



CIVIL AIR PATROL
United States Air Force Auxiliary

CADET ENCAMPMENT PROGRAM

X3 Parents' Orientation

Presentation Outline

Goal: Develop positive relationships with parents by briefing them on the encampment program and addressing their questions and concerns.

Concept: Responsible adult leadership requires that the senior staff develop a good rapport with cadets' parents and reassure them that the encampment experience will be safe, positive, and fun. While parents probably know the local CAP leaders, the encampment senior staff may be total strangers to them. Therefore a good encampment will include a parents' orientation. Of course, CAP cannot *require* parents to participate in an orientation, but the encampment is obligated to at least offer the orientation for those parents who personally drop-off their cadet.

Process: The orientation could be offered on the hour and half-hour during the students' arrival timeframe, with the session leader presenting to however many parents are on hand for those sessions.

Suggested Duration: 10 to 15 minutes

Presenter / Representative: Any member(s) of the senior staff may provide the orientation. This session is intended as an adult-to-adult conversation, with no cadets participating.

Visual Aid: One simple slide is available. Use it or write that content outline on a whiteboard so parents can see what topics will be covered and save their questions for when the relevant topic comes up.

Content: A sample content outline is provided below. Encampments may add to this information as desired. While the outline reads like a script in some sections, that content is provided merely as a resource for the presenter. The presenter is free to put his or her own "spin" on this presentation, provided all the main points are addressed.

Preceding Greeting Process: Note that prior to this parents' orientation, a senior member will have greeted the parents upon arrival. It is at that time that the parents' contact information and the cadets' medical information is double-checked, among other administrative tasks. See §2.6 of the *Cadet Encampment Guide*.

Content Outline

Introduction. Welcome to Civil Air Patrol's (name of encampment). I am (name) and over the next 10 minutes I want to tell you about the exciting activities we have planned for your cadet and give you an opportunity to ask any questions.

- 1. Program Goal.** The purpose of the encampment program is for each cadet to develop leadership skills, investigate aerospace sciences and related careers, commit to a habit of regular exercise, and solidify their moral character.
- 2. Supervision.** Throughout the encampment, screened and trained CAP senior members will supervise the cadets. Although cadets learn by doing and are afforded some decision-making authority, ultimately the adult volunteers are responsible for the cadets' safety and well-being. Each student is assigned to an (adult) training officer and can talk with that person at any time.
- 3. Activities.** List and describe some of the activities planned.
- 4. Phones and Web.** Explain the encampment's policy on cadets' use of the phone and access to the web. Provide the encampment's emergency contact number. Provide information about encampment photo pages or social media.
- 5. Homesickness.** It is common for first-time cadets to experience some degree of homesickness during the first few days. The cadets are grouped into teams, and are taught to encourage one another during the encampment. It usually takes 2 or 3 days for the teams to truly come together, but once they do, any feelings of homesickness tend to disappear at that point. Therefore, the challenge is for CAP adults and the cadets' peers to help homesick cadets persevere for a few days and give the program a chance. Today's generation of young people, having grown up with smart phones, may not be used to not having constant, immediate access to mom and dad, and vice versa for parents accustomed to texting their kids throughout the day. One goal of any overnight camp, CAP or otherwise, is for the young person to develop an age-appropriate sense of independence or self-reliance. Our adult staff will counsel homesick cadets, providing a sense of optimism and encouragement, before early dismissal is considered.
- 6. Discipline and Regimentation.** Encampment showcases the Cadet Program's regimented, military-like training model, in a positive, age-appropriate manner consistent with CAP and Air Force traditions. Encampments operate at a higher level of intensity in respect to the military aspects of cadet life than virtually any other cadet activity. We keep the cadets busy and we challenge them to thrive in a military-like, team-focused environment. The strictness, rigor, sense of urgency, and overall expectations of military bearing will be markedly more challenging at encampment - yet still age-appropriate - compared with a weekly squadron meeting or Saturday field exercise. We never tolerate hazing, and the cadet and adult staff have received special training on how to challenge cadets in a positive manner.
- 7. Meals.** Cadets are provided three good meals every day. Briefly describe the meal arrangements and variety of food available. Be prepared to field questions about special dietary requirements; address these on an individual basis after the orientation concludes.
- 8. Lodging.** Describe the lodging arrangements. If logistically and operationally feasible, allow the parents to visit a dormitory. If a visit is not practical, consider taking some pictures of the dorm area and showing them at this time.
- 9. Medicine.** Reiterate CAP's requirement that cadets be able to self-administer any medications they have been prescribed. If you have any medical personnel on staff, mention that, but be clear that if medical care is needed, cadets are taken to a hospital or clinic.
- 10. Graduation.** Invite the family to graduation ceremonies. Provide specifics about the date, time, and if necessary, instructions on how to gain access to the facility.
- 11. General questions and comments.**
- 12. Thank You.** Finally, thank the parents, friends, and families for supporting their cadet's participation in Civil Air Patrol.