smell, and/or one thing you taste. This can help increase your awareness and stay present by redirecting your focus when you're anxious.
- **Shake it out.** If you're able, shake out your worries by slowly shaking out your right hand (say "one"), then your left hand (say "two"), then your right foot (say "three"), then your left foot (say "four"). Then repeat over and over, increasing the speed of your one-two-three-four until you can't go any faster!

Want more ideas? Try meditation or breathing exercises. Work on a crossword puzzle or Sudoku. Count backward from 100 by 7s. Dance around the room for one minute or the length of a song you know by heart. Name all the colors you see around you. List animals found in a zoo. Label objects in the room by their first letter, from A to Z.

Time Management

Camp staff know a lot about time management—how long it takes to get from one area to another, how long cleanup, setup, and breakdown takes, and how to effectively manage their time so activities run smoothly.

If you ever need help with time management, you might try to:

- **Watch the time.** A watch or timer can help you stay on track.
- **Keep to-do lists.** Keeping track of tasks is key. If you're feeling overwhelmed by the list, complete a simple task first. This can bring some relief and build momentum to help you tackle the big priorities.
- **Be flexible.** Things happen at camp! Be patient with yourself and others. Be realistic about what can be accomplished. Include buffer time to reduce obstacles and potential stress.
- **Set priorities.** When there's a lot to do and not enough time, it can help to evaluate your priorities. Consider which tasks must happen now and which can be postponed. A matrix like the one below can be helpful in determining clear short-term goals and planning immediate and long-term goals more effectively.
- **Ask for help.** Sometimes we feel overwhelmed because we're trying to do too much. Once you have identified your priorities, ask for someone to help you complete them, or to take on a small task so you don't have to worry about it!

Priority Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Do First	Do Next
Not Important	Do Later	Postpone



Responding to Homesickness

A homesick camper may appear very sad and disengaged—they miss their family and want to go home. While it's not your role to resolve the problem, you may be asked to help. In doing so, if you find yourself thinking about your own family and feeling homesick or sad, know this is a natural reaction. If it happens, try using a coping skill in the moment and ask for support from your counselor and peers.

2. Interview, Observe, and Assist Camp Staff

Camp staff are responsible for caring for a group of campers and leading them in activities, from arts and crafts to canoeing. This requirement is about experiencing what it takes to be a unit counselor (see the role's responsibilities to the right). Throughout the camp session, you'll need to work side-by-side with unit counselors and camp staff over five or more activity sessions. Through the five sessions:

1. Conduct one or more interviews with camp staff. Talk to camp staff about their career paths, and camp experiences.

2. Observe two or more activity sessions.

Watch and learn! You're simply there to see and understand what the staff member is doing—not to assist.

3. Assist with two or more activity sessions.

Know what's expected, about any Safety Activity Checkpoints or other safety requirements, and how the area is set up. Note that camp staff may evaluate your performance.



Sample Unit Counselor Job Description

As a Unit Counselor, you'll be responsible for supervising campers while helping them learn life skills and participate in camp activities. Your responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

- Creating and implementing camp programs and activities
- Supervising Girl Scout campers who may range from 5 to 17 years old
- Working with the camp staff team to uphold camp standards, maintain the cleanliness and neatness of camp, and record daily and weekly paperwork

Candidates must be comfortable working and living outdoors, be dedicated to child development, enjoy problem solving, work well with others, and have good energy for the role.

After each session, reflect on what you experienced. For example:

- What preparation (materials, setup, etc.) was needed for the activity or for camp staff's role?
- What went well during the activity? What could be improved for next time?
- What did you learn from camp staff about their role? What do they do to lead the activity and/or in their role? Did they share any tips or advice?
- If campers were part of the activity, were they engaged? Were there any problems—and if so, how were they managed?
- If you assisted, how did you perform? What's something you did well? How might you improve?
- What did you learn that you'd like to explore more?
- What questions do you have?

3. Practice and Lead Songs and Games

Every camper at Girl Scout camp is a Girl Scout, and camp staff bring the Girl Scout camp experience to life.

This requirement is about understanding what it means to be a camper at Girl Scout camp, including what’s developmentally appropriate for each age of participant in the camp setting. Throughout the camp session, this knowledge can sharpen your sense of what campers need and how to support them as you lead them in songs and games. You’ll also create a song and game box with your CIT unit. After camp, this is a resource you can use as a CIT 2, counselor, or in any kind of career involving childcare.

Supporting Campers of All Ages

Girl Scouts are ready for fun, friendship, and new adventures at camp. They look at our world and take action to change it for the better. They develop the skills and confidence to say “I know I can do this!” So how does it happen? It’s all part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), and it’s what makes Girl Scout camp a unique experience.

Learn more about the GSLE below and what it looks like at each Girl Scout level on the following pages.



The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)		
What Girl Scouts Do (A Variety of Activities)		
Discover: They find out who they are, what they care about, and how to use their unique talents.	Connect: They collaborate with others, both locally and globally, to learn and expand their horizons.	Take Action: They do what Girl Scouts always do: make the world a better place.
How They Do It (The Girl Scout Processes)		
Girl-led: Girl Scouts follow their own lead, no matter their age. From selecting badges to organizing activities, Girl Scouts follow their dreams and grow their skills—and the confidence that comes with that.	Learning by doing: Hands-on activities are fun, but they also empower Girl Scouts to shape their experience. Girl Scouts unlock their “I got this” attitude and discover they can always try again.	Cooperative learning: Girl Scouts understand the power of friends you can learn and grow with. Teamwork and collaboration can help with any challenge that comes their way.
Who They Do It With (Supportive Adults and Peers)		
With the help of supportive adults and older peers like you who help bring these three unique processes to life, campers try new things and see how good it feels to lead from the heart.		

The Daisy Girl Scout Experience at Camp: K-1 (Ages 5–6)



	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
Daisies	■ Are curious, imaginative, and active. ■ Want to get outdoors, try new things, be creative, and make friends. ■ Take longer getting ready, moving from place to place, and eating. ■ Need time to rest and recover.	■ View their camp staff and CITs as caring role models, authority figures, and “fun purveyors.” ■ Are generally comfortable with direction and clear rules. ■ Can be easily frightened by being alone, the dark, and animals. ■ May need help understanding what they need.	■ Show independence by going to camp. ■ Are learning group cooperation, sharing skills, and what it means to be part of a team. ■ Love and learn best from physical and participatory activities and games. ■ Understand some letters and numbers.
Staff and CITs	■ Plan a mix of outdoor, make believe, and other camp activities. ■ Introduce GS traditions, songs, and games to build spirit, sisterhood, and belonging. ■ Include transition time, countdowns for tasks, and rest (nap or quiet time).	■ Provide clear direction, ongoing guidance, and conflict resolution support. ■ Listen to campers’ feelings and stories with interest, and reassure them that they’re safe. ■ Make time to address basic needs (e.g., water breaks, bathroom stops).	■ Engage Daisies with a variety of quick, participatory activities that keep them creative and active. ■ Help them to choose what to do. ■ Have them work together in small groups or one large group.

The Brownie Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 2–3 (Ages 7–8)



	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
Brownies	■ Want to try new things and learn skills with friends. ■ Are growing and ready for more physical activities. ■ Love to build and experiment. ■ Want to feel accomplished in what they do.	■ Are developing a sense of self and their interests. ■ Need and welcome guidance. ■ Want to behave well, and can take direction and complete tasks. ■ Are deepening their friendships.	■ Are taking initiative, especially with tasks like dressing and grooming. ■ Are starting to see others' points of view but are still largely focused on themselves. ■ Perform well through organized, hands-on activities with friends.
Staff and CITs	■ Include badges and activities that are active, moderate in duration, and focused on trying new things. ■ Explore all camp offerings, including horseback riding, canoeing, swimming, and large group games. ■ Encourage campers to try new foods, and teach things like rolling sleeping bags and shoelace-tying tricks. ■ Include time to rest and reset.	■ Provide clear expectations. ■ Help campers make decisions and set goals. (Try a checklist or kaper chart!) ■ When something doesn't go as planned, assure campers they still learned something! ■ Support the group's social dynamics, but also encourage new connections, collaboration, and traditions that build sisterhood.	■ Encourage “bite-sized” choices and multiple opportunities for leadership. ■ Have campers work in pairs and small groups. ■ Do activities that emphasize “we” instead of “me” to build cooperation and teamwork. ■ Support routines and give reminders, especially for wake-up and bedtime.

The Junior Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 4–5 (Ages 9–10)



	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
Juniors	■ Want to be busy, learn new things, and grow. ■ Can stay engaged for longer periods of time. ■ Have the fine and gross motor skills for sports and skill building. ■ Have an understanding of the world that has expanded beyond themselves.	■ Are getting closer to or entering puberty. ■ Can identify and monitor their basic needs yet are still too young to fully self-supervise. ■ Are developing their own opinions but are self- and group-conscious. They want a best friend and to be part of a group. ■ Look up to staff, CITs, and older campers.	■ Are developing a deeper sense of self and others. ■ Are learning independence and how to lead others. ■ Are silly and childlike while also responsible and thoughtful. ■ May be nervous about what others think and sensitive to criticism.
Staff and CITs	■ Encourage campers to try new things and follow their interests. ■ Try physical activities such as zip lines, horseback riding, and canoeing. ■ Earn badges and incorporate service. ■ Be goofy as a way to inspire campers' love of camp!	■ Help campers explore independence and feel supported to try and fail. ■ Listen, ask questions, and be mindful of campers' needs. ■ Support them in navigating friendships and resolving conflicts as group dynamics shift. ■ Still share reminders about personal hygiene, cleanliness, and routines.	■ Encourage campers to make decisions and lead. ■ Use brainstorming games to get everyone to share their opinions. ■ Encourage campers to persevere through challenges. ■ Offer various opportunities for leadership.

The Cadette Girl Scout Experience at Camp: Grades 6–8 (Ages 11–13)



	Variety of Activities	Supportive Adults (& CITs!)	Girl Scout Processes
Cadettes	■ Are ready to go, seek new challenges, and explore. ■ Can experience more that Girl Scouts has to offer, like field trips, overnight travel, and outdoor adventures. ■ Learn best by diving in and doing things themselves, which they very much want to do.	■ Are undergoing physical and emotional changes with puberty. ■ Want independence but need an authority figure to guide them. ■ Value the opinions of their peer group more than those of adults. ■ Are anxious about fitting in, especially as romantic relationships may begin.	■ Are ready to lead yet often choose activities to please the group (not actually what interests them). ■ Are self-focused—most aware of themselves. ■ Thrive in a supportive group of friends who help inform their self-image and views.
Staff and CITs	■ Explore all of camp, such as climbing adventures, kayaking, and backpacking overnight. ■ Build in time for informal discussions among campers. ■ Give encouragement and honest praise. Role-model your enthusiasm for camp!	■ Be supportive of campers in different phases of change, for example by offering private spaces for dressing, validating feelings, and helping campers regulate their emotions. ■ Offer healthy snacks between meals and encourage campers to get enough sleep. ■ Involve the group in proactively setting rules and boundaries.	■ Involve campers in group decisions, activity planning, and problem solving. ■ Encourage campers to work with people outside their usual group. ■ Avoid activities that may fuel comparison or require physical competition.

Leading Songs

Girl Scouts sing at camp for the pure joy of it! Singing happens at mealtime, when doing dishes, while hiking, in celebration, and around the campfire. There are songs to grow team spirit, to quiet campers, and for every final campfire.

Tips for Song Leading

- **Song choice matters.** Lead songs and games you love! Incorporate songs that add magic and memory making to moments of fun, friendship, and celebration. Consider a song’s appropriateness (message, language, culture, tempo), and never use songs to tease or punish others.
- **Change it up!** Don’t overuse songs—send campers home with a whole cadre of new songs to sing. Use songs to fill time gaps, for example when waiting for an activity to start.
- **Be prepared.** Know the words and tune of each song and have a few extras at the ready. If you want others to help lead, let them know ahead of time. When possible, share the song’s history or origin.
- **Sing confidently.** Sing strong and be confident in your voice. Most importantly, HAVE FUN!
- **Use a teaching method.** Check out some ideas below.



Call and Response	Visual Aids	Break It Down	Actions or Movements	Repetition	Interactive Games
Sing the song all the way through. Then sing a line for the group to repeat, line by line. This helps campers learn the melody and lyrics gradually.	To make it easier for campers to remember the words, you might use lyric sheets or pictures to represent the lyrics.	If the song has complex or fast sections, break it into parts and teach each one separately before putting it all together.	Use hand gestures or simple actions to represent the lyrics. For example, acting out the animals mentioned in a song can keep campers engaged.	To reinforce campers’ memory of the song, repeat it multiple times, gradually increasing the tempo as they become more familiar.	Use a game or activity such as musical chairs or a scavenger hunt to teach lyrics and add an element of excitement.



Facilitating Camp Games and Activities

Using what you know about campers of different ages, you can plan and lead activities that suit their interests and needs. Check out some tips and ideas on the following pages!

Team-Building Activities

Help campers learn to work together, communicate, and build trust as a team. Start with activities that are simple and give everyone personal space, so people feel comfortable. As the group's bonds strengthen and confidence grows, the activities can become trickier and involve the group working more closely together.

- **Get creative.** Arts, music, and drama bring campers together to express themselves and discover hidden talents. You might do anything from creating SWAPS to painting, from campfire improv to building bird feeders.
- **Play together.** Sports such as soccer or basketball keep campers active while working toward a shared goal. Games can include anything from board games to video games to outdoor activities such as tag.
- **Try bonding activities.** Bonding activities promote cooperation and teamwork. Once the group members know one another, activities such as a trust walk or human knot can strengthen relationships. These types of activities might also give group members a chance to learn more about one another. One example is a “Line-up” activity, where the group organizes themselves alphabetically or by birthday, favorite color, or another characteristic without talking.
- **Explore Camp.** Take on new adventures as a team. From archery to kayaking, outdoor activities can help campers plug into nature together! Activities like hiking and canoeing help campers develop a love for the great outdoors while moving their bodies and having fun as a group.



Large Group and All-Camp Activities

Foster a sense of camp community and belonging among all campers.

- **Tour the world, via map.** Campers use a map to travel “around the world” and complete a different challenge (earning a passport stamp) at each place or “stop” around camp. The first group to collect all the stamps wins a prize.
- **Find the counselor.** In their units, campers follow clues to find their counselor. Each group is given a starting clue that leads them to a counselor who isn’t their own. This counselor will give them a clue to find another counselor who will give them the next clue, and so on, until the campers finally reach their own counselor, at which point the group brings their counselor back to the starting place where everyone gathers to celebrate.
- **Hold a camp field day.** Set up activity stations with quick events such as “Duck, Duck, Goose” (or the water version, “Drip, Drip, Drop”), a water balloon toss, kickball, tag, and other outdoor games that let kids run and play together. Campers can rotate in groups or roam freely.

Other Large Group and All-Camp Activities

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------|
| ■ Talent show | ■ “Capture the Flag” | ■ Trivia |
| ■ Open mic | ■ Kickball | ■ Bingo |
| ■ Dance party | ■ Campfire | ■ Karaoke |



Tips for Facilitating Games and Activities

- **When planning, assign roles**, such as facilitator, notetaker, and timekeeper. Make sure everyone knows the rules, expectations, and their role.
- **Keep your introduction fun and quick.** Don’t talk too long. (Plan out what you’ll say ahead of time.) If you can, act out the rules or share key information in another creative way.
- **Give time updates.** Set an end time, let everyone know what it is, and give timely reminders like “30 minutes to go!” and “5 minutes left!”
- **Share clues.** It’s never a bad idea to give extra information if a group needs guidance. For example, during a scavenger hunt you might tell the group where the final location is.
- **Have options at the ready.** If a game or activity isn’t engaging the group, try something else.
- **Stay in bounds.** If your activity includes space for campers to roam freely, station adults at any exit points to make sure no one wanders.

Camp Song and Game Box

Throughout the camp session, you’ll learn, observe, teach, lead, and participate in many different songs and games. A great way to remember them is to build a song and game box (or binder). Make a list with at least 10 songs and games for each level, Daisy through Cadette. Of course, the more you include, the more useful the resource will be!

4. Do a Service Project

Part of being a Girl Scout is making a difference in the world, and that means leaving camp a better place than when you arrived. To meet this requirement, you'll need to plan and create a service project with your CIT unit. Find out what your camp needs by talking to your camp director, ranger, and any other camp staff member.

After meeting with camp staff, use all you've learned about teamwork, your campers, and your camp's needs to decide on one project for your CIT unit. For example, you might:

- Pull weeds from a garden
- Plant a rain garden to curb erosion
- Paint a fence to preserve the wood
- Build new benches for the program area

Work with your CIT unit to make a plan that includes a to-do list, materials list, timeline, list of roles, and anything else you'll need for the project. Then follow your plan to complete the service project with your team.

Go Team: Tips for Teamwork

- **Listen generously.** Value each person's point of view without judgement.
- **Say what you mean**—but don't say it meanly. Your perspective is valuable, so share it with kindness and in a spirit of collaboration.
- **Be “for” each other.** This helps build trust and makes it easier for everyone to feel safe, be honest, and take risks.
- **Honor commitment.** If someone fails, it doesn't mean they're not committed. Help others feel safe to make mistakes and ask for help.
- **Acknowledge and appreciate.** Recognize others and their effort, especially when plans go awry.





5. Reflect on the Experience

At Girl Scout camp, each day often begins and ends with reflection. This can get you thinking about what you've learned, how you've grown, any challenges faced, and what you're excited for. Engaging in reflection can also help you develop critical thinking capacity, self-awareness, and mindfulness.

As a CIT, you're expected to reflect on your own, for example by journaling or meditating daily. You'll also reflect with camp staff and your CIT unit, finding ways to support one another while at camp.

At the end of the camp session, you'll need to reflect on all you've accomplished while at camp as well as meet with the CIT director. Consider:

- What have you learned from your experiences as a CIT?
- What was your most meaningful experience or moment? Why?
- What are you most proud of from the camp session? What did you accomplish?
- Where do you think you could improve? How do you plan to do this?
- How could the program be improved? Will you continue on to CIT 2 programming?

As part of your daily reflection, think about...

- What camp staff and/or activities did you support?
- What did you participate in?
- What was your favorite and why?
- What age group(s) did you work with?
- How do you feel about how you performed?
- Do you have any questions? Is there anything you'd like to explore more?

Once you complete the CIT 1 programming, continue your leadership path at camp and become a CIT 2!

CIT Level 2

Congratulations! You've completed the CIT 1 programming and are ready to learn more about being a camp counselor through Girl Scouts' CIT 2 programming. This coming camp session, you'll plan and lead activities for younger campers, including a service project. You'll assist camp staff as you practice managing schedules, learn effective group management techniques, and help resolve conflicts. You'll continue to serve as a role model for younger campers and develop your leadership skills.

CIT II



CIT 2 Program Breakdown

Purpose	Requirements
Prepare to become a camp counselor by leading activities and assisting staff to support campers.	Care for younger campers. Spend at least half your time with younger camp units under the supervision of camp unit staff, supporting individual campers and camper groups. Assist camp staff throughout five activity sessions, to better understand the responsibilities of working in camp areas ranging from arts and crafts to the climbing wall. Plan and lead camp activities for campers of different ages and different group sizes. Lead younger campers in planning and executing a service project that leaves camp a better place than before. Reflect on your experience, including through daily self-reflection, group reflection, and a staff evaluation at the end of camp.
Skills You'll Develop	
■ Conflict management ■ Giving and receiving feedback ■ Group leadership ■ Persuasion and influencing ■ Planning	



1. Care for Younger Campers

Being a CIT or camp staff member is all about caring for campers. At camp, you're helping shape campers' actions and character. When they observe you demonstrating kindness, cooperation, and empathy, they're likely to follow suit. This creates a positive camp environment and teaches campers valuable life skills such as how to navigate social interactions, resolve conflicts, and contribute positively to their communities.

When a challenging situation occurs with an individual camper or a group, know that you aren't responsible for resolving the issue—but, rather, for supporting the camper(s). No matter the situation, your goal should be to try to ensure that everyone is having what is ultimately a positive experience. In order to do this, it's important that you understand your role, including your limitations as a CIT, so: what to do, what not to do, and who to escalate any issues to.

Tips for Supporting Individual Campers

Consider their age and experience. Support campers using what you've learned about campers of different ages.

Praise what they do well. This builds trust and makes it easier to deal with problems when they occur.

Avoid threats. Phrase things positively—for example, try “please walk” instead of “don't run!”

Find out WHAT and WHY. How someone acts is usually rooted in something deeper—active listening can help you learn more.

Ask for help. We're a team at camp. Please reach out to camp staff when you have questions or need help.

Conflict Resolution

Most campers' actions are positive—they're excited to be there, they're willing to try new things, and they want to make new friends. Sometimes, though, a camper might present particular challenges—for example if they're having a hard time making friends, if they're finding camp a bit intimidating, or if they just have a personality that can make the camp experience more trying. Some actions campers can control and others they cannot.

Conflict is an unavoidable part of life, and it happens at camp, too. You might need to address a specific problem with a camper, find yourself working with a camper unit when a disagreement arises between two younger campers, or end up navigating conflict in your own relationships with other CITs. To help resolve conflict, you can engage in and encourage positive communication, practice active listening, and seek assistance as needed. When you have these skills, you can support both yourself and campers in sorting out conflicts.

Remember that campers come from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences. There's not only one way to act or behave at camp, and we need to make sure we meet campers where they are. Throughout camp, focus on safety and lead with compassion, inclusion, and empathy.



Do's and Don'ts in Caring for Campers

DO: Positive Ways

- Model what you want to see—campers are watching your every move.
- Have realistic expectations for the age and abilities of your campers.
- Clearly explain rules and the reasoning behind them—kids don't mind following rules if they make sense!
- Be consistent: rules apply to everyone.
- Know your campers' names.

DON'T: Inappropriate Ways

- Avoid yelling or shouting, name calling, labeling, using sarcasm, teasing, humiliating, or belittling
- Avoid giving attention only or mostly to undesirable behaviors.
- Try not to make up new rules on the spot—i.e., without first having a group discussion.
- Avoid inconsistency in or unfair enforcement of rules.
- Avoid engaging in any physical contact.

Supporting Small Groups

As you support campers, you'll observe how friendships and groups form and shift. You can help campers navigate these developing and changing relationships. For example, you can:

- Demonstrate effective communication skills and be a role model.
- Observe the group's interactions and encourage positive communication and collaboration.
- Celebrate and build on what's working well and help campers reflect on what can be improved.
- Intervene when necessary to provide support for conflict resolution.
- Nurture an atmosphere of safety and acceptance of all campers.

There are many different activities you can use to support what your campers are experiencing or may need. For example, icebreakers at the start of the session can help campers get to know one another. And when difficult situations arise, group processing or reflection activities might help. Check out the chart and activities that follow for specific ideas.



Group Management Activities	
Type of Activity	Helpful if you need to...
Icebreakers	Help campers feel comfortable, learn more about one another, and build friendships.
Decision making	Help campers consider the options and choose which is best or most important to the group.
Brainstorming	Encourage campers to think creatively and allow everyone in the group to share ideas, from practical to silly, for anything from skits to community service projects.
Reflection and Processing	Moments for processing and reflection happen all the time at camp. A group might meet at the start of, throughout, and at the end of the day. Taking time to consider what they've experienced can help campers to better understand what they've learned and how this knowledge can help them in the future.



Ice Breakers / Get-to-Know-You Games

- **Learn names.** Names are an important part of personal identity. Make sharing and remembering everyone's names into a game. For example, each person might turn their name into an acronym of their interests, such as "Kiwi, Adventures, Tennis, Elephants" for K-A-T-E. Or they could pair their name with a fun movement, like "Samantha spins" or "Laura leaps."
- **Explore interests.** Discover what group members have in common while having fun. For example, play "Human Bingo," where each person gets a bingo card with squares containing fun facts or interests (such as "Has been camping," "Loves pizza," or "Plays an instrument"). Everyone moves around the group to find people who match the squares and see who can get bingo first!
- **Show and tell.** Encourage group members to get to know one another on a deeper level by sharing objects or photos. For example, hold a traditional "Show-and-Tell" where campers bring something special to share. You could also offer a selection of objects or photos for campers to choose from.

Campers can then explain why their chosen object is special and how it connects to their life or personality.

- **Warm up with an activity.** Break the ice by getting everyone involved in an opening activity. For example, hold a "Rock-Paper-Scissors" tournament where everyone pairs up, and winners from each match keep playing against other winners. Or try anything else, from a craft to a sport, while encouraging the group to take risks, show their talents, and have fun together.

Decision Making

- **Weigh options.** Explore the benefits and disadvantages of each option to better understand which might work best. For example, create a simple "Pros and Cons" list with what's good (pros) and what's not so good (cons) about each option. Or ask "Would You Rather" questions to help the group choose among multiple options.
- **Vote openly as a group.** Let everyone share their preferences before voting. This can be as simple as having the group raise their hands or move to different sides of the room to share their opinion. Or help the group to see everyone's input and decide collectively by sticker voting, where each camper adds stickers to posters with the available options to show their top choice(s).





- **Vote privately.** Campers may feel more comfortable voting privately, which enables them to share their true preferences without influence or pressure from others. You might simply have the group close their eyes before voting, or share their preference on slips of paper that you can tally afterward. These methods ensure that everyone's vote is private while still leaving the decision open to the whole group.
- **Gauge interest.** Use a scale to understand how campers feel about any idea or prompt. For example, ask a question, such as, "Do you want to go swimming today?" Have campers respond by either turning their thumbs up (agree), to the side (unsure), or down (disagree). You could also have them show any number of fingers (such as 0 for disagree, 5 for strongly agree). This method allows everyone to share their feelings in a simple, non-verbal way, and can be adjusted for the group's abilities.

Brainstorming

- **Brainstorm individually and as a group.** Support the group in brainstorming on their own, in pairs, in small groups, or together as one large group. Or combine these techniques with an activity such as "Think-Pair-Share," where group members think of ideas on their own, then share in pairs, and finally come together to combine their thoughts for even more ideas.
- **Generate lots of ideas.** Come up with as many ideas as possible without worrying about whether they're good or not. For example, use an activity such as "Fishbowl," where one person shares an idea and others listen. Then, the others can "jump into the bowl" with new ideas or build on what has been said, creating a flow of ideas. Alternatively, simply have everyone write down ideas on posters or slips of paper.
- **Visualize your ideas.** Organize the group's thoughts in a way that's easy to see and understand. For example, try "Spider Mapping" to see how ideas connect like a web: write a main idea in the center of a page and draw lines out to smaller ideas.
- **Turn it into a game.** Add a playful twist to brainstorming. For example, play "Roll the Dice" by assigning each number on a die to a different topic or category, such as "Outdoor activities," "Favorite foods," "Animals," or "Travel destinations." Roll the die, then have the group brainstorm ideas related to the number rolled.





Processing and Reflection

- **Create space to share feelings.** When your group checks in, find out how they're feeling in the moment and about the activity or day in general. You might find a creative way to do this, such as asking them to choose an emoji related to their mood, describe how they feel as a type of weather, or simply share one "feeling" word for a group pulse check.
- **Encourage individual reflection.** Make time for campers to think quietly about their own experiences. For example, you might have the group write in journals, either free-form or by responding to a prompt, such as, "What aspect of nature do you feel connected to today, and why?" Or you might lead campers through a guided meditation, have them doodle, or do anything else that gives them time to reflect on how they feel, what they've observed, and what they've learned.

- **Support the group through tough moments.** Groups encounter all different kinds of challenges—from tensions that grow during a difficult hike to conflict between certain group members. When a challenge occurs, encourage positive communication and active listening. Allow everyone involved time to share their feelings and their ideas about possible solutions. Use calming or grounding activities such as breathing exercises, group stretches, or reflection circles that help the group calm down, focus, and work together to find solutions.
- **Reflect on the past, present, and future.** Organize processing and reflection time to consider both what has happened and how it can help in the future. For example, use a structure such as "Rose, Bud, and Thorn," where campers share something positive that's happened (rose), something challenging (thorn), and something with the potential to grow or improve (bud). Another reflection technique is "What? So what? Now what?" to discuss what happened, why it matters, and what can happen or change as a result.

2. Assist Camp Staff

In the CIT 1 programming, you learned the basics of being a member of camp staff through observing, conducting interviews, and shadowing. Now, as a requirement for the CIT 2 level, you'll assist unit counselors and camp staff in their roles over five activity sessions, supporting areas from arts and crafts to rock climbing. You might help with tasks like guiding campers to their next activity, doing a head count, getting campers' attention when counselors need to give directions, and most of all being a role model for campers. Remember that you should always be with a staff member when working with campers.

After each activity session, reflect on your experience. For example:

- What preparation (materials, setup, etc.) was needed for the activity?
- What went well during the activity? What could be improved for next time?
- What did you learn from camp staff about their role? What do they do to lead the activity? Did they share any tips or advice?
- When were campers most engaged? Were there any problems with engagement—and if so, how were they managed?
- How did you feel in taking on this particular leadership role?
- How do you think you performed? What's something you did well? How can you improve?
- What else did you learn from the activity session? What questions do you have? What did you learn that you might like to explore more?



3. Plan and Lead Camp Activities

As you know, counselors support campers every day at camp. This includes keeping them entertained and having FUN.

Now *you* get to try your hand at planning and leading your own camp activities to engage younger campers.

The Benefits of Camp Activities

Girl Scout summer camp is filled with longstanding traditions and activities through which campers can develop skills as individuals and create lasting memories with friends.

- **Community and social time:** Group games, shared meals, team sports, and other group activities teach campers social skills, cooperation, and teamwork.
- **Outdoor adventures:** Hiking, archery, canoeing, kayaking, and other outdoor activities help campers develop a love for the outdoors. And as they learn outdoor survival skills and how to do things like cook over a campfire and build shelter, they develop self-confidence and feel a sense of accomplishment.
- **Independence:** Exciting challenges such as backpacking, completing ropes courses, and orienteering support campers in trying new things, navigating obstacles, and recognizing that it’s okay to fail (and learn from it!).
- **Creative opportunities:** Art, music, drama, and other creative activities can help campers express themselves. Creating skits, songs, and even friendship bracelets nurtures creativity and promotes self-discovery.
- **Character and value development:** When teamwork, fair play, and sportsmanship are encouraged in activities, it can help campers develop leadership skills and a sense of self.
- **Memory making:** Traditional activities like flag ceremonies, camp songs, and campfires can foster a camper’s sense of belonging, strengthening their connection to camp.

How to Plan a Camp Activity

- 1. Explore what’s possible.** As you know, at Girl Scout camp you can do a variety of things—earn a badge, complete the Girl Scouts Love the Outdoors Challenge, summit the climbing wall, and more. Talk to camp staff to get clear on the activities that are available to campers at each age level.

2. Choose an experience. Use what you know about the number and age(s) of campers (find tips on page 9) you’re working with to help you decide what to do. Do you want campers to learn a skill, just have fun, or something else? What’s an activity that’s a good match?

3. Adapt as necessary. Does your chosen activity need to be changed at all? Does it suit your

campers’ ages, abilities, interests, needs, and experience levels as is? If you can, offer a variety of activity levels so all campers can build their skills.

4. Decide on the details. Many activities require specific supplies and preparation. Make a plan for your chosen activity. For example, when and where will you do it: on the playfield, in the lodge, or somewhere else at camp? Who will lead and support the experience? What materials will you need?

5. Gather what’s needed. Track down, with help from camp staff, any art supplies, sports equipment, or other materials you’ll need to carry out the activity.

4. Lead a Service Project with Younger Campers

Girl Scouts do what they can to improve their communities and the world. They help other people, animals, and the environment by engaging in acts of service and kindness. For this CIT requirement, discover how you can give back and lead campers in a small service project to make your camp a better place.

First, talk with your camp director or the ranger to find out what the camp needs—maybe painting a small shed, clearing a trail, or building a bench. Then use what you know about campers to help them work as a team, be part of the planning process, and continue this Girl Scout tradition. Work with your CIT director and camp staff to review your plan and fit the project into the camp schedule. Then lead the team to complete the project!



Tip: Include Campers in the Process!

Including campers can sometimes seem like a hassle, but the experiences and satisfaction they'll gain are well worth it. When working on your service project with campers:

- **Brainstorm as a group.** Use the decision-making activities on page 22 to inspire ideas as you plan the project together. Allow the group to drive the brainstorming. (Don't lead with your own ideas!)
- **Let everyone share their ideas.** Make sure everyone has input.
- **Include everyone in preparations.** When you plan, create a list of materials and anything else you'll need to complete the project. Have campers help decide and gather what you need.
- **Consider campers' strengths and knowledge.** Newer campers may need more help knowing what to do, while those more familiar may be able to guide themselves and even help their peers.
- **Understand your campers' abilities.** Remain aware of your campers' abilities, age, and the speed they can work at. Divide the project work logically (i.e., not necessarily equally—but, rather, based on individuals' abilities, energy, etc.).
- **Have fun with it!** Get involved, get creative, and get silly. Encourage your campers to think outside the box to make a difference for your camp.

6. Reflection and Evaluation for CIT 2

Learning and improving is an ongoing process in life and in Girl Scouts. More than just a program requirement, reflection can help you process your experience at camp and feel better prepared to take on any challenges.

As a CIT, you're learning how to be a leader in a camp setting. You're expected to reflect on your own, in a group setting with other CITs, and as part of your final evaluation with CIT staff. You'll debrief with camp staff regularly, too, when you assist or lead activities.

For your final performance conversation, reflect on all you've accomplished as a CIT 2. Consider:

- What have you learned from your experiences as a CIT?
- What was the most meaningful experience or moment? Why?
- What are you most proud of this camp session? What did you accomplish?
- Where do you think you need improvement? How do you plan to make these changes?
- How could the program be improved? Do you want to return as a camp counselor?

As part of your daily reflection, think about...

- What activities did you assist or lead? What was your favorite and why?
- What age group(s) did you work with?
- What camp staff did you support?
- What did you learn?
- How did you feel? How did you perform?
- Do you have any questions or things you'd like to explore more?



Once you earn the CIT pin, keep going!

As a CIT 2, you've experienced what it's like to be a camp counselor at Girl Scout camp. However, the skills you've learned along the way are useful not just at camp, but at school, work, and anywhere else you take the lead. You can use what you've gained to:

- **Apply for Girl Scout camp positions.** If you want to continue as a leader at camp, apply to become a junior counselor or camp counselor. Generally, each camp has its own application process—your camp or council staff should be able to share open positions, deadlines, and next steps to help you navigate the process.
- **Thrive outside of camp.** Again, communication, teamwork, problem solving, and the many other leadership skills you've learned through the CIT program are invaluable to you in various contexts, including future jobs, college applications, and resumes. As you seek new opportunities, it can be helpful to reflect on your camp experiences and identify how they can be applied.



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