



New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station

Cooperative Extension
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To The Parents of Our Campers,

In our constantly changing world socialization is becoming increasingly technology based. More and more, children are forming and maintaining their relationships with each other primarily through screens, be them by the computer monitor or on their cell phones.

It is with this in mind that we here at Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp relish the unique elements of socialization and building friendships that only camp can provide. From relating to each other one on one in our buddy system, to ten or more in their course area classes and cabins, dozens in their camp groups, and by the hundreds in our all camp games and activities, our campers get exposed to the valuable skill of building relationships the old fashioned way: speaking, listening, supporting, and learning about each other. Where else do children get to interact with their peers in a safe, nurturing environment for six days straight without ever coming into contact with electronic communication?

Yes, now more than ever we believe our youth benefit from the virtues and opportunities instilled by a stay here at summer camp. However, for us to make that happen, we need your help. When a camper brings a cell phone to camp, it interferes not only with his or her journey of responsibility and independence but with that of all cabin mates and fellow campers. A cell phone can be used as a crutch for a camper to stay unengaged and outside of the camp program. In fact, it is often directly counterproductive to the skills we endeavor to help our campers build. If a camper runs into a problem here at camp, it is part of our mission of fostering independence that they learn to deal with and solve that issue with the help and support of our counselor staff. If a child uses a phone to call home and circumvents the process of dealing with the conflict autonomously, he or she is deprived of this vital learning and growing experience.

It is for all these philosophical reasons that campers are prohibited from having a cell phone in their possession while here at camp. If campers are caught with cell phones, the **cell phones will be confiscated and the camper may be sent home**. We pride ourselves on the ethical character of our campers, so please do not place your child in a compromising situation by sending cell phones with him or her to camp.

If you would like to check on your child, please feel free to call the Summer Camp Director for a report on how your child is doing at camp. If your child is struggling at camp due to homesickness, problems in the cabin, or other, you will be contacted by the Summer Camp Director promptly.

We hope you will join us in our mission of showing our campers what the world is like (if only for six days), when the only people you are with are right next to you, and the only place you're at is exactly where you are.

The Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp Staff