

# PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE



## What is the philosophy behind La Senda Summer Camps?

We are NOT a traditional language school! We have a unique mission that looks very different from traditional learning environments. We hope this helps you understand our approach:

La Senda creates environments that encourage kids, youth, and adults to love Spanish in order to build communities that celebrate Spanish by growing individuals that excel in connection, curiosity, and confidence.

### Signs of success at camp look like:

- Each kid has a personal connection at camp
- Each kid is curious about learning instead of feeling an obligation to learn
- Each kid has the confidence to share their love for Spanish

### We DO NOT measure success by:

- Assessing reading/writing skills
- Testing language fluency



## MONDAY

**CHECK-IN**  
Follow our signs and directions for the check-in process.

## TUESDAY

**GROUP PICTURES**  
Make sure you have your red shirt on! We are using the photos for our craft on Thursday.

## WEDNESDAY

**THEME DAY**  
Dress up for the week's theme!

## THURSDAY

**WATER DAY**  
Come in a swimsuit and put a towel and change of clothes in your backpack.

**SHOW**  
Don't forget to attend our end of the week show! Please arrive 20 minutes prior to pick up time.  
(morning camp: 11:40am  
afternoon camp: 3:40pm)

# WEEKLY CAMP SCHEDULE

## How will camp communicate updates and reminders to me?

An email will be sent out the week before each session containing the following information: drop-off/pick-up times, camp address, what to bring, where to view pictures, a schedule of the camp activities, and other important announcements.

A short recap along with photos will be posted in the La Senda Families Facebook group.

Group leaders will check-in their campers each morning. This is a great time to chat with them! A site director is also available to talk during the check-in/out period.

If you need to notify a staff member on-site, the fastest way to reach us is by texting 612-314-6063. If it is not time sensitive, email [camp@lasendaspanishcenter.com](mailto:camp@lasendaspanishcenter.com) and a team member from headquarters will get back to you.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **What should my child bring to camp?**

- backpack with first and last name clearly labeled
- water bottle with first and last name clearly labeled
- comfortable clothes for activities in the outdoors
- a nut free lunch (for afternoon campers only!)

## **What should I know about field trips?**

A message with specific details will be sent out a few days prior. Kids will need a packed lunch. Heads-up, field trips days are very exciting and very exhausting. Don't be surprised if your child needs a little extra rest when they get home.

Since kids are in a more public setting, there are some different safety procedures we follow.

All children are asked to wear their La Senda t-shirts so that they are easy to see in a crowd. The number of staff members present is based on the number of students as well as based on the location being visited. Each student is given a wristband that has the La Senda phone number. All children watch a safety presentation before leaving for the field trip, informing them on bus rules, stranger awareness, what to do in an emergency, and the importance of staying with the group.





## Who are the camp counselors?

We have an AMAZING staff made up of Spanish speakers and individuals who love kids! Our youngest leaders are ages 11-13 who participate in the camp assistant program and get to shadow counselors at camp. Our lead counselors include individuals who have completed our yearly training course on the following topics:

Navigating Spanish: How to navigate language barriers and work with kids at varying language levels.

Navigating Kids: Understanding the developmental stages of kids and the appropriate behavior management and discipline strategies.

Culture, Coworkers & Conflict: How to foster a positive environment, be a good team member, and deal with conflict that may arise among peers or between kids.

Top Priority: How to follow crucial safety procedures and build bridges between camp and families.

Camp 101: Crash course on camp- daily routines, roles on-site, and all the other behind the scenes of a day at camp.

Company Profile: The story behind La Senda and how our foundation impacts each team member.

Expectations and Evaluations: What exactly is your role and how are you challenged and developed.

Leadership: Our top five leadership lessons and how you can implement them.

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## How do we maintain a Spanish immersion environment?

The key to our strategies is adjusting to each kid's level. At camp, it takes just a few minutes of interacting with a kid to get a feel for where they are at in their Spanish abilities.

A crucial aspect to consider is fostering intrinsic motivation in kids. We define this as “actions that are driven by internal rewards. The motivation to engage in a behavior arises from within because of the inherent satisfaction of the activity rather than the desire for a reward or specific outcome.”

Ways to encourage this self-motivation include staff sharing why they are passionate about Spanish, why it is valuable to speak Spanish, or helping them understand their own reason why they love Spanish.

The opposite approach, that we avoid, is feeding extrinsic motivation. This happens through positive and negative reinforcement. An example of positive reinforcement is giving a prize to a kid each time they speak Spanish reinforces the pattern that Spanish is used to get something else.

We want Spanish itself to be the reward. An example of negative reinforcement is punishing a kid when they speak English. This reinforces the pattern of kids speaking Spanish out of fear or not speaking at all! At the end of the day, it has to be the kid's choice to speak Spanish, so our staff's role is centered around encouragement.

Now, let's look at some tools that we use to encourage kids to speak Spanish.



## FIRST TIME LEARNER

### **Be gentle and focus on easy wins.**

For this level, we are extremely sensitive that there is probably a lot of fear. Connection is our primary objective because it can be super isolating when you are surrounded by a foreign language. There are moments when English may need to be spoken. If this is necessary, we use the whisper trick. This literally means that anytime English is spoken, it is in a whisper. What this does is help to preserve the Spanish environment. As soon as someone hears a leader figure speaking English, they feel like they have permission to speak English. To make sure kids feel connected, it is okay to whisper some English in moderation. We also help them realize that there are other kids who don't speak Spanish and use high level kids as guides.

The other strategy for this group is to find easy wins. Almost everyone knows what "hola" means. If you can get a kid to say "hola," they've already gotten a win under their belt! We celebrate with them for knowing the easy words!

### **Teach, teach, teach.**

This group will probably show the most visible growth throughout the camp week. Kids have spongy brains that soak up new languages. Since this group has already had some level of exposure to Spanish, they will be more comfortable in the environment and less fearful. What we do with them is teach! Giving them the vocab they need is essential to seeing that growth in the end.

## BEGINNERS

### **Challenge them.**

The best way to challenge kids who have a solid foundation is to do what they are used to. Many of their teachers use a strategy of only responding to Spanish. If they speak in English, we ignore it. If they don't switch languages, we tell them we only hear Spanish! When we stick to this strategy, it reinforces that it is easier to speak Spanish instead of repeating themselves over and over in English which gets frustrating.

We will always prioritize safety. An incorrect application of this strategy would be a kid saying "help, there is an emergency!" and not responding because they spoke English. This is not acceptable.

## IMMERSION STUDENT

### **Celebrate with them.**

We help this group be proud of their abilities. We are intentional about making them role models for their peers. Highlighting their language skills is especially important if they are weaker in English. This allows them to have confidence that they might not always get to show.

## NATIVE SPEAKER