Date

Hello <insert school administrator name>,

I would like to attend the 2025 Tri-State Camp Conference as Professional Development days from March 11th-13th in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

According to the ACA (American Camp Association), the purpose of the conference is to gather camp professionals from all over the world. The camp community of over 3,000 people will be able to come together to join in on over 170 educational sessions and spend time with like-minded people who are dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of children.

Although the conference is centered on camp, I truly believe that the content of the lectures and activities are closely aligned with the strategies and practice pointers presented in teacher professional development sessions (e.g., interpersonal relationships, managing child behavior, parent communication, etc.). I believe that the key to a successful teacher-student relationship is the ability to empathize and understand the child's mind in order to foster positive social-emotional relationships.

**You can view ALL the sessions** [**here**](https://tristate25.eventscribe.net/agenda.asp?BCFO=&pfp=Browse%20by%20Day&fa=&fb=&fc=&fd=&all=1)**. The sessions listed below are examples of the many sessions geared towards teachers. I feel my attendance at the conference will provide me with valuable takeaways to bring to the classroom:**

**Add or subtract to the below as you see fit! [insert applicable sessions here]**

**Mental Health & Suicide Prevention in Camp Life –** The 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed that 42% of high school students felt sad or hopeless for at least two weeks, with 10% of females and 20% of LGBTQ+ students engaging in suicidal behaviors. While camp offers a magical reprieve, many campers continue to struggle with their mental health. As they adjust to new surroundings and bunk life, responses can vary greatly. This session will equip camp staff with the tools to recognize when campers may be struggling, use appropriate language around mental health and suicide prevention, debunk myths and learn effective response strategies. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss case studies in a safe space. Attendees will leave with practical tips for identifying warning signs, how to respond, and how to train all staff members during orientation.

**Ugh, I Have to Call a Parent! –** Okay, so, this is nobody's favorite task, but it's also not as scary/intimidating/bad/your-word-here as you think it will be! Parents and guardians are people too - and you share a common goal, which is for their child to have the best possible experience at your program. Using this united intent as the baseline, we'll dive into a practical plan for initiating and responding to challenging conversations about participants, including preparing, identifying potential roadblocks, surviving first contact, solving problems collaboratively, and yes, even getting through getting yelled at. If connecting with participants' responsible adults is on your list of responsibilities, this session will prepare you to approach these necessary and sometimes complicated conversations with confidence, grace, and a solid skill set (rather than dread and angst, so that's a win right there).

**Responding to Anxiety at Camp: What to Say and When to Say It –** Anxiety can present in different ways in the camp environment, and as camp professionals, it's essential to respond with care and clarity. This session will start with the basics of understanding the different types of anxiety and how it might present at camp. Learn about factors that help to alleviate anxiety versus those factors that exacerbate anxiety and also learn both proactive and responsive techniques to address campers' needs. Participants will walk away with a broader understanding of anxiety, techniques and approaches on how and when to offer support, and how to model healthy coping strategies that will help keep campers engaged in everyday programs and camp life.

**The Neurodiversity in Everyone: Thriving in a Camp Setting –** Night time routines, getting ready for the day, bunk clean up, oh my! Creating an inclusive camp environment for campers with ADHD, Autism and Anxiety may feel daunting, but practical strategies can help reduce challenges around transitions and improve social interactions. While camp can feel like a welcome escape from navigating different learning styles and decoding emotional distress, understanding these approaches can enhance the well-being across campers and staff. In this interactive, hands-on session, attendees will learn the basics of neurodiverse needs of campers and practical tips to support campers through role play and discussing case examples.

**Thinking of ADHD as a Super Power! –** With the right tools, kids with ADHD can embrace and celebrate their unique way of thinking, feel more confident, and in control. In this session you will learn how to help them to cope with anger and frustration, improve focus and impulse control, become more effective communicators, and unleash their true potential. We will also explore practical strategies to help kids learn to reframe the way they think about ADHD with fun approaches to organizing their day, creating routines, tackling cleanup, coping with their emotions, handling transitions, and more!

**Behavior Magic - Proactive Behavior Management for All Levels –** Enhance your behavior management skills through a hands-on training workshop with the fun and behavior experts. This session was carefully crafted by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and award-winning magician and improviser. This unique and high-energy session offers concrete tips, tricks, and tools to understand and manage behaviors, create a positive camp environment, and transition smoothly between activities. Designed for educators, directors, staff of all levels, administrators, parents, and anyone who works with children. The interactive format ensures a fun and impactful learning experience. Attendees will leave feeling inspired and empowered, armed with practical tools and a new "Behavior Magic Wand" that they can use immediately!

**Belonging is The New Inclusion: The Importance of Friendships & Meaningful Participation –** So, you've tackled access barriers and have worked on creating a culture toward disability inclusion in your recreation programs. That's great.... but it's not enough. We'll review the dimensions of belonging and understand that meaningful participation and the opportunity to make authentic friendships are a true measure of belonging. When we focus on a child's gifts and values that they can share with their community, we have taken the first step in facilitating a friendship based on mutual interests regardless of disability. Join us to create a pathway to friendship and belonging FOR ALL.

**Managing Diabetes At Camp –** Type 1 diabetes is one of the most common childhood chronic diseases, affecting 1 in 400 children and teens. It is possible for campers with type 1 diabetes to be safely managed at a mainstream camp, with proper planning and supports. This session will provide non-medically focused camps an understanding of best practices for training staff in type 1 diabetes management. You will learn tangible ways to be inclusive of children living with type 1 diabetes to allow them to thrive in a mainstream camp environment.

**Accountability Conversations: Having Those Though Chats to Improve Performance –** Having accountability conversations with counselors, leadership, or even your boss can be challenging, but it doesn't have to be! Let's take a look at what it means to give meaningful feedback, be a fierce advocate for our camp's vision, and learn how to reconcile broken trust and commitments

**Balancing Support and Independence: How to Communicate and Collaborate with Parents & Caregivers –** Navigating the relationship between camp staff and parents/caregivers can be delicate - particularly when balancing a child's independence with the need for parent/caregiver involvement. This session will provide you with effective communication strategies to foster trust and collaboration with parents/caregivers while reinforcing camp as a space for personal growth. Learn how to address concerns, set clear boundaries, and provide meaningful updates without undermining campers' autonomy. By mastering this balance, you'll be able to manage expectations, reduce anxiety, and create a positive partnership that enhances the camp experience for both children and their families.

**The 2025 Tri-State Keynotes are:**

***David Brooks,*** best-selling author and op-ed columnist at the New York Times

***Dominique Dawes,*** owner of the Dominique Dawes Gymnastics & Ninja Academies

Full biographies can be found [here.](https://www.acanynj.org/tri-state-camp-conference/keynotes)

More information on the conference can be found on [www.tristatecampconference.com](http://www.tristatecampconference.com).

**I also will be able to earn 17 Continuing Education Credits and am willing to take what I learn at the conference and bring it back to help the school run training or provide professional development for my colleagues.**

Questions about the conference can be directed to me or the Director of Events, Samara Feinberg at samara@acanynj.org.

Thank you for your consideration, we look forward to hearing back from you,

<insert name here>