



# ATS Connections Peer Mentor Program

The purpose of A Thousand Summers' (ATS) Peer Mentor Program is to connect experienced parents and campers (Mentors) with first time parents and campers (Mentees) to assist in camp preparation so that everyone can get the most out of the camp experience.



## Mentee Parent Instructions

Your primary role as a Mentee Parent is to receive support, encouragement and to ask camp related questions to your Mentor Parents and Campers. Sending your child to camp for the first time can bring up various emotions like excitement, fear, anticipation, and anxiety. Through your conversations with your Mentor Parents we hope you gather information that will reduce anxiety and increase confidence.

Another important role is to prepare your child to be a Mentee Camper under their Mentor Camper. Determine if you feel comfortable allowing your child to communicate independently with their Camper Mentor. If and when you feel comfortable, review the Mentee Camper Instructions with your camper (found on page 4) and monitor them as they receive support from their Mentor Camper.

*We want parents to be comfortable with connecting their camper with another camper. **This is yours to determine.** We are making this available to support your and your child's preparation for camp. Contact the ATS Programs office with any questions or concerns.*

### Mentee Parents are asked to:

- Watch for an email and phone call from your Mentor Parents. *Contact the ATS Programs office if you have not heard from your Mentor Parents within 5 days of receiving this information.*
- Be available for a video call (Facetime, Zoom {set up a free account [HERE](#)}) between both Mentor and Mentee Parents AND Mentor and Mentee Campers to introduce yourselves. [HERE](#) are some fun questions to ask to help get conversations started.
- Discuss permission for campers to communicate independently of parents. IF/WHEN BOTH MENTOR AND MENTEE PARENTS GIVE PERMISSION, provide camper contact information, and establish boundaries for camper to camper communication. *For example, campers may text, call or zoom after homework is finished but before 9pm.*
- Mentor Parents will contact you and Mentee Camper **at least once per month between now and September 15th** to make themselves available for your questions. *For example, you may plan to talk/zoom every second Tuesday of the month at 5pm.*
- Mentor Parent(s) will contact you **each week while campers are away at camp** to answer any new questions that come up, help calm fears, etc. *For example, you may plan to talk/zoom every Tuesday at 3p.*

- Mentor Parent(s) will contact you ***after campers return from camp*** to hear about how the camp experience went, discuss post camp ATS forms and how to reapply for a campership for next summer.
- At the end of each conversation, make a plan for when to talk next.
- If campers are communicating independently, check in with your camper weekly to verify they are communicating effectively and troubleshoot issues as needed. *Contact the ATS Programs office with any questions or concerns.*

### **Conversations to have with your Mentor Camper and Parent before camp:**

- What is the best thing about sending your child to camp? What has your camper gotten out of the experience?
- What did it feel like the first time you sent your camper to camp? How did you reduce fears or anxiety?
- Will my camper be well fed at camp?
- Were there any struggles your camper had at camp (homesickness, fitting in, class or racial differences, etc.) and how did you handle them? How did camp handle them?
- What did you wish you knew the first time you sent your camper to camp?
- Describe the camp culture, camp community and traditions. What types of campers will there be? Will there be racial and socioeconomic diversity?
- How do I enroll my camper at camp? Where do I find the forms and documentation? When is it due? Do I need to make an appointment with the camper's doctor?
- Will I be able to contact my camper while they are at camp? How will my camper be able to communicate with me? Can I send letters? Email? Care packages?
- Where do I find the camp packing list? How were you able to get all of the items on the camp packing list? Borrow items from friends and family? Thrift store? Online discount stores? Loan or rent from camp? Were there items not on the packing list that campers should take to camp? *See [ATS Equipment Assistance](#) for those who qualify according to their ATS Campership Agreement.*
- What is Camp Bank / Camp Store? What is it used for? How do I make a deposit? *See camp bank assistance for those who qualify according to their ATS Campership Agreement.*
- Are there any trips, activities and/or items camp offers that require additional fees? How do we enroll and how do we pay for them? *See [ATS Trip & Activity Assistance](#) for those who qualify according to their ATS Campership Agreement.*
- How do I make camp transportation plans? Where do I find camp arrival and departure dates and required arrival and departure time windows? Will the camper be driven to camp? Fly? Ride a camp shuttle bus? How do I communicate camper travel arrangements to camp? *See [ATS Transportation Assistance Program Guidelines](#) for those who qualify according to their ATS Campership Agreement.*
- How do I get camper luggage to camp? Will the camp allow us to check it on the plane? Do I need to ship it? *See [ATS Baggage Assistance](#) for those who qualify according to their ATS Campership Agreement.*

### **Conversations to have with Mentor Parent while campers are at camp:**

- How do you cope while kids are away?
- When and where do I find camp photos of kids at camp?
- When and where do I receive camp counselor letters?

## **Conversations to have with Mentor Parent and Camper when campers get home from camp:**

- How the camp experience went, what were the best parts, what were the challenges and how your camper met those challenges?
- What ATS forms are due when kids get home from camp?
- What benefits do campers get from returning to camp multiple times?
- How do we reapply for an ATS campership for next summer?
- When are campership applications available and when are they due?

## **Conversations TO AVOID with your Mentor Parent and Camper:**

- Camp related gossip or bad / negative camp experiences. Keep the conversations positive. *Please contact the camp or the ATS Programs office to discuss concerns about camp or ATS Programs.*
- Topics outside of the scope of soliciting support from the Mentor Parents that are offensive or discriminatory.



Contact Karen in the ATS Programs office with any questions or concerns by email at [karen.smith@athousandsummers.org](mailto:karen.smith@athousandsummers.org) or by phone at 720-981-2532 x 102.



## **Mentee Camper Instructions**

Your role as the Mentee Camper is to receive support, encouragement, and to ask camp related questions to your Mentor Camper. Going to camp for the first time can bring up various emotions like excitement, fear, anticipation, and anxiety. Through your conversations with your Mentor Camper, we hope you gather information that will reduce anxiety and increase confidence in going to camp for the first time.

### **Mentee Campers are asked to:**

- Take part in video calls with parents.
- IF/WHEN BOTH MENTOR AND MENTEE PARENTS GIVE PERMISSION, plan to zoom/text/talk on the phone with your Mentor Camper at least once per month.
- Get to know each other. [HERE](#) are some questions to ask to help get conversations started.

### **Examples of ongoing conversations to have with your Mentor Camper:**

- What is camp like?
- What activities did you like the most?
- What activities were you scared to try but tried anyway? How did that go?
- What do you wish you had known about camp before you went for the first time?
- Is the food good at camp?
- What is the bathhouse like? How far is it from the cabin?
- What was the weather like? Rainy? Hot? Cold?
- Was it hard to make friends? What is your best piece of advice about making new friends?
- How did you feel about going to camp for the first time? Excited? Scared? Nervous? All of these things?

### **Examples of conversations NOT to have with your Mentor Camper:**

- Camp gossip. Keep the conversation positive.
- Topics outside of the scope of soliciting support from the Mentor Camper that are offensive or discriminatory.
- If you wonder if a topic is appropriate, ask your parents before you bring it up.
- If any communication feels uncomfortable, talk with your parent(s) or the ATS Programs office immediately.



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