

Counselor interview questions

[BackPR](#)

Ask every candidate the same core questions so you can compare fairly. Take notes and score each topic from 1 (weak) to 3 (strong). Don't ask about age (beyond whether they meet your minimum), race, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marriage or family plans, pregnancy, health, disability or arrest record.

Candidate

Candidate name _____

Position _____

Interviewers _____

Date _____

Getting to know them

- Why do you want to work with children this [summer or school year]? A good answer shows real interest in kids, not just in having a job.
- What ages have you worked with, and which do you enjoy most? A good answer gives specific experience and an honest sense of where they're strongest.
- Can you work all the dates and hours for this job? A good answer is a clear yes, or any conflicts named up front.

Notes _____

Score (1 to 3) _____

Working with children

- Tell me about a time you led a group of kids. How did you keep them interested? A good answer gives a real example and shows planning ahead and reading the group's energy.
- A child is sitting alone and won't join the game. What do you do? A good answer shows patience, curiosity about why and a gentle way to include the child without forcing it.
- How would you make every child in your group feel welcome, including kids with different needs or backgrounds? A good answer shows respect for differences and practical ideas, such as learning names fast or changing a game so everyone can play.

Notes _____

Score (1 to 3) _____

Behavior guidance

- Two kids are arguing over a ball, and one pushes the other. Walk me through what you do. A good answer puts safety first, stays calm, hears both sides and helps them make it right. Yelling, shaming or physical punishment is a red flag.
- A child breaks the same rule every day. What do you do? A good answer shows consistency, looks for the reason behind the behavior and involves a supervisor.
- Tell me about a time you stayed calm when someone was upset with you. A good answer shows self-control and a focus on solving the problem.

Notes _____

Score (1 to 3) _____

Safety and supervision

- You're at the park and count your group. One child is missing. What do you do, step by step? A good answer: alert other staff right away, keep the rest of the group supervised and start searching. Waiting, or searching alone without telling anyone, is a red flag.
- An adult you don't recognize says they're here to pick up a child. What do you do? A good answer: check the authorized pickup list and photo ID, and get the director if anything is unclear. The child doesn't leave until it's confirmed.
- A child says they feel sick and wants to go home. How do you handle it? A good answer takes it seriously, tells the lead staff member and follows the program's illness steps without guessing what's wrong.

Notes _____

Score (1 to 3) _____

Child protection and boundaries

- When might you end up alone with one child, and what would you do about it? A good answer avoids being alone with a child out of sight of other adults and names ways to stay in view, such as keeping doors open.
- A child tells you something that makes you worried they're being hurt. What do you do? A good answer: listen calmly, don't promise to keep it secret, don't ask leading questions, tell the director right away and follow the program's reporting steps, including calling the state hotline themselves if state rules require it.
- A camper asks for your phone number or to follow you on social media. What do you say? A good answer is a kind, clear no, followed by telling a supervisor.

Notes _____

Score (1 to 3) _____

Teamwork and reliability

- Tell me about a time you disagreed with a coworker or supervisor. What happened? A good answer shows respect, listening and working it out directly.
- What would you do if you were going to be late or had to miss a shift? A good answer: tell the supervisor as early as possible, because ratios depend on every staff member showing up.
- How do you handle long, hot days on your feet? A good answer is honest and practical, such as drinking water, pacing themselves and keeping a good attitude.

Notes _____

Score (1 to 3) _____

Skills and creativity

- Teach me a game or activity you'd lead with kids. A good answer has short, clear instructions, energy and ideas for different ages.
- It's raining, you're inside with 15 kids and you have no supplies. What do you do? A good answer shows creativity and a plan to keep everyone together and busy.

Notes _____

Score (1 to 3) _____

Their questions

- What questions do you have for us? A good answer shows they've thought about the kids, the training or how the team works.

Notes _____

Overall

Total score _____

Strengths _____

Concerns _____

References checked (date) _____

Decision and next steps _____

Free to use and change, but not legal or medical advice. Check your state's licensing rules and your insurer's requirements, and have a lawyer review any consent or waiver language.

Template from BackPR · backpr.com