MANAGING GUEST EXPECTATIONS

Brooke Applegate- Los Angeles Urban Adventures
Kristen Payne- Kidspace Children’s Museum
Alicia Vogl Saenz- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Ben Dickow- Columbia Memorial Space Center
“Welcome to the wonderful world of Kidspace Summer Camps! We have an exciting lineup of programs this year that promise to transport your child to a world of exploration and adventure where they will create lasting memories.”
2012
Outerspace Adventure Camp

(......attempt #1!)

“Discover the world of outer space as Kidspace teams up with JPL to create an Outer Space Adventure. Learn about how robotics are used in space, what it takes to survive in the harsh environment of space, and the ins and outs of our solar system.”
“Journey into outer space with NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory! Led in part by specialists from JPL, kids will explore the environments and atmosphere of outer space and create their own imaginary place in space with activities such as Outer Space Olympics, walking on the solar system, making a “Universe in a Jar,” and creating olive oil constellations. Kids will also learn what food and equipment an astronaut takes into space by packing for their own space mission!”
“Campers will take on the role of little astronauts as they embark upon missions to explore the universe. They will learn about the environments and atmosphere of outer space by creating olive oil constellations, being “run over” by model Mars rovers, and discovering the mythology of the cosmos inside a giant planetarium. One camp day will feature a guest appearance by JPL specialists.”
2013, 2014, & 2015
JPL Outer Space Camp

- Journey into outer space with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory! Led in part by specialists from JPL, kids will explore the environments and atmosphere of outer space and create their own imaginary place in space with activities such as Outer Space Olympics, walking on the solar system, making a "Universe in a Jar," and creating olive oil constellations. Kids will also learn what food and equipment an astronaut takes into space by packing for their own space mission!

2016
Outer Space Camp

- Campers will take on the role of little astronauts as they embark upon missions to explore the universe. They will learn about the environments and atmosphere of outer space by creating olive oil constellations, being "run over" by model Mars rovers, and discovering the mythology of the cosmos inside a giant planetarium. One camp day will feature a guest appearance by JPL specialists.
LESSONS LEARNED:

- Are you over promising?
- Be mindful of your wording!
- Be specific!
- Your awesome selling hook may actually be your greatest downfall in disguise.
Little Learners Camp

“Designed exclusively for children ages 4 to 5, Little Learners Campers will explore the wonders of nature in and around Kidspace. Campers will plant their own crops, create art using natural materials, and experience the joys of getting messy with mud! They will also play in and learn about water, dress up as their favorite animal, and meet some of Kidspace’s resident critters. Filled with wonderful opportunities for imaginative play and developing a comfort with and appreciation for nature, this week promises to instill a love for camp in your little learner.”
Anticipated Needs:

- This may be some children’s first time in camp, away from their parents for extended periods of time, etc.
- Children this young may experience separation anxiety.
- Children this young may need nap time.
- Children may be more physically affectionate than older campers.
- Children may have more bathroom accidents.
- Children may have more meltdowns than older campers.
- Children may require a different discipline style than older campers.
- Children may have trouble listening.
Training, Training, Training!
SURPRISE!

- Little Learners campers were the best listeners, most well behaved, and least emotionally dependent campers of the summer.
- Zero campers had separation anxiety, meltdowns, etc.
- Campers were eager to show their independence from their parents!

- But..............
2016 Mandatory Parent Orientation

- What to expect at/from camp
- Meet the staff
- Opportunity to share any camper needs, etc. with staff in advance
- Share any parental concerns
- Paint an accurate picture in order to dispel any inaccurate expectations
- Create a safe, secure space & build relationships preemptively!
Lessons Learned!

- Know your audience - It’s not just the kids!
- Taking care of parents’ needs is every bit as important as taking care of children’s needs
- Anticipate EVERYONE’S needs
- Parents have separation anxiety too!
- Listen, learn, apply solutions the next time around