

Q & A With Winnetu's Activities Director, Laura Johnson

1. How long have you been working with children? How long have been at the Winnetu?

- a) I started working with children in 2019 when I graduated college and got my first job working at Disney World in their children activities department. That is also where I got my first experience working in hospitality and fell in love with the industry. I started working at the Winnetu as a counselor in 2021, so 4 summer seasons I have been at the Winnetu.

2. Did you study early childhood education?

- a) Yes, I got my bachelor's degree in early childhood education at Valdosta State University.

3. Is the children's program designed with a curriculum in mind for each age group?

- a) While I always try to keep in mind age-appropriate curriculum while planning for the four different age groups, but what I think that makes the Winnetu's children's program so special is that our focus is that we want to create memories that will last a lifetime for these children. It is summer after all, and these kids have so much pressure on them during the school year and with other camps that this becomes somewhere that they can just be kids and have fun.

4. What do kids love the most about the Winnetu's children's program?

- a) It would be very easy to say what the kids love the most about the children's program are the different field trips to the candy store, the bay, mini golf, and kayaking. But what the kids really love the most is seeing their favorite counselors year after year. We all build such special relationships with these kids and their families that a lot of families even keep in touch with us in the winter season. Every time a family is checking in for their first day back, they always ask me if specific counselors are back, the kids faces and even their parents face light up when I say, "Of course they are back!".

5. Have you seen kids attend the program year after year?

- a) There are kids that have been coming to the children's program since before I started working at the Winnetu. Families tend to come the same weeks every summer and we are always looking forward to when our returning families are back to stay with us.

6. Have you had kids who have attended the kids club end up working at the Winnetu?

- a) We currently have three counselors that are brother and sisters that were campers when they were young enough to be in the camp. The youngest sibling, her camp counselor at the time is still working here today and they are now coworkers!