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## 2023 Staff-in-Training (SIT) Frequently Asked Questions

The Mechina and Avodah SIT programs are the culmination of the camper experience and an intentional transition to being on staff. The SIT program combines the fun of being a camper with the leadership and training needed to assume the responsibility of a staff member and provide the magic of the CBM experience to campers. This summer is designed to bridge that gap between camper and staff member while having fun, learning leadership skills, and building the skills necessary to ensure you are successful in your staff role.

### What is the Avodah Program?

Avodah is our two-month leadership and staff development SIT program. Hebrew for “work,” this highly selective opportunity is geared toward campers who have completed 11<sup>th</sup> grade who are ready to participate in the SIT program and then transition into a staff role in summer 2023. The first month entails a comprehensive training and leadership development program. Avodah participants will begin their SIT experience by arriving at camp three days before campers and will participate in their own SIT specific sessions and activities during the month of June, including six rotations of camp staff positions. The intent of the program is to prepare all SITs to transition into highly successful staff members for second session.

### What is the Mechina Program?

Mechina (Hebrew for “prep course”) is our one-month SIT program offered in July and geared toward participants who have completed 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The Mechina program will provide a more general overview of the various staff positions at Camp Barney, and participants will gain valuable leadership training that will prepare them well for staff in 2024 as well as other leadership and employment roles outside of camp. The Mechina Program will give you a chance to develop a full understanding of the importance and responsibilities of staff at camp and will also allow time to transition from a camper mindset to that of a staff member.

### How do I apply for the SIT Program?

[Please refer to the How to Apply document.](#)

### Why is there not an option for SIT age campers to be on staff all summer?

It is very important for campers to experience a transition program in which they receive the necessary training to become successful staff members. We strive to hold ourselves and our staff to the highest standards possible in order to safely care for and provide positive experiences for campers. The proper transition experience between camper and staff helps ensure the most successful path for each individual SIT participant.

Parents, we know all of you greatly appreciated the experienced counselors and specialists your campers benefited from having and we want to ensure that happens for future generations. Importantly, the 2019 revision of the American Camp Association (ACA) Standards requires that at least 80% of our staff members be 18 years old or older, so we are limited in how many positions can be occupied by rising high school seniors and rising college freshmen. We greatly value our ACA accreditation, as we know you do too. Ensuring the appropriate age of our staff members keeps us in line with ACA and other camps.

**Will I be able to put this on my resume? What will I get out of the SIT Program?**

Yes, both programs are intended for you to gain valuable knowledge, experience, and leadership skills. Those skills are directly translatable to success in future employment and you are able to put those skills on a resume. During the Mechina and Avodah Programs, you will be cultivating skills in communication, critical thinking and problem solving, interpersonal dynamics, leadership, collaboration, and creativity. The competencies you will complete for each program will ensure the basic level of understanding of youth and their needs, articulating your own goals and how to achieve them, effectively working as a member of a team, correcting behavior appropriately, giving and receiving feedback, how to respond in an emergency, and relating to and connecting with diverse groups of people. These job-readiness skills stand out to potential employers and give you a leg up when applying for positions.

L'dor v'dor: As campers, we hope that you were provided with an exceptional experience where you made lifelong connections, learned and grew as an individual, and felt what it was like to be part of an amazing community. Now it is your turn to help give that experience to campers and continue the passing the joy from generation to generation.

**How will campers who previously attended different sessions be integrated together in the Avodah program?**

Before arriving at camp, all Avodah participants will take part in a virtual orientation session to get to know each other. This session will include icebreaker activities and intentional groupings that will help participants from different camper sessions break down barriers and learn to work as a team. After all, we're all Barney folk! One of the best parts of being on staff is getting to meet people who attended different sessions as campers.

**I want to participate in the one-month Mechina program in July. Will I get to see and spend time with my friends who are in the Avodah program?**

Of course! The SIT Lounge will be available for Avodah and Mechina to use and socialize in. Our intention is to also provide joint training and processing sessions for participants to learn from one another.

**I'm interested in Avodah, but I can't arrive on time. How late can I arrive and still participate?**

We understand that you may have other things you want to do, but we're asking folks to commit to the entire two-month experience. If that's not for you, we invite you to consider Mechina. If you are unable to arrive on time due to school commitments, we can accommodate participants who can arrive by the morning of June 9<sup>th</sup> for Avodah.

**I'm interested in Avodah, but I need to leave during the summer and come back. Will this be allowed?**

As with our traditional staff training, the entirety of this program has value. Our focus is always on our campers, which requires us to ensure that all our staff have received proper training. We will work with participants on a case-by-case basis to figure out if we can accommodate your needs in the program. In general, this will be easier if you need to miss part of July rather than part of June.

**When will I know if I am hired for July? Will CBM pay the cost to change my flight if I am not hired?**

Avodah applicants will be interviewed prior to summer and our intention is for everyone in the Avodah program to be hired as staff members for the month of July. That being said, taking care of people's children is a sacred responsibility, and if participants are not able to meet and demonstrate the [requirements and competencies for being on staff](#), they will not be asked to be staff in July. Avodah participants will train on these competencies and be evaluated based on an associated rubric. This evaluation process will formally conclude on June 28<sup>th</sup>, and those who did not meet staff standards will be communicated with promptly.

In order to transition into staff members after training, you must follow all camp and program rules, participate fully in all aspects of the program, and demonstrate readiness and competencies associated with being a part of

Camp Barney's staff. That said, Camp Barney Medintz is not liable for travel costs if you are not hired and need to make changes to your travel for this reason.

**How many participants will you accept in each program?**

Both programs have a different, but selective, acceptance process. Our final capacity will depend on how many apply for each program, available housing, and the composition of our larger staff as guided by ACA standards.

**Can I have my phone?**

Part of our program will include discussing how to incorporate technology into camp life successfully. Avodah participants will be trained and evaluated on responsible phone usage and will be given their cell phones when that portion of the training begins in June, somewhere around the middle to end of 1<sup>st</sup> session. As they are not immediately transitioning onto staff, Mechina participants will not have their cell phones.

**Can I have my car?**

Due to limited space available for staff parking at camp, SITs in both the Mechina and Avodah programs will not be permitted to bring a car to camp. However, we are committed to arranging or providing transportation for Avodah participants on their days off in July (as we historically have done for any staff members who do not have cars at camp).

**Will Avodah participants have days off?**

In June, Avodah participants will still be considered campers. They will not have days off but will still have camper-style activities and programs, including off-site experiences. In July, Avodah participants will be on staff, and they will have three days off during the session, as is standard for all staff members.

**Is there intersession for Avodah participants?**

Yes. Avodah participants will help on the last day of 1<sup>st</sup> session with camper departure. They will attend the final staff meeting and depart after that as hired CBM staff. They will return to camp with staff before second session campers arrive. For participants who do not live in the Atlanta area, we can arrange for you to stay with a host family during your time off if requested.

**I'm interested in the Avodah program and want to be a Unit Counselor. Which age groups will I be able to work with?**

ACA standards require that staff members be at least two years older than their campers. Therefore, Avodah participants will not be hired to work with any units older than Chaverim (campers completing 8<sup>th</sup> grade).

**I'm interested in the Avodah program and want to be a Specialist. Which areas will be available?**

In 2022, the Specialty Areas that were available included Waterfront, Nature, and Arts and Crafts. Waterfront received Lifeguarding, CPR/AED for the Professional Rescuer, and First Aid certification. Nature received training and skills verification from Project Adventure in ropes course facilitation, the gold standard of trainings in this industry. Arts and Crafts staff received in-depth training from a professional who has been involved in the Pottery scene of Atlanta for over 30 years.

For 2023, we are still finalizing what Specialist Areas will be available.

**For Avodah participants, how are the staff placements for July decided?**

Participants who follow program rules, participate fully in the program, and successfully complete all required training, will be offered a specific position based on Camp Barney's needs and the participant's strengths and demonstrated competencies. While a participant's preferences are certainly considered, the placement will be made by the Specialty Area and Unit Assistant Directors with input from the SIT Unit Head(s) to ensure exemplary camper experiences. While we endeavor to give everyone their number one choice of staff position,

that is not always possible. We encourage Avodah participants, and all staff members, to think about what impact they can have on camp and on campers in their role and position.