



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEADERS-IN-TRAINING (LIT) HANDBOOK





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Dear LIT Participants and Families,

Welcome to the Leader in Training Program. We are truly so excited to have you with us this summer. The LIT Program is a special part of camp. It is a place where growth happens, confidence builds, and leadership begins to take shape. This experience is designed to help you step into new responsibilities while still enjoying everything that makes camp meaningful and fun.

Throughout the summer, LITs will have the opportunity to:

- Grow as leaders and role models
- Work alongside YMCA staff
- Build confidence and independence
- Make a positive impact on younger campers

We do not expect perfection. We expect effort, openness, and a willingness to learn. This is a space where mistakes are part of the process, and growth is the goal.

What we ask from you:

- Come each day ready, on time, and prepared
- Be respectful, positive, and supportive of others
- Stay engaged and give your best effort
- Represent the YMCA's core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility

Families, your support plays an important role in this journey. Encouraging independence, allowing space for growth, and trusting the process will help your LIT get the most out of this experience.

We believe in every LIT who walks into this program. We are excited to watch you grow, take on new challenges, and discover the kind of leader you can become.

This is going to be a summer full of growth, connection, and fun. We are so glad you are a part of it.

Let's make it a great one!

Warmly,
Jordan Godin
Summer Camp Director
Sanford-Springvale YMCA



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Purpose of the LIT Program

The purpose of the LIT Program is to provide campers with structured leadership training while maintaining a traditional camp experience.

LITs will:

- Participate in daily camp activities, including daily swim
- Engage in games, group activities, and special events
- Learn leadership skills through observation, practice, coaching, and reflection

The overall goal of the LIT Program is leadership development. Camp activities provide the setting where leadership skills are learned and practiced in real time.

LITs as Campers in Leadership Training

LITs are campers first. Each day, LITs will:

- Participate in typical camp activities alongside peers
- Have a scheduled time to swim daily
- Engage in group games, creative activities, and outdoor play
- Follow the same daily routines as other campers

Within this camper experience, LITs also receive:

- Leadership-focused responsibilities
- Guided practice supporting staff
- Opportunities to observe staff leadership in action
- Time for reflection and feedback
- This balance allows LITs to enjoy camp while developing leadership skills.



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Technology & Phone Use

LITs are not permitted to use personal phones or electronic devices during camp hours.

Exceptions may include:

- Emergencies
- Directed use by staff for program purposes

Phones should be:

- Stored away and out of sight
- Not used during transitions, activities, or free time

Failure to follow this expectation may result in loss of privileges or removal from the LIT role for the day.

Attendance & Commitment

LITs are expected to:

- Attend scheduled camp days consistently
- Arrive on time and prepared
- Communicate absences in advance

Frequent absences or late arrivals may impact:

- Participation in leadership opportunities
- Completion status of the program

Dress Code

LITs are expected to dress in a way that reflects their role as leaders and role models.

Examples include:

- Clean, appropriate clothing for active play
- Closed-toe shoes (unless otherwise directed)
- Clothing appropriate for all camp activities

Clothing must:

- Be free of inappropriate language or imagery
- Allow safe participation in camp activities



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Core Messages of the LIT Program

Throughout the summer, LITs will be reminded that:

- You are a role model first
- You are learning, not expected to know everything
- Your presence matters more than control
- Safety and respect come before fun
- Your role is to support staff, not replace them
- How you receive feedback matters
- You represent the YMCA at all times

If you remember one thing this summer:

“I am a role model who leads with calm, respect, and care — and I am here to learn.”

Role of a Leader-in-Training

As a Leader-in-Training, your role is to:

- Participate fully in daily camp activities
- Assist staff during games, transitions, and group routines
- Practice leadership skills in supervised settings
- Observe how staff manage groups and behavior
- Model positive behavior and YMCA core values
- Reflect on experiences to grow as a leader
- LITs are not staff members and are not responsible for discipline, supervision, or decision-making.



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Authority & Boundaries

Clear boundaries ensure safety and clarity for everyone.

LITs MAY:

- Give reminders about expectations, routines, and safety
- Redirect minor behavior early and calmly
- Assist staff during activities and transitions
- Lead activities with staff present
- Ask for help or clarification when unsure

LITs MAY NOT:

- Enforce consequences
- Discipline campers independently
- Handle escalated behavior
- Supervise children alone
- Replace staff in any situation

LITs guide. Staff decides.

Knowing when to ask for help is an important leadership skill.

Behavior Guidance & Discipline Philosophy

LITs are held to the same philosophy of behavior guidance and discipline as all campers.

This means:

- LITs follow the same rules and expectations as other campers
- Behavior is addressed using respect, empathy, and consistency
- Consequences are developmentally appropriate and aligned with camp policy
- Discipline decisions are made by staff

When expectations are not met, LITs may receive redirection or consequences as campers. This is part of learning responsibility, accountability, and leadership.

LIT Accountability

If expectations are not met, the following may occur:

- Verbal reminder and coaching
- Temporary removal from leadership responsibilities
- Parent/guardian communication
- Removal from the LIT Program if concerns persist



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Parent/Guardian Role

Families play an important role in supporting LIT success.

We ask families to:

- **Encourage independence and responsibility**
- **Allow LITs to communicate and advocate for themselves**
- **Support feedback provided by staff**

This program is designed to help teens grow through real experiences, including challenges.

Mock Onboarding Experience

As part of the LIT Program, participants will complete a mock onboarding process.

This includes:

- **Practicing professional communication**
- **Learning expectations similar to YMCA staff onboarding**
- **Participating in guided training activities**
- **Receiving feedback from leadership staff**

This process is designed to:

- **Prepare LITs for future employment**
- **Build confidence in professional settings**
- **Help LITs understand expectations of working at the YMCA**

LITs will be supported throughout this process by staff and leadership.

Field Trips

LITs will participate in most field trips.

During field trips, LITs are expected to:

- **Stay with assigned groups**
- **Follow all safety expectations**
- **Model appropriate behavior in the community**
- **Support staff when appropriate**

LITs may lose field trip privileges if expectations are not met.

Communication with Children

LITs practice effective communication by:

- Using calm voices and positive body language
- Giving short, age-appropriate directions
- Getting attention without yelling
- Being patient and respectful
- Referring challenges to staff when needed

Clear communication supports positive camp experiences.

Emotional Awareness & Empathy

Leadership includes understanding emotions — both your own and others’.

LITs will practice:

- Recognizing emotions in children and peers
- Managing their own emotions during challenges
- Responding thoughtfully instead of reacting
- Asking for help when emotions feel overwhelming
- Emotional awareness is a key leadership skill.

Feedback & Growth

Feedback is an important part of the LIT Program.

LITs are expected to:

- Listen respectfully to feedback
- Ask questions for understanding
- Reflect on suggestions
- Try again after mistakes

Mistakes are expected. Growth is the goal.



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LIT Camp Experience Week

During the summer, there will be one designated week when LITs fully participate in traditional camp experiences.

This may include:

- Full participation in camp activities
- On-site programs
- Field trips with their group

During this week, LITs participate fully as campers, allowing them to:

- Experience camp from a camper's perspective
- Strengthen peer relationships
- Observe staff leadership styles
- Reflect on leadership in action

Reflection

Throughout the summer, LITs will have opportunities to reflect on:

- Daily experiences
- Leadership challenges and successes
- Behavior and decision-making
- Personal growth
- Reflection helps turn experience into learning.

Completion & Recognition

LITs who complete the program will receive:

- Written feedback from staff
- A self-reflection opportunity
- A completed skills rubric
- Recognition during an end-of-summer LIT celebration

Final Reminder

Being a Leader-in-Training means learning how to lead with respect, calm, and care — while still fully participating in camp.

You are here to grow, learn, and enjoy camp while developing leadership skills.



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This page should be removed and turned in with your application. You should hold onto your handbook.

Agreement

By signing below, we agree to uphold the expectations outlined in the LIT Program Handbook and understand that failure to do so may impact participation in the program.

LIT Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____