



GUIDEBOOK

CONTENTS

Welcome.....	2
The Purpose of Young Life Camping.....	3
What to Expect at YoungLives Camp.....	4
Preparing for Camp.....	5
Preparing to Volunteer: Childcare Volunteer Job Description.....	5
Caring for Children	6
Caring for Teen Moms.....	7
Caring for Each Other.....	9
Packing	10
Heading Home	11
Camp Glossary	12



WELCOME

Dear Friend,

We are so glad you have made plans to serve as a childcare volunteer at one of our *YoungLives* camps! Your service is a vital part of making it possible for teen moms to hear the life-changing good news and to have a chance to become the women and mothers God intends for them to be.

Our time at camp will be amazing! Our hearts will be melted by sweet little babies. We will make wonderful new friends. We will see God at work. We will also be challenged in new ways. We will be more tired than we thought possible. And we will have moments of frustration or irritation.

In order to have the best week and to avoid as many pitfalls as possible, we ask you spend some time doing two things before camp:

- 1) **Prepare your heart through prayer**—Ask for God to prepare you for your time of service. Ask some friends and family to be praying for you as well.
- 2) **Prepare your mind**—Read through this handbook to begin to understand what camp will be like.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the camp childcare administrator for your week of camp.

Again, we look forward to our time at camp. We know we will see God work in amazing ways and are excited to have you join in that work!

Gratefully,

The *YoungLives* Leadership Team

THE PURPOSE OF YOUNG LIFE CAMPING

Our founder, Jim Rayburn, had this to say about Young Life camping: “We want to create an atmosphere in which the Gospel of the grace of God can be clearly communicated to each guest.”

As a young man, Jim Rayburn quickly realized when young people were in the midst of God’s creation, they were more open to thinking about who they were and what their life meant. It wasn’t long before Jim suggested Young Life buy its own piece of property where groups of kids could come to hear the Gospel. The success at that first property inspired the purchase of many more camps and facilities around the country and is a key to the Young Life ministry.

Creating an environment where Christ’s message can be heard involves stretching kids and giving them new experiences to open their bodies and minds to the spirit of God. Camping is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. We want to communicate in word and deed the person, work and love of Jesus Christ and to lift Him up, not ourselves.

Young Life’s ministry to reach *every kid* means providing teen moms with the same Young Life camping opportunity. As with any other kid who attends a Young Life camp, these young moms, too, have a great need to get away from their environment, to step back away from the noise, the chaos, and the lifestyles which tug at their souls.

In addition to providing them with fun and adventure our hope is camp will have a huge impact on their “next steps” as they go back to their life at home and continue on in their relationship with their mentor. Camp provides great momentum for moving them into Campaigners where we can take next steps as they grow in their faith.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUNGLIVES CAMP

SAMPLE ITINERARY & SCHEDULE

Below is a sample itinerary for volunteers at YoungLives camp. This schedule will vary depending on the camp property, but it gives a general idea of the week's activities. Childcare volunteers must be able to attend for the full week of camp.

	Arrival Day	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Early Morning		Breakfast & Group Worship	Breakfast & Group Worship	Breakfast & Group Worship	Breakfast & Group Worship	Breakfast & Group Worship	Camp Clean Up & Breakfast
Late Morning		REQUIRED Training & prep nurseries	Provide childcare in nurseries	Attend club with teen moms			
		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Departure with sack lunch
Afternoon	Check-in at camp	Welcome teen moms to camp	Free Time	Provide childcare in nurseries	Free Time	Free Time	
	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
Evening	REQUIRED Training session	Provide childcare in nurseries	Provide childcare in nurseries	Special event	Provide childcare in nurseries	Provide childcare in nurseries	

HOUSING

You will stay in dorm-style cabins with shared bathrooms with 6-12 other childcare volunteers (babies sleep in camper cabins—we want to make sure you are well-rested!) Due to camp sizes, we cannot accommodate married couples together. Some locations may have married housing options off camp property. Some of the camps may have RV/camper hookups available. Childcare volunteers sleep separately from the campers and babies. We want to make sure all our volunteers are well-rested and ready to care for babies each day!

FOOD

Young Life camps offer a variety of delicious meals for our guests. Meals are generally served family style and all of our kitchens offer options for those with special diets and food sensitivities

SIZE OF CAMP

We anticipate caring for more than 100 babies at each of the camps. You will be assigned to a nursery with a particular age group of babies. There will be about 10-15 babies and about 7-15 childcare volunteers per nursery. We follow all of the legal quotas for childcare ratios.

PREPARING FOR CAMP

PREPARING TO VOLUNTEER: CHILDCARE VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

Childcare volunteers are essential to the YoungLives camp experience! Providing excellent care to babies allows teen moms the opportunity to participate in camp activities and so feel and witness the love of Jesus Christ.

Childcare volunteers must commit to:

Care for Children

- Provide excellent physical care for babies during all childcare shifts.
- Follow all procedures reviewed during orientation (all Young Life care policies, diapering, sanitation procedures, etc.).
- Uphold the buddy system—never be alone while caring for babies.
- Be familiar with property boundaries and inform Nursery Leader at all times their whereabouts with children.

Care for Teen Moms

- Represent Young Life to teen moms by showing them a kind, loving attitude at all times and by being the hands and feet of Jesus to them by loving on their babies.
- Communicate to their Nursery Leader any issues their teen moms may have relating to childcare volunteers. (Nursery Leaders will communicate with Trip Leaders and/or Childcare Coordinators as needed).
- Pray over babies, over teen moms, over relationship building between teen moms and their mentors, for safety during camp, for girls to see and respond to the love of Jesus.

Care for Each Other

- Work alongside other childcare volunteers and take guidance from Nursery Leaders and the YoungLives leadership team.
- Be a team player and look out for the needs of others before yourself.
- Work out issues as soon as they come up with the parties involved. Do not gossip with others about problems.

CARING FOR CHILDREN

These lists are based on the average development of children. We will be prepared to care for them just how they are and can play with them in a ways to encourage their growth and development.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

2-3 months

- Likes looking at faces, may follow a person with their eyes
- Sometimes responds to smiles
- May like being rocked
- Coos, cries and grunts
- Several naps per day
- Feeding every few hours
- May still enjoy being swaddled
- Developing some head control
- "Tummy time" develops muscles, can somewhat lift head/chest when doing so

4-6 months

- Babbles
- Recognizes bottle
- Has control of heads and arms
- Can grasp and reach, transfers objects hand to hand or hand to mouth
- Rolls over
- Can hold up head when upright
- Can differentiate caregiver vs. stranger
- Likes being cuddled and sang to

7-9 months

- Can sit and crawls
- Like peek-a-boo games
- Starts eating table food
- Developing small words...mama, dada
- Enjoys stroller rides

10-12 months

- Can stand, creep or walk
- Likes affection
- Can grasp with forefinger and thumb
- Very curious
- Likes putting objects in and out of containers
- Enjoys books, music

12-18 months

- Can understand and obey simple directives
- Repeats words/sounds
- Like seeing self in mirror
- Can feed self
- Can make some lines with crayon
- Learning body parts and object/animal names, etc.
- May like to pull or push objects (toy wagons, strollers, lawnmowers, etc.)

18 months to 2 years

- Can run, climb, and kick
- Can build with blocks
- Able to turn pages in a book
- Can follow 2 step instructions
- Starts asserting independence/does not always do what is told/asked/temper tantrums
- Usually down to 1 nap per day
- Vocabulary is developing, can say 2 or 3 words together
- Can ask for items by name

2 to 3 years

- Can draw
- Able to ride tricycle
- Has a sense of humor
- Can use short sentences
- Enjoys pretend play
- Expresses emotions and senses those of others
- Can be possessive
- Enjoys parallel play
- May copy adult actions
- Still independent and uses tamperers
- May be working on potty training or can verbalize toilet needs.

CARING FOR TEEN MOMS

Strengths & Challenges of Teen Moms

Many of the teen mothers we serve in YoungLives share a similar set of challenges. However, they often show great resiliency, determination, and strength in the face of these challenges. Every teen mom's experience is unique, but the following topics describe some of the most common obstacles and strengths we have witnessed among the teen moms who come to YoungLives.

Poverty/Wealth

In a survey of YoungLives areas taken in 2010, we found that although YoungLives serves a racially diverse audience, almost all of the teen moms involved in YoungLives are living in material poverty. Teenage girls from all socioeconomic backgrounds get pregnant, but many more babies are born to girls in poverty – both because they tend to have unintended pregnancies more often and because they tend to choose abortion less frequently. Where they lack finances, however, many teen moms are rich in other ways – including loyal friendships and strong social bonds.

Home Life

Most YoungLives teen moms come from unstable and/or transient homes. Some teen moms live in foster care or with a grandparent – or they may not have a consistent place to live and frequently move between different homes. However, because of the dynamics of living in non-intact homes, many teen moms have developed flexibility and adaptability. Others have learned by experience to care for younger children – including siblings or cousins.

Family

Drug and alcohol abuse, illegal activity and incarceration are common among the fathers of YoungLives teen moms. Mothers or other matriarchs in the family often play a significant role in helping to raise the child, providing financially and materially for the young mother and sometimes providing housing for the young family. Extended family also typically plays a large role in supporting the young mother and her child(ren). It is not uncommon to hear of three or four generations of a family and even non-family members living together.

Father of the Baby

Poor decision-making, financial irresponsibility and joblessness plague many of the fathers – and wreak havoc on young relationships. Although most teen moms and dads expect to stay together and eventually marry, two-thirds will break up before the child turns three. (Edin & Kefalas, 2006, p. 74). Many teen moms learn early on to develop independence and to take on the majority of the parenting responsibilities themselves.

Pregnancy

Many teen moms in YoungLives say they weren't trying to get pregnant – but they also weren't trying to avoid getting pregnant. Because they often believe marriage and a college education are out of reach for them, they place high value on children and sometimes even see them as the best life has to offer. The positive side is teenage mothers do not often see children as a nuisance getting in the way of their goals, and they do not see their lack of material resources or their age as hindrances to being good mothers.

Works Cited Edin, K., & Kefalas, M. (2006). *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*.

Interacting with Teen Moms

You will be interacting daily with teen moms as they drop of their babies for childcare.

Initial Meeting

- Smile and greet them warmly.
- Take the initiative to introduce yourself to the teen moms and their mentors.
- Ask questions and then LISTEN.
- Look into their eyes.
- You will be seen as part of the staff, act in a way to reflect well on YL and on Christ.
- Some moms will be hesitant, if not antagonistic about childcare, especially at the beginning of the week. Do NOT take this personally. Many have never left their babies in childcare before.

The Power of Positive Talk

- Use positive words: don't call babies "screamers" or "terrors," instead say "baby sure missed mom" or "baby kept us on our toes."
- Compliment mom whenever possible; these moms are often starved for positive words.

Throughout the Week

- Share the positive things which happened during the day.
- Tell them about what the baby did while she was gone.
- Share any concerns, but tread lightly so mom doesn't feel judged or like you don't like her baby.
- Ask them about what they did while away.

Things to Avoid

- Do not share how hard your time was.
- Never talk negatively about the babies EVER, as another teen may hear and tell the mom.
- Avoid sarcasm.
- Don't ask a girl if she is pregnant. Some may have recently delivered. Some may have miscarried. Let her tell you.
- Avoid "Your baby is so cute I just want to keep her." Some of these girls feel people or agencies in their life are threatening to take their baby away (real or perceived).
- Avoid asking "Why?" This can be threatening, instead ask "How?" or "Can you explain more?"
- Do not question or correct the mom's parenting.
- Do not confront a mom if you suspect abuse or neglect (speak immediately with your Nursery Leader instead-Young Life has a specific process for handling).

CARING FOR EACH OTHER

You will be serving day and night, caring for children who will demand a lot of your emotional energy, and alongside people who you may be meeting for the first time. These circumstances can lead to tension and conflict. To ensure a pleasant experience for everyone (including you!), keep the following principles in mind:

1. **Teamwork is essential.** You will work in nurseries with 6-12 babies and 6-12 other childcare volunteers. Expect to be challenged – not just by the babies, but even by other caregivers. This is to be expected when many different personalities come together. Find ways to be a part of the team, to care for and to serve those around you, especially when you don't feel like it!
2. **Be flexible!** Every camp week, camp property and nursery is different. You may experience unmet expectations, disappointment or confusion during your time at camp. Plan to take things in stride, knowing your flexibility and graciousness will not only help you to stay calm, but they are a gift to everyone around you.
3. **Take care of yourself spiritually, emotionally and mentally.** Prepare yourself with prayer before you come, and find a team of people to pray for you during camp. Take full advantage of the daily devotionals and club (meetings) available to you at camp. Even if you are physically tired, these times will renew you and give you extra energy.
4. **Be ready to serve.** Remember this is a mission trip, not a vacation. You are coming to volunteer and serve! Be willing to step outside of your comfort zone in order to serve.
5. **Choose to see the best in others.** It is hard not to make assumptions about the motives or intentions of others, but it is important when you are working so closely with people for a week. Whenever possible, try to overlook offenses and assume good intentions in others.
6. **Handle conflict biblically.** If you have a concern or issue, do not talk about it with everyone else. Go directly to the person to work it out. Choosing to resolve conflict in this way can actually build community. (See Matthew 18:15-17 and Ephesians 4:25-27)
7. **Reconciliation is more important than resolution.** The most important thing is not to have every problem worked out in your favor, but to keep relationships in good condition. Ultimately, our goal is to encourage and support one another in every circumstance.
8. **No gossip allowed!** In a camp full of people of all ages and backgrounds, it is essential we do not allow ourselves to engage in gossip. You never know who may overhear or repeat a conversation and how much hurt can be caused by a seemingly innocent comment. Be careful with your words!

PACKING

You will care for babies for many hours each day—holding them, rocking them, playing on the floor with them and walking outside while pushing them in strollers. Plan to wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

Babies are messy. Plan to wear clothing which can be played in, spilled on and otherwise dirtied! Also bring extra clothing, as there are not laundry facilities available for childcare volunteers.

Layers are also a good idea, as temperatures can vary throughout the day at camp.

WHAT TO BRING

- One week supply of casual, comfortable clothes which can get dirty
- A couple extra outfits in case a baby "erupts" on you
- A light jacket or sweater—evenings can be cool
- Comfortable shoes
- Rain Gear - afternoon thunderstorms are a possibility
- Possibly a nicer outfit and/or a theme night outfit--contact your camp admin for details on whether to bring these items.
- Swimsuit (optional) - we ask our volunteers to wear one piece or tankini style two piece suits
- Beach Towel-optional
- Toiletries- shampoo, soap, deodorants, toothbrush, make up, hair dryer, flat iron, etc.
- Hand mirror - bathrooms are shared; you may want one for doing hair, etc.
- Personal medications
- Washcloths, if desired
- Eye mask or ear plugs, if you are a light sleeper
- Bible and journal
- \$\$ for gift shop, snack bar or coffee shop
- Calling card. Cell phones may not work at camp. If they do, we ask they not be used in view of campers.
- Alarm clock (you may use your cell phone for this if desired...just remember to bring a charging cord for your cell phone)
- Flashlight
- Camera (optional)
- Hat and sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Snacks or other food items- camp provides terrific food, but if there is something specific you would like to have, feel free to bring it. Keep in mind there is no refrigeration in the cabins.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Sleeping bag--linens are provided by the camp. (On occasion Camp Buckner requires childcare volunteers to bring their own linens. The childcare admin will notify you, if it is needed.)
- Bath towel--camp provides bath linens

HEADING HOME

It is not too early to begin thinking about what your life will be like when you return from your camp experience. Below are some helpful tips to remember.

Keep a Record

During your camp experience, consider writing down things you don't want to forget: lessons learned, personal commitments made, things God showed you, people who impacted you, highlights and observations.

Telling Your Story

The most common question you might hear upon returning is "How was your trip?" Some people ask this question as a formality or greeting, while others will really want to know. One way to anticipate a person's interest level is to prepare answers of varying lengths.

- The "sound-bite" - a 15 second, short, friendly answer
- The "commercial" - a one minute response, inviting them to hear more
- The "interested conversation" - a five minute response

Strategy

Sometimes re-entry from your trip can be difficult. Generally it's because you are changing in your attitudes or values, and you are coming back to an environment which has not changed in the same way. On your way back home, spend some time answering these questions:

- The first full week I am home I want to make sure I...
- The first three months I am home I want to make sure I...
- Over the next year I hope to make adjustments in my life in the following areas:

Debrief

It's important to see your trip as a beginning or continuation of the Lord's work in your life, not as a one-time event. You might ask yourself questions about how this experience will affect your life back home. What are some ways you can care for the less fortunate back in your own city or community? What things can you share? In what ways can you serve others?

Resources + Relationships = Regeneration

Your trip provided both **resources** and **relationships** and you helped to bring **regeneration** to the lives of teen moms. Even though you might not be able to see the immediate impact of your service, you can be encouraged and know the seeds planted by your willingness to give your time, energy, finances-your very life-will continue to grow for generations to come.

CAMP GLOSSARY

Assigned Team: Young Life staff members who spend three-four weeks at a Young Life property serving in various camp roles. Those roles include: Camp Director, Head Leaders, Speaker, Program Directors, Work Crew Bosses and Summer Staff Coordinators.

Cabin Bell: A bell rung to signify the beginning of an event or meal. It also rings at night to signal campers to return to their cabins.

Cabins: The individual rooms within the dorms.

Dorms: The large buildings which house the majority of campers.

Free Time Activities: These are activities for moms to participate in (such as the pool, blob, zipline, bead cart, etc), but for which childcare is NOT provided.

Leaders/Mentors: The adults who have built relationships with the teen moms and have brought them to camp.

Nursery: A nursery space which represents a specific age of children. A nursery is staffed with childcare volunteers including a Nursery Leader.

Property Staff: Young Life staff members who serve at a Young Life property year-round. These roles include: Camp Manager, Guest Services, Administrators, Kitchen staff, and Facilities managers.

Ride: The special activities at camp like the ropes course, ridge runners, mountain bikes, etc. Each group is assigned a specific time to do these activities.

Ride Care: The childcare provided for moms who are going on an assigned ride. Usually occurs in a few designated nursery locations each afternoon (three or four nurseries instead of all the nurseries)

Summer Staff: College students who commit one month in the summer to serve at a Young Life property. These roles include: staffing all "rides", preparing for special events, and assisting in Kitchen.

Trip Leader: The mentor/leader who is in charge of a group coming to camp. This person serves as the main contact for that group of teens, babies and mentor/leaders.

Work Crew: High School students who commit one month in the summer to serve at a Young Life property. These roles include: serving in dining hall, housekeeping, and grounds crew.

YoungLives Leadership Team: the team of people leading all the childcare workers.