

Advice for New Student Leaders from Former Student Leaders

Self Care

- "Take breaks even when it's hard!"
- "Don't get too in your head and stress yourself out about how you're doing."
- "Make sure to give yourself breaks when you need it, 6th graders can be a lot."
- "You're doing great! Ask for help when you need it and have fun with it."
- "Don't be afraid to ask for help when things get overwhelming."
- "Don't stress, especially if you need a break from the kids it's okay to ask for help."
- "Try to have some time for yourself, but also prepare to not have time for yourself."
- "Taking a break is not a bad thing! Take breaks when you need them! You can't pour from an empty glass!"
- "It's okay to be stressed, the first couple days are the hardest but it gets better and easier."
- "Take care of yourself first and ask for help when you need it <3"
- "Take it easy, 6th graders can be hard to get used to. Everyone knows you are trying your best."
- "Don't be so hard on yourself if you make a mistake - we all adapt and evolve."
- "It can be nerve wracking or stressful but take deep breaths and you'll do great."
- "Make sure you ask for help when needed."

What to Bring

- "Bring a rain jacket."
- "BRING BEADS!!!!!"
- "Bring UNIQUE beads."
- "Come with beads, bead challenges, and games!"
- "Bring beads and have a lot of games ready and prepared."
- "A hoodie is not a rain layer."
- "BRING BEADS."
- "BRING A WATCH."
- "BRING MULTIPLE PAIRS OF SOCKS lol"
- "Pack the amount of socks you think you need and then pack five more."
- "It gets real cold at night, bring extra layers."
- "Bring a thermos for coffee or tea on the go."
- "It's better to be overpacked than underpacked (ex: sleeping bag, pillow, etc.)"
- "Bring beads, the kids love to earn them."

- “Pack less clothes than you think you need, better to have useful items than cute fits.”

Making Friends

- “Build connections with the other student leaders! You’ll have each other’s backs all week.”
- “You’ll definitely leave ODS having made some new friends.”
- “Make friends with the other SLs. They will have your back in anything.”
- “Go without friends. You’ll make so many new ones. You get to be whoever you want without judgment.”
- “Make friends with other SLs and the feeling of being alone goes away after the first day!”
- “Talk to the other student leaders, I’ve made lifelong friends through ODS.”

Strategies & Attitude

- “Yolo!”
 - “Be confident and don’t be afraid to use your voice!”
 - “Build a rep with kids and connect with them as friends while still being a leader.”
 - Rapport, warm clothing, schedules, and bathroom breaks are the most important.”
 - “Don’t be afraid to ask questions during the training day.”
 - “Meal times are the perfect time to bond with kids.”
 - “Problems that may seem small to you can be a big deal for a 6th grader!”
 - “You don’t need to be perfect for a kid to look up to you.”
 - “Kids feed off your energy and vibes! Bring the fun and excited energy into every activity!”
 - “When in doubt, play a game.”
 - “Be a leader before a friend when it comes to 6th graders.”
 - “Be extroverted as best you can.”
 - “Pay attention to the time!”
 - “Everytime you go it gets easier and more fun. Stay on schedule!”
 - “Get out of your comfort zone.”
 - “Have patience, preserve your voice, give your kiddos motivation to listen.”
 - Let your goofy side come out, have fun!”
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- “Treat the students like people, not toddlers.”
 - “Patience and kindness are everything.”
 - “Fake it till you make it - even if you don’t feel like it, don’t let the kids know.”

- "Be a little silly! Have fun! The kids have more fun if you do."
- "Lean into the chaos, it's gonna happen."
- "Be BOLD. Step out of your comfort zone and make memories for yourself and the kiddos."
- "Be confident! The kids look up to you, whatever you do they'll do too!"
- Do your best to learn what works and what doesn't work with your kids early on."
- "Play into it even if the kids don't bite at first! They will if you will!"
- "Everybody, even student leaders who have been there 3 or 6 times, won't be perfect and that's okay."
- "The kids think you're way cooler than you may think :)"