



Camper Preparedness on Teen Programs Camp Kennedy 2022

Tamarack Camps' Teen Programs include physically challenging adventures and activities, but given proper preparation, it will not be beyond most teen's personal physical limits. If you are already in good shape, keep it up. No previous backcountry experience is required, but a willingness to learn and work with others will assure you have a positive adventure in such a challenging environment.

To help you have the best summer experience, it is necessary to be in an appropriate emotional and physical condition.

1) Physical Preparation

Every minute you put in prior to your summer experience will pay off once you get out there. If you do not already engage in **30 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week**, we recommend putting in the time to begin training now. Before a teen begins any exercise program, please consult with their physician.

The most important kind of training is aerobic fitness (running/jogging, bicycling, skating...), the kind which stimulates heart and lung activity for at least 30 minutes without stopping. You can also consider specific training techniques to prepare for the summer such as climbing stairs or walking around your neighborhood with weight in your backpack.

2) Physical Expectations

Camp Kennedy campers will go on two trips – a 4 day/3 night hiking trip and a 3 day/2 night canoeing trip. The hiking trip will require campers to hike long days while carrying a 30+ pound pack. The canoe trip will require up to six hours of paddling (with appropriate breaks), as well as the ability to portage a canoe (carrying it on one's shoulders) and lift heavy gear across portage trails. Appropriate training will be provided prior to the trip. Throughout the summer there will be day hikes of varying length and difficulty while carrying a light daypack, as well as in-camp physical activities.

Teens are expected to be in good enough physical shape and to keep up with the group. An extremely slow hiker or paddler may compromise the safety of the community by dividing staff and campers by creating a large distance. Staff will work with a camper to find an appropriate pace and a place to hike/canoe where they can be a part of the community. If a camper is unable to keep up, they may have to leave the program early.

3) Emotional Readiness

Just as you might discuss expectations prior to the start of a new school year, we strongly suggest you help prepare your teen for new and exciting challenges awaiting this summer. The experiences in our teen programs require campers to be mentally and emotionally fit going into the program. This includes readiness for being an active participant, functioning positively with peers and staff, learning to communicate challenges and bringing a positive attitude each day.

Camp Kennedy is isolated and a significant distance from most other people and places. Campers and staff will be completely in the woods, with no one else nearby. Campers cannot have electronics other than digital cameras or GoPros. There is no cell service or internet access. This isolation is one of the greatest draws, but it can also potentially induce anxiety.

Our programs provide teens with unique and sometimes unfamiliar experiences and environments. This is very exciting. Understandably, anticipating these experiences can also make incoming participants anxious. Discuss with your teen what fears, concerns, or thoughts they may have about their upcoming summer. Help brainstorm strategies to manage fears and take on challenges. If they have questions or concerns about camp, get in contact with the camp director prior to camp. We can provide support, answer questions, and help to demystify any aspects of the experience.

4) Personal Equipment

Teens should spend at least six weeks breaking in their hiking boots, even if they were used in previous summers. In order to break them in, campers should wear a school backpack with books while “hiking” around the neighborhood for at least thirty minutes, three days a week. This will help soften the hiking boots and toughen up their feet to prevent blisters during the trip.

I understand the information stated above and will make sure that my teen is/I am prepared for the upcoming summer experience.

Further, I understand that if my teen’s participation in the social, physical or mental/emotional aspect of the program is determined to be insufficient by the Director of Teen Programs and staff members, they will be required to return home early. The costs associated with the early departure will be the responsibility of the teen’s family.

I understand, acknowledge and agree to the policy above:

_____	_____	_____
Teen’s Name	Teen’s Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian’s Name	Parent/Guardian’s Signature	Date