

Camp Brebeuf

1. **Can you tell me a bit about what makes your camp unique?** We built a barrier-free facility, so all who want to enjoy camp are able to do so without restrictions.
2. **What percentage of your campers and/or staff have a disability?** 40% of our campers (less than 10% of campers use a One-on-One support worker) and 20% of our staff have a disability. **Of those disabilities, what percentage would be “invisible” (you couldn’t tell by looking at them that they had a disability)?** 75% of these are invisible.
3. **Do those campers participate fully in all programs and events?** Not always, I would say that of the 10% of campers that need support workers, half participate fully, the other half as much as possible. **If yes, what do you need to do to make that possible?** We set up meetings with parents in advance to come up with profiles and game plans to ensure we have as much success as possible. We figure out what activities they enjoy and try to use those to entice them through the day. We also attempt to use the other campers in the group as encouragement!
4. **What are some of your accessibility best practices that other camps might learn from?** If everyone can’t do it, it doesn’t exist. This is a hard one, something we have found challenging in keeping everyone engaged and entertained, but one that has been important to our success of remaining barrier-free. We also purchased some all-terrain vehicles to assist with hiking and group games for campers and staff who require use of a wheelchair or who may not be able to walk long distances can still participate. We also made a committee which included several ages and abilities so when we were building/creating our facilities and programs, we had lots of input to better understand what was needed rather than just assuming.
5. **Can you tell me a success story about a camper/staff with a disability?** We have too many to count!!! But I would say, the biggest were the campers being able to attend camp without the use of a support worker, because the facility is accessible. Or this past summer, we had a little boy who had never had success in a program, always being sent home and he had a lot of fun with his worker, completing all the activities and his mom was over the moon excited because he was able to “be a little boy, play, try and experience new things”. I will send you a separate document with our success stories, we started building a file!
6. **What challenges do you experience to fully including staff and/or campers with a range of disabilities?** It is a challenge to figure out a good balance of expectation vs. ability. Everyone can work to serve a purpose, but it’s finding out limits, what works, what doesn’t, etc.
7. **How do you train your staff so that can best support and engage your campers with disabilities?** Our staple and heart is our inclusion programs. Teaching them from the

hiring/interview stage, straight through that each person belongs and that everyone deserves a chance is our key. We work on tips and tools during each training piece and it rolls into the summer!

8. **What final message would you give to other camps working towards greater inclusion of people with disabilities?** It is hard, but it is worth it. The lessons they will teach you, the challenges that they overcome, it's inspiring. Also, it doesn't happen overnight.....just like everything, it takes time and trials to see what works best for your camp environment. But there is a lot of support and tools out there. We learned that if you ask people are willing to help, be it OCA, parents, community, etc.