

## 6. SCREENING AND SELECTING OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

An agency's screening and selection of employees and volunteers should be centered around ensuring that the staff working with youth are safe. It also hinges on how the agency communicates its vision on youth protection. All camps should be doing the following:

- Comprehensive interviews of prospective staff
- Reference checks of prospective staff
- Administering background checks for all staff
- Staff sign-off on all policies and procedures, code of conduct, and roles/expectations

Camp leadership should also be thinking about and communicating the organization's values to prospective employees, volunteers, and families. Clearly communicating camp values helps staff understand what behavior is inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

Visitors should never be left alone with campers, nor should they be allowed to have unsupervised contact with campers. Camp staff can consider providing visitors with a brief one-pager on camp values or boundaries with campers, or have the visitor sign off on appropriate conduct around campers. This can help provide an extra layer of protection and let any visitor know that staff are trained to address any issues.

For overnight camps, it is recommended that any overnight visitors or visitors who may have unsupervised access to campers be background checked prior to being allowed on campus. This helps to ensure that anyone who may have unsupervised access to campers is "safe" to be on campus and interact with campers. This includes camp spouses, visiting educators, or any other individuals who may be staying at camp overnight.

### *Key questions to keep in mind:*

- *How is the organization communicating its safety practices to anyone who steps foot on campus or participates in camp programming?*
- *Who has access to minors, and what kind of screening or training should they have based on that access? How often does that screening, training, and subsequent access get reviewed and revised?*