

## How to Find a Summer Camp

Presented by: Kelly Collins, MA

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## Things I will be able to identify...

- Family's care requirements
- My child's needs and interests
- Different summer care options
- Key indicators of quality summer care options
- General resources and how to obtain more information about programs

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## Timeline

### January

- Assess interests
- Collect information
- Examine budget

### February

- Apply to camps – look for early registration discount deadlines

### April

- Get camp physicals

### May

- Look at Travel/Carpool schedules
- Take inventory of camp gear and prepare shopping lists

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### Assess Interests

- What are your favorite activities?
- What are some new activities you would like to try?
- Are there friends with whom you would like to spend time this summer?
- What family activities would you like to schedule?

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### My Child's Interests

- Arts and Crafts
- Music/Drama
- Fitness/Recreation
- Academics
- Technical
- Outdoor/Nature Activities

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### My Child's Needs

- Developmental
- Emotional
- Social
- Educational
- Special

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### Summer Care Options

- Family Child Care
- Child Care Center
- In-home Care
- Summer Buddy
- Traditional Summer Camp – General Interest
- Specialty Camps
- Special Needs Camp
- Resident/Sleep Away Camp

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### How to cut the cost of summer care

- Non-profit organizations
- Public subsidies
- Municipal organizations
- Ask each camp about financial aid
- Money saving tips for summer care
  - scholarships or camperships
  - shared care
  - sibling discounts
  - sliding fee schedule
  - early enrollment discounts

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### Camp Activities

- Music
- Drama
- Academic
- Arts and Crafts
- Sports
- Outdoor life/Nature

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### **Camp Considerations**

- Programming and activities
- Facilities
- Fees
- Staffing

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### **Clarify Your Family's Needs**

- Type of care – self-care, child care, camp?
- Hours – extended day?
- Days – full-time, part-time?
- Budget – registration, other fees?
- Location?
- Transportation?

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### **Quality Indicators**

- Safe & comfortable environment
- Staff ratios
- Appropriate environment for activities
- Campers' self esteem encouraged
- Scheduled activities
- Accredited program

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## American Camp Association (ACA) Member Camps

<http://www.acacamps.org/>

- Healthy, developmentally appropriate activities and learning experiences
- Discovery through experiential education
- Caring, competent role models
- Service to the community and the environment
- Opportunities for leadership and personal growth

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**American Camping Association**

Find A Camp | What is ACA Accreditation? | Send a Child to Camp Fund

**Find A Camp**

Camp is fun and so much more. At camp, children and youth find a community that encourages achievement and builds self-esteem, promotes healthy lifestyles, fitness, and activity, and inspires the confidence and courage to become the leaders of tomorrow.

(The counts below (2) are based on sessions.)

**Do you want a Day, Overnight, or Family Camp?**  
 Day (camps will travel to and from camp each day) (8,995)  
 Overnight (camps will sleep at the camp) (13,453)  
 Show both Day and Overnight Camps (22,448)  
 Family Camp or Camps for Adults (562)

Next

You can also search by Camp Name

Number of Matches	
	Total Accredited
Camps	2,538 2,438
Programs	7,157 6,917
Sessions	21,260 18,556

**Parent Resources**

- CampParents.org
- Camp Planner
- Expert Advice
- Parent Newsletter

**Quick Links**

- Camps that Need to Groups
- Camp Fairs
- Find a Job
- Send a Child to Camp
- ACA Home

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**American Camping Association**

Find A Camp | What is ACA Accreditation? | Send a Child to Camp Fund

**Find A Camp**

(The counts below (2) are based on sessions.)

Click links below to see choices

- Campier Age/Gender
- Location
- Day Camp Specific
- Audiences or Physical/Mental Challenges
- Activities
- Session Dates/Duration
- Cost
- Organizational Affiliation or Culture
- Waterfront

Number of Matches	
	Total Accredited
Camps	1,411 1,195
Programs	2,558 2,865
Sessions	6,191 6,949

**Choices I've Made:**

Day Change

Apply the choices for made and update counts

Fit ready. Show me the results!

Clicking the above button will allow you to see all of the choices available to you in the system.

**Parent Resources**

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**Quick Links**

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Find A Camp

(The counts below (c) are based on sessions.)

Click links below to see choices

- Camp Age/Gender
- Location

Help Me Decide

(c) I want to find camps by distance.

ZIP Code:  Distance:  miles

(or)

(c) I want to find camps by state.

Camps outside the U.S.

- Day Camp Specific
- Audiences or Physical/Mental Challenges
- Activities
- Session Dates/Duration
- Cost
- Organizational Affiliation or Culture
- Waterfront

Number of Matches

	Total	Accredited
Camps (c)	1,414	1,114
Programs (c)	2,593	2,092
Sessions (c)	8,171	6,508

Choices I've Made:

Day:  Change

Apply the choices I've made and update counts

Get ready. Show me the results!

Clicking the above button will allow you to see all of the choices available to you in the system.

Parent Resources

- CampParents.org
- Camp Planner
- Expert Advice
- Parent Newsletter

Quick Links

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- Find a Job
- Send a Child to Camp
- ACA Home

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Find A Camp

(The counts below (c) are based on sessions.)

Click links below to see choices

- Camp Age/Gender
- Location
- Day Camp Specific
- Audiences or Physical/Mental Challenges

Help Me Decide

(c) Camp Program specializes in serving camps with the Physical/Mental Challenge

(c) Camp Program exclusively serves camps with the Physical/Mental Challenge

Programs for specific audiences.

Help Me Decide

Activities

Session Dates/Duration

Cost

Organizational Affiliation or Culture

Waterfront

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## Interview Questions for Camps

- Camp philosophy goals
- Emergency preparedness
- Security processes
- Medical services
- Staffing
  - Screening
  - Director background
  - Counselor training
  - Turnover
  - Background checks

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## Interview Questions for Camps - Continued

- How do they handle homesickness?
- Communications between camper and parent, camp and parent
- Who are the key personnel who would handle issues that arise at camp or if parents had an issue?
- Ask for references

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## Preparing Your Child for Camp - Together

- Discuss activity schedules and necessary items to take in order to participate in activities
- Assess clothing needs together
- Advise child of medication processes
- Help child understand what items are allowed during camp – check camp policy
- Ask camp for special food considerations
- Label everything
- Break in new shoes/boots

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## Will Your Child be Left Home Alone?

- "Home Alone: Are You and Your Child Ready?" Archived seminar:  
[http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/pages/parent\\_seminars.aspx](http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/pages/parent_seminars.aspx)
- This seminar covers:
  - Minimum age requirements for leaving children home alone
  - How to assess parental readiness for leaving children
  - Child development and readiness to be left alone
  - How to establish a "Home Alone" contract
  - "Home Alone" considerations for success
  - Resources for parents and children

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## Your Teen and Summer Options

- "What to Do with your Teen this Summer" archived seminar:  
[http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent\\_seminars.aspx](http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent_seminars.aspx)
- This seminar covers:
  - Why is planning ahead for summer important for your teen?
  - What are your concerns?
  - What summer opportunities exist for your teen?
  - What are the guidelines and minimum age for obtaining a work permit?
  - How can your teen gain SSL hours?
  - What resources exist for you and your teen?

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## Community Summer Camp Resources

- The Family Phone Book
  - [www.thefamilyphonebook.com](http://www.thefamilyphonebook.com)
- LOCAL Summer Camp Fairs
- Network with other parents – friends, coworkers
- Websites, Other Online Search Tools
- Activity Rocket
  - [www.activityrocket.com](http://www.activityrocket.com)
- Recreation Departments
- American Camping Association
- YMCA & Other Local Organizations
  - DC YMCA: [www.ymcawashdc.org/camps/camp.htm](http://www.ymcawashdc.org/camps/camp.htm)
- Parent Magazines
  - Washington Parent: [www.washingtonparent.com/guides/gulde-camp.htm](http://www.washingtonparent.com/guides/gulde-camp.htm)

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## The Family Phone Book

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON DC  
THE **FAMILY** Phone Book

Family life in the Washington DC area just got a whole lot easier!

EMAIL | 703-242-PAGE (7248) | HOME | BLOG | ADVERTISING INFORMATION | SITEMAP

Welcome!  
Washington, DC  
42°F  
Mostly Cloudy  
10:00 AM EDT | 10:00 AM EDT

CAMP/SUMMER PROGRAMS  
Looking for a camp that will offer your child a safe, happy opportunity to develop new skills this summer? This list will help!

Adventure Links

Search Our Site  
List Your Services

11220 Yates Ford Road

The Family Phone Book metro DC

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## NIH Specific Resources

<http://childcare.ors.nih.gov>

- NIH Child Care Resource and Referral
- NIH Parenting ListServ
- NIH Back-Up Care Program

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The new NIH **GREEN**  
way to search  
for summer camps!



American Camping Association

<http://www.acacamps.org/>

# 2013 Local Camp Fairs

Attend a camp fair to speak directly with representatives from a variety of camps.  
*Inclusion in the below list does not constitute an endorsement of any specific event or camp.*

**\*\*PLEASE CALL AHEAD: DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*\***

Event	Fair Date(s) & Time	Address	Phone
<b>Overnight Camps and Teen Fair</b>	Saturday, January 26 1pm - 3:30pm	Sidwell Friends School 3825 Wisconsin Ave, NW Washington, DC	Organized by Tips on Trips (866) 222-8477
<b>Baltimore Summer Camp Fair</b>	Sunday, January 27 1pm - 3:30pm	Gilman School 5407 Roland Avenue Baltimore, MD	Organized by Tips on Trips (866) 222-8477
<b>White Flint Mall Camp Expo</b>	Saturday, January 26 10am - 6pm & Sunday, January 27 12pm-6pm	11301 Rockville Pike Rockville Pike at Nicholson Lane North Bethesda, MD	(301) 231-SHOP
<b>Columbia Summer Camp Expo</b>	Sunday, January 27 2:30pm - 5pm	Kahler Hall 5440 Old Tucker Row Columbia, MD 21044	(410) 730-0770
<b>Lakeforest Mall Camp Expo</b>	Saturday, March 2 11am - 6pm & Sunday, March 3 11am - 6pm	701 Russell Avenue Gaithersburg, Maryland	(301) 840-5840
<b>Chesapeake Family's Summer Camp Fair</b>	Saturday, March 9th 10am - 2pm	"Pip" Moyer Rec. Center @ Truxtun Park 273 Hilltop Lane Annapolis, MD 21401	(410) 263-1641, x 204
<b>Dulles Town Center Summer Camp Expo</b>	Saturday, February 23 10am - 4pm & Sunday, February 24 11am - 4pm	21100 Dulles Town Circle Dulles, Virginia	(703) 404-7120
<b>Summer Resources Fair for Children with Special Needs</b>	Saturday, January 12 1pm - 4pm	Ivymount School 11614 Seven Locks Road Potomac, MD	Organized by Tips on Trips (866) 222-8477

# Getting Started

Use these resources as you are planning summer care for your child and preparing him/her for the upcoming change in schedule. This is especially important if this will be your child's first camp experience or if you are making a plan that includes multiple camp programs, which is often the case.

Just as you did when you selected full-time care or after-care during the school year, you will want to consider various elements of summer care. This may include staff training, nutrition, activities/curriculum, transportation, safety, and your family budget. Include your child in the assessment process so that you both will be satisfied with the final arrangement selected.

These resources are intended to assist you with:

- Understanding the options for summer care
- Surveying your child's interests
- Evaluating various programs of interest
- Preparing you and your child for camp or a change in routine

If your teen is spending any time at home alone this summer, it is worthwhile to begin preparing now, from creating a safety plan to doing a trial run. On pages 13 and 15, you can get ideas on how to help your child have a productive and fun summer at home.

Take a few moments to write your to-do list, using the sample "Summer Camp To-Do List" to the right as a framework.

## SUMMER CAMP TO-DO LIST:

### January & February

- Talk with my child about their interests (Use the quick assessment tool on page 3)
- Ask friends for recommendations
- Use the Directory in this handout and request a camp directory from our County Recreation Department
- Collect basic information about camps of interest
- Attend a Camp Fair to talk with representatives (consider bringing my child with me)
- Discuss camp fees in family budget planning (See page 6 for tips on paying for camp)

### February & March

- Interview Camp Directors (Refer to page 7 for sample questions)
- Apply to camps—*Be mindful of deadlines for early registration discounts!*

### April

- Prepare my child for camp (Get tips on page 12)
- Schedule a camp physical and complete required paperwork

### May

- Arrange travel to and from camp—Remember to communicate all possible pick up and drop off contacts to the camp
- Make a shopping list for camp gear

# Research Summer Care/Camp Types

## ENRICHING SUMMER PROGRAMS COME IN MANY FORMS

Enriching summer programs are available through many types of organizations, enabling children to have fun and explore at their own pace. Perhaps you want your child to participate in a variety of tasks or focus on improving performance in a specific area. In any case, you want your child to be cared for in a safe environment. About 80% of summer camps are operated by non-profit organizations. Some are accredited. When researching the various care options, consider the types listed below.

### Family Child Care or Center

You might continue the relationship with your current care provider if possible. In this situation, there will be less adjustment for your child and transportation may be less difficult for you. Ask if there will be new children and other children of similar ages. The program will likely be less structured than care during the school year. Ask about special summer activities.

### Summer Buddy

A Summer Buddy is a mature teenager or college student who comes to your home to provide supervision, companionship and transportation to and from activities. Or you could set up a co-op arrangement with neighborhood families. While typically less costly than a formal program, this type of care is not regulated. Consider a caregiver who is CPR/First Aid certified.

### Traditional Summer Camp

A traditional summer camp is one that offers a variety of activities, like outdoor recreation, arts & crafts, individual & team projects. Kids usually select their favorite activities and do a lot of it. It's great for children who love to do many different types of things.

### Educational/Academic Camps

Some programs have an academic focus, such as science or language. The emphasis is on both knowledge and fun. Activities are self-paced, and may be project-oriented.

### Specialty Camps

Many camps have focused instruction on one activity, like dance or basketball. These camps are geared towards children who desire to improve performance. Consider it if your child is very motivated in and can concentrate on one thing for long periods.

### Special Needs Camps

A special needs camp promotes inclusively and a "can-do" attitude amongst campers. Staff are specifically trained & the camp is specially equipped. There will be a range of camp activities tailored to ability and opportunities to interact with other youths.

### Resident/Sleep-Away-Camp

Some kids may desire a sleep-away-camp, where they stay for a week or month at a time, under the supervision of adults. The specific camp may offer traditional or specialized activities. Camps may provide leadership opportunities for older kids. Travel expenses are additional. Visit the National Camp Association for tips on selecting a residential camp: [www.summercamp.org](http://www.summercamp.org).

# What does your child want to do this summer?

COMPLETE THIS PAGE WITH YOUR CHILD

What are your favorite activities?

What are some new activities you would like to try?

Are there friends with whom you would like to spend time?

What things would you like to do with the family this summer?

ARTS/CRAFTS	Yes	No	Maybe
Coloring			
Drawing			
Painting			
Pottery			
Sculpting			
Woodwork			
SPORTS	Yes	No	Maybe
Baseball			
Basketball			
Cheerleading			
Soccer			
Swimming			
Tennis			
OUTDOOR	Yes	No	Maybe
Archeological			
Birds			
Farm Life			
Fishing			
Geology			
Horseback Riding			
Plant Life			

MUSIC/DRAMA	Yes	No	Maybe	ACADEMIC	Yes	No	Maybe
Band/Instrument				Astronomy			
Clown lessons				Animals			
Dance				Biology			
Improvisation				Chemistry			
Magic				Civics			
Puppetry				Computers			
Singing				Health			
Theater				Language			
Voice lessons				Poetry			

# What do you want from a program?

## THERE ARE MANY PERSONAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Finding a summer program that will meet the interests of your child and align with your family's goals and schedule may take some time. It's possible that you will need to select a combination of arrangements.

Obtain information on at least 3 to 5 different programs before making a decision. While you can get a lot of information on the camp's website, also talk to the camp director and check references. Ask for referrals from other parents, teachers and co-workers.

Consider the following questions:

### PROGRAM/ACTIVITIES

- Is the camp accredited by ACA?
- Do the hours fit your schedule?
- Is extended care available?
- May parents visit during the week?

- What is a typical day like?
- What types of activities are planned?
- Are there different choices each day?
- How competitive are the activities?
- Are campers separated by age?
- Is there swimming? Lessons?
- If food is served, what are typical meals like? Should I send snacks for my child? Is there refrigeration?
- Will the camp cater to a child's specific needs?
- What is the camp's policy when a child gets sick or has an accident?
- How are requests to call home handled?

### FACILITY/FEES

- Does the camp meet health & safety standards?
- Is the facility well maintained and clean?
- Are there enough materials/equipment?
- Is the outdoor activity area sufficient?

- Is the indoor space adequate for children during rainy or very hot weather?
- Do the rooms have air conditioning or should my child bring a fan?
- Does the camp provide transportation? What are the pick-up and drop-off times?
- Are there additional fees for swimming, t-shirts, field trips, food service?

### STAFF

- What are the staffs qualifications?
- Has the staff received special training?
- Does the Director have a background in camping?
- What is the Director's camp philosophy?
- What is the staff to camper ratio?
- Do the staff have CPR and First Aid certification?

# What does Camp Accreditation mean?

When choosing a Camp, another factor to consider is whether or not the program is accredited. According to the American Camping Association (ACA), there are about 12,000 camps programs in the US and roughly a quarter of them are accredited.

Accreditation demonstrates a camp's commitment to a safe and nurturing environment. Accreditation means that camp practices have been measured by going a step beyond the state's basic licensing requirements. Accreditation is voluntary. It is an educational process that involves training and implementing guidelines, as well as ongoing publications for camp directors and staff.

ACA accredits camps; its standards are recognized by courts of law and government regulators as the standards of the camp industry. ACA collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies.

No environment is risk free. However, ACA camps go through a rigorous risk management process to prevent illness or injury to campers—and have solid crisis plans if an emergency does occur. At least once every three years, an outside team of trained professionals observe the camp in session to verify

compliance with ACA standards. Standards cover all aspects of operation, such as:

- **Site & Food Service Safety:** Fire protection, sleeping areas, bathing/toilet facilities, food areas and practices
- **Transportation:** Driver and vehicle requirements, traffic control, transportation safety
- **Health Care:** Staff and facility requirements, medication management, required health information, record keeping
- **Management:** Safety and security regulations, staff emergency training, crisis communications, insurance
- **Staffing:** Staff qualifications, training, ratios, supervision and behavior management guidelines
- **Program:** Goals for camper development, orientation and policies for general and specialized programs, including aquatics, challenge courses, trips, and horseback riding

There are approximately 300 standards. View the 2013 standards at a glance at:

[www.acacamps.org/accreditation/stdsglance](http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/stdsglance)

An ACA web tool allows you to search over 2,400 ACA-accredited camps:

[http://find.acacamps.org/finding\\_a\\_camp.php](http://find.acacamps.org/finding_a_camp.php)

## Tips for Paying for Camp

The opportunity to go to Summer Camp is special. Kids have the chance to make new friends, discover new interests and learn valuable life skills. While it is a great experience for children, it may not be easy on the wallet. Camp costs can add up quickly. Fees range from \$75 to more than \$500 per week depending on the type of camp, supplemental activities and options, such as before and after care. It is important to plan ahead and consider your family's budget. Here are a few ways to curb the costs.

- **Ask about Financial Aid/Scholarships**– No matter your income level, it is fair for a parent to ask ‘what type of financial assistance do you provide?’ Most camps offer “camperships” or scholarships that may cover a portion of the camp fees.
- **Send siblings to the same camp if possible**– A sibling discount can reduce costs by 5 to 15%.
- **Enroll early**– Some camps offer a discount if you enroll early or for multiple sessions. Plan in advance- sessions fill up fast!
- **Try to enroll in local day programs**– Camps that require an overnight stay, taking a plane or train cost significantly more.
- **Resist the urge to splurge**– Most camps will recommend that you provide play clothes, swim trunks, towels, etc. Don't go out and buy new things unless you absolutely must.
- **Find out your camps refund policy**– Sometimes your plans change or simply don't work out. Most camps will give you a full refund if you cancel *before* a certain date.

- **Ask for help from others**– Camps are starting to offer gift certificates for their services; think birthday or holiday gifts. You can print a generic “gift certificate” on the ACA website at <http://www.campparents.org/newsletter/0711/article1>
- **Pay in advance**– Camps may offer a discount for paying the full balance before the sessions begin.
- **Payment options**– Camps want your child to have a great experience with them and are willing to work with you. Ask if they are willing to set up payment arrangements.
- **Take advantage of a canteen fund**– Some camps allow you to deposit money for your child into a fund to be used on snacks, drinks, ice cream, etc. Putting a certain amount in it weekly and not going over will allow you to keep track of costs.

Two additional ways to make camp affordable:

- **Take advantage of your Flexible Spending Account**– Some employers offer a benefit program which allows you to pay your dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. Expenses for summer day camp may qualify if the camp meets certain criteria. Check with your employer or go to [www.fsafeds.com](http://www.fsafeds.com)
- **Child Tax Credit**– when filing your taxes find out if you qualify for the Child Tax Credit. The Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit reduces your taxes by providing a tax credit for money you spend on day care and child care services.

When you receive a camp's brochure, you will invariably have questions. From that first phone call or letter, you begin developing an impression of what a particular camp is like and how it's run. To further assess the quality of the camp, get to know the Camp Director through telephone conversations, correspondence, and a personal visit. Use the table below to make your notes. Remember that no institution has an impenetrable safety net from ills. However, you can find out if

the camp has taken all reasonable precautions to provide an environment that makes safety for children the top priority.

- For your state's regulations, go to: [www.acacamps.org/publicpolicy/regulations](http://www.acacamps.org/publicpolicy/regulations) (select your state)
- To view standards for camps accredited by the American Camping Association, go to: [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)

You Might Ask...	Consider the Response...	Program #1 Name: Telephone #: Cost:	Program #2 Name: Telephone #: Cost:
<b>What is the camp's primary emphasis and goals?</b>	Does the program complement your own parenting style? Would you prefer that your child attend a camp that emphasizes competition or cooperation? Is the program suited for your child's personality and style of learning?		
<b>What is the camp director's background?</b>	At a minimum, ACA recommends that the Director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a bachelor's degree</li> <li>• Has completed in-service training within the past 3 years</li> <li>• Had at least 16 weeks of camp administrative experience before becoming the Director</li> </ul>		
<b>How do you screen staff?</b>	Organizations should rely on more than one means to identify child predators (e.g., background checks, face-to-face interviews, work history). Look for an immediate sensitivity from the Director for your concern for a safe atmosphere for your child. Ask if they use criminal background checks and why or why not. (Some states do not give access to their background checks for camp directors.) Ask about screening procedures used for returning staff.		

# Interview questions for Camp Directors

You Might Ask...	Consider the Response...	Program #1	Program #2																				
<b>What training do counselors receive?</b>	At a minimum, camp staff should be trained in: safety regulations, emergency procedures and communication, behavior management techniques, child abuse prevention, appropriate staff and camper behavior, and specific procedures for supervision.																						
<b>What is the counselor-to-camper ratio?</b>	<p>There are different ratios for varying ages and special needs. Each state has regulations for staff:camper ratios that vary by type of activity and situation. The following ratios are for ACA-accredited camps (the camp may specify exceptions):</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Camper Age</th> <th>Staff</th> <th>Day Camp</th> <th>Resident Camp</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4–5 years</td> <td>1</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6–8 years</td> <td>1</td> <td>8</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9–14 years</td> <td>1</td> <td>10</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15–18 years</td> <td>1</td> <td>12</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Camper Age	Staff	Day Camp	Resident Camp	4–5 years	1	6	5	6–8 years	1	8	6	9–14 years	1	10	8	15–18 years	1	12	10		
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<b>What are the ages of the counselors?</b>	<p>Some guidelines include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% of the staff should be at least 18 years old</li> <li>• Staff must be at least 16 years old and be at least two years older than the campers</li> </ul> <p>Are younger counselors-in-training (CIT's) ever left in charge of campers by themselves?</p>																						

# Interview questions for Camp Directors

You Might Ask...	Consider the Response...	Program #1	Program #2
<b><i>What are desired qualities in camp staff?</i></b>	Consider the qualities that are important to you—trustworthy, empathic, energetic, etc.		
<b><i>What percentage of the counselors returned from last year?</i></b>	Most camps have from 40-60 percent returning staff. If the rate is lower, find out why.		
<b><i>How are behavioral and disciplinary problems handled?</i></b>	Positive reinforcement, assertive role-modeling and a sense of fair play are generally regarded as key components. The disciplinary policies are well communicated. If penalties are involved for violations, they should be applied consistently and fairly, without judgment or criticism to campers.		
<b><i>How does the camp handle special needs?</i></b>	Ask the camp director about needed provisions and facilities. Is there a nurse on staff? Are special foods available for campers with restricted diets?		
<b><i>How does the camp handle homesickness and other adjustment issues?</i></b>	The camp's view on helping children adjust is important. Be sure you are comfortable with the camp's guidelines on parent/child contact.		

# Interview questions for Camp Directors

You Might Ask...	Consider the Response...	Program #1	Program #2
<b><i>Does the ACA accredit the camp?</i></b>	This does not guarantee a risk-free environment, but it provides evidence of a camp's commitment to a safe and nurturing environment for their children.		
<b><i>Will they have a doctor?</i></b>	Typically, accredited camps will have a camp nurse on site, while a doctor is a phone call away.		
<b><i>How are medications dispensed?</i></b>	All medications should be collected at registration and secured.		
<b><i>What happens if there's a natural disaster or emergency?</i></b>	Camps should have established written procedures to respond to such emergencies. Staff is required to be trained and rehearsed on these procedures.		
<b><i>How can the camp control strangers who may enter?</i></b>	Camps should have written procedures concerning unauthorized persons on the site. These include a periodic review of security concerns as well as training for campers and staff if a situation was to present itself.		
<b><i>What training does your staff receive in the prevention of child abuse?</i></b>	Directors should be able to explain their policies (e.g., staff being alone with a single child, training of staff, policies concerning termination related to allegations or proof of abuse.) Directors should be able to confidently tell you what the state law is concerning the reporting of abuse. What training does staff receive in recognizing and reporting of abuse or other situations that give rise to concern? You may want to ask particularly about the supervision of "free time," overnight activities, or of cabin/group dressing and changing times. Are multiple staff present? Are children told to whom they can report behavior that makes them uncomfortable?		

# Interview questions for Camp Directors

You Might Ask...	Consider the Response...	Program #1	Program #2
<p><b><i>What methods do you use to make your staff sensitive to the needs and concerns of children?</i></b></p>	<p>A director should verbalize specific training for staff in understanding children's needs, training to immediately stop abusive, hazing, or damaging behaviors. Directors should be quick to identify training methods and guidelines for helping staff work effectively and appropriately with children.</p>		
<p><b><i>What are your policies on parent-camper communication while in camp?</i></b></p>	<p>For examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under what circumstances will the Camp Director call you?</li> <li>• Will they call if your child needs to stay in the camp health lodge overnight or see a doctor?</li> <li>• Will they call if your child seems unhappy?</li> <li>• Will they call if your child is running a fever?</li> <li>• Can you send and receive e-mails from your child?</li> <li>• Can you call and talk to the child during his/her time at camp?</li> </ul>		
<p><b><i>Ask for references from the camp and call those parents!</i></b></p>	<p>This is generally one of the best ways to check a camp's reputation and service record. Directors should be happy to provide references.</p> <p>Ask other parents about their experiences at the camp. Find out if the children seemed comfortable in talking about their experiences with staff and campers. Ask if they are going back the next summer. Ask if the parent was pleased with the communication they received from the camp. Ask what communication was received. Ask these parents for the names of other parents and children who may have attended the camp.</p>		
<p><b><i>Your Other Questions:</i></b></p>			

# Prepare your child for camp

## A NEW PROGRAM INVOLVES AN ADJUSTMENT

Summer is a fun and exciting time for children of all ages. It is an opportunity for children to strengthen their athletic and intellectual skills, to meet new people, and to promote and foster their independent spirit. Your help with summer camp preparation will positively impact your child's experience.

The following are some preparation guidelines:

**Prepare together.** From choosing the camp to packing their bag (even if it is a day camp), it is important to support them through the process. As you prepare, allow them to express their concerns and communicate your confidence in their ability to handle the situation. Try reading a book about a camp experience to help your child open up about their uneasiness. Talk realistically about the expectations for camp. It is normal for campers to experience homesickness for the first few days of camp until they make

friends. Make a plan to keep in touch. If possible, visit the camp in advance so your child is familiar with the environment.

**Activities:** Know the activities that your child will be participating in during the camp. Pack necessary items such as a swimsuit, beach towel, sunscreen, an extra set of gym shoes, reading glasses, spending money, etc. Explain the activities to your child and explain the items you packed for him/her to enjoy.

**Clothing:** Whether your child is attending an overnight camp or a day camp, be sure to clearly mark all clothing and personal items with the child's name. Do not allow your child to pack or take valuable personal items that would be unnecessary in the camp environment. Always check the weather forecast to have your child appropriately and comfortably prepared.

**Medications:** As the parent or guardian, please work with the camp nurse or health office to ensure that all medications are administered properly. It is also important for you to know the camp rules regarding medications, and to follow them appropriately.

**Food and Drink:** Always check with the camp about how meals are handled. Does the child bring his/her own lunch or does the camp provide the meals? What about morning or afternoon snacks and drinks? If your child is a picky eater or on a special diet, should you make other arrangements with the camp? Can your child bring a water bottle every day?

**Other:** Other issues to consider:

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# What can teens do this summer?

It can be challenging to find appropriate activities to keep your teen busy during the summer months. They may want to hang out with friends or be home alone. You can help ensure that your teen has fun this summer, and at the same time, be safe and productive.

Start by meeting with your teen and brainstorming the possibilities. Explain the different options they have available to them at this stage in their life. The most common things for teens to do during the summer are attend specialty camp, volunteer, and work. These will take up a good amount of time and you then can discuss some filler activities, such as, vacations, sporting events and visiting with family. Below are some suggestions to help your teen have a meaningful summer.

**Camp**– There are many camps specific to teenagers’ interests, such as, music camps, drama camps, chess camps. Some camps also provide the opportunity to be a Counselor-in-Training (CIT). While this is an unpaid position, it provides teens with the

chance to obtain the leadership skills required of a counselor. Camps begin accepting applications for CIT’s early in the year so plan in advance. Contact your local Department of Parks and Recreation or private Summer Camp.

**Volunteer**– There are always organizations in need of volunteers. Although a volunteer position is unpaid, the work experience gained from it may be useful in the future; volunteer work looks great on resumes, college applications and scholarship applications. Check your local shelters, hospitals, nursing homes and local camps. Your county website may have a list of volunteer opportunities as well.

**Work**– It’s a good idea to have your teen touch base with their school guidance counselor before the school year is over. Many organizations contact local schools when they are looking to fill open positions. Check local newspapers and temp agencies. Speak to neighbors and friends of the family; you will be surprised how many parents would love the idea of hiring a teen to provide tutoring to their

younger children, house work, pet sitting, etc. Teens can check out websites, like: [www.gotajob.com](http://www.gotajob.com), [www.coolworks.com](http://www.coolworks.com), [www.teens4hire.org](http://www.teens4hire.org), or [www.snagajob.com](http://www.snagajob.com). There is a fee for some career websites, so make sure you discuss use of any sites with your teen.

The idea of having your teen home alone all summer with nothing to do can be bothersome. It is important that you take their opinion into consideration, research activities that are of interest to them and decide what is best for the entire family.

## Additional Resources

Lunch and Learn Parenting Seminars:

*What to do with your teen  
this summer  
and  
Family Fitness = Family Fun*

These seminars and handouts are archived and available at:

[http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent\\_seminars.aspx](http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent_seminars.aspx)

# Family fun this summer

## PUT FAMILY TIME ON YOUR CALENDAR

FUN PLACES	Yes	No	Maybe
Adventure Theater <a href="http://www.adventuretheatre.org">www.adventuretheatre.org</a>			
Black Rock Center for the Arts <a href="http://www.blackrockcenter.org">www.blackrockcenter.org</a>			
The Puppet Company <a href="http://www.thepuppetco.org">www.thepuppetco.org</a>			
Living Classrooms-Discovery Creek <a href="http://livingclassroomsdc.org">http://livingclassroomsdc.org</a>			
Carousel Ride at Glen Echo Park <a href="http://www.glenechopark.org">www.glenechopark.org</a>			
Concerts at Strathmore Hall <a href="http://www.strathmore.org">www.strathmore.org</a>			
Amusement & Water Park <a href="http://www.sixflags.com">www.sixflags.com</a>			
Catoctin Wildlife Preserve <a href="http://www.cwpzoo.com">www.cwpzoo.com</a>			
Visit the US Capitol Building <a href="http://www.aoc.gov">www.aoc.gov</a>			
Explore at the Smithsonian <a href="http://www.si.edu">www.si.edu</a>			
Bike Ride along the C&O Canal <a href="http://www.fletcherstove.com">www.fletcherstove.com</a>			

### Special projects I would like to do with my child:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Resources for Activities in the DC Metro Area:

- Imagination Stage: [www.imaginationstage.org](http://www.imaginationstage.org)
- DC Baby: [www.dc-baby.com](http://www.dc-baby.com)
- DC Urban Moms and Dads: [www.dcurbanmom.com](http://www.dcurbanmom.com)
- Our Kids: [www.our-kids.com](http://www.our-kids.com)
- KidSource: [www.kidsource.com](http://www.kidsource.com)
- Washington Parent: [www.washingtonparent.com](http://www.washingtonparent.com)
- Maryland Parks: [www.parkpass.org](http://www.parkpass.org)
- Virginia Parks: [www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\\_parks/index.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/index.shtml)

Have fun shopping at your local farmer's market and enjoying the resources of your local library.

# Home alone safety

If you think your older child is capable of caring for himself or herself for some portion or all of the day during the summer, a self-care situation may be suited for your family's needs.

There are minimum age requirements, beginning from 8 to 15 years, of legal self-care that vary from state to state and county to county. Many counties specify the amount of time that children of various ages can care for themselves as well as age requirements for staying home with other children. To find out the requirements in your county, refer to your county Department of Health and Human Services.

It is necessary to prepare your child for a self-care situation in advance, even up to 2 years. You must carefully consider your child's readiness and assess your child's ability to consistently perform important tasks.

Self-care situations may be appropriate for an older child who:

- Is able to assume responsibility for self and has cared for themselves at other times during the year
- Knows first aid and has personal safety skills
- Demonstrates maturity and problem-solving ability
- Uses good judgment and talks to you about problems

Your child must be able to:

- Follow safety instructions and responsibilities according to your directions
- Lock and unlock doors and windows
- Answer telephone calls and write messages
- Get a snack and drink for themselves
- Handle minor problems that arise, but know when to ask for help from an adult

Other considerations:

- If you have more than one child, consider how well they get along together.
- Develop the "home alone" rules with your child's input and post them in the house.
- Consider asking your child to sign a "home alone" contract to add impact.
- Before allowing your child to stay home alone this summer, consider if your neighborhood is generally safe and ensure that you are reachable by phone and there are other adults nearby who could help.

## Additional Resources

Lunch and Learn Parenting Seminar:

**Home Alone: Are you and your child ready?**

This seminar and handouts are archived and available at:

[http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent\\_seminars.aspx](http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent_seminars.aspx)

# Additional camp & kid resources

Child Care Resources	Recreation Departments	Camp Searches & Information	Special Needs Resources
LWS Child Care Resource & Referral Service 1-877-252-8550	Baltimore County <a href="http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov">www.baltimorecountymd.gov</a>	KidsCamps Resource <a href="http://www.kidscamps.com">www.kidscamps.com</a>	National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities <a href="http://www.nichcy.org">www.nichcy.org</a>
Dept. of Health & Human Services <a href="http://www.hhs.gov">www.hhs.gov</a>	Frederick County <a href="http://www.co.frederick.md.us/Parks">www.co.frederick.md.us/Parks</a>	Camp Page <a href="http://www.camppage.com">www.camppage.com</a>	ADHD Resources <a href="http://www.adhd.com">www.adhd.com</a>
Child Care Bureau <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb">www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb</a>	District of Columbia <a href="http://www.dpr.dc.gov">www.dpr.dc.gov</a>	Camp Channel <a href="http://www.campchannel.com">www.campchannel.com</a>	ACA Special Needs Camp Resources <a href="http://www.campparents.org/spclneeds.php">www.campparents.org/spclneeds.php</a>
National Resource Center for Health & Safety in Child Care and Early Education <a href="http://nrckids.org">http://nrckids.org</a>	Fairfax County <a href="http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec">www.fairfaxcounty.gov/rec</a>	My Summer Camp <a href="http://www.mysummercamps.com">www.mysummercamps.com</a>	Easter Seals Recreation <a href="http://www.easterseals.com">www.easterseals.com</a>
<b>Camp Associations</b>	Arlington County <a href="http://www.arlingtonva.us/prcr">www.arlingtonva.us/prcr</a>	Summer Solutions <a href="http://www.summersolutions.com">www.summersolutions.com</a>	Children with Cancer <a href="http://www.acco.org">www.acco.org</a>
National Camp Association <a href="http://www.summercamp.org">www.summercamp.org</a>	Loudoun County <a href="http://www.loudoun.gov">www.loudoun.gov</a>	Student Summers <a href="http://www.campadvice.com">www.campadvice.com</a>	My Summer Camps <a href="http://www.mysummercamps.com/camps/Special_Needs_Camps">www.mysummercamps.com/camps/ Special_Needs_Camps</a>
American Camp Association <a href="http://www.CampParents.org">www.CampParents.org</a>	Prince Georges County <a href="http://www.pgparks.com">www.pgparks.com</a>	Tips On Trips/Camps <a href="http://www.TipsonTripsandCamps.com">www.TipsonTripsandCamps.com</a>	
<b>Recreation Departments</b>	City of Greenbelt <a href="http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/recreation">www.greenbeltmd.gov/recreation</a>	The Boys and Girls Clubs of America <a href="http://www.bgca.org">www.bgca.org</a>	<b><i>Inclusion in this resource list does not constitute an endorsement of any specific web site or its contents.</i></b>
Montgomery County <a href="http://recweb.montgomerycountymd.gov">http://recweb.montgomerycountymd.gov</a>	Charles County <a href="http://www.charlescounty.org">www.charlescounty.org</a>	Metropolitan Washington YMCA <a href="http://www.ymcadc.org/selectioncamps.cfm">www.ymcadc.org/selectioncamps.cfm</a>	
Montgomery Parks (MNCPPC) <a href="http://ParkPASS.org">ParkPASS.org</a>	Howard County <a href="http://www.co.ho.md.us/RAP">www.co.ho.md.us/RAP</a>		

# Additional camp & kid resources

## The World Wide Web

***Inclusion in this resource list does not constitute an endorsement of any specific web site or company. Parents are encouraged to visit any web site prior to sharing it with their child.***

The Internet is a great place to find answers to questions, ideas for activities and books to either read on the screen, purchase, or get from the library. Parental guidance online is important. Stay aware of what connections your children are making.

[www.crayola.com](http://www.crayola.com)

Crayola offers fun activities for Kids, Teachers, and Parents.

[www.brainpop.com](http://www.brainpop.com)

Activity pages and help with school homework for kids; animated science, health, technology, and math.

[www.meddybemps.com/index.html](http://www.meddybemps.com/index.html)

Created to enable parents and teachers to help young children strengthen learning skills in unique and playful ways. Activities for all ages, a parents and teacher's guide is available to extend learning.

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com>

Offers kids' games, pictures, stories, maps, and more on an assortment of subjects.

[www.abcya.com](http://www.abcya.com)

Games and activities for K-5th graders made by teachers.

[www.bookhive.org](http://www.bookhive.org) and [www.storyplace.org](http://www.storyplace.org)

A reader's advisory tool for infants through sixth graders that can be searched by topic or reading level' includes materials for parents and other adults.

[www.funwithspot.com](http://www.funwithspot.com)

Full of games and activities which entertain and educate; helps children to develop basic literacy, numeracy, and much more! Also includes advice and resources for parents and teachers.

[www.ipl.org/div/projectguide](http://www.ipl.org/div/projectguide)

This is an excellent resource from Internet Public Library that links kids to all sorts of exceptional resources for their projects.

[www.nick.com](http://www.nick.com)

Kid friendly free games, and find popular TV shows for kids.

## Reading Suggestions

### Four to Eight-Year-Olds

Arthur Goes to Camp

By Marc Brown (Little Brown)

Arthur's Camp-Out

By Lillian Hoban (HarperCollins)

Ronald Morgan Goes to Camp

By Patricia Reilly Giff (Penguin)

Jerome Camps Out

By Eileen Christelow (Houghton Mifflin)

### Nine to Fourteen-Year-Olds

Camp Confidential: Natalie's Secret

By Melissa J. Morgan (Grosset & Dunlap)

Fat Camp Commandos

By Daniel Pinkwater (Scholastic)

There's a Bat in Bunk Five

By Paula Danziger  
(The Putnam and Grosset Group)

Letters from Camp

By Kate Klise (HarperCollins)

Essential Camping for Teens

By Kristine Hooks (Children's Press)

### For Campers of All Ages

Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah

By Allen Sherman and Lou Busch (Dutton)

Cooking on a Stick: Campfire Recipes for Kids

By Linda White (Gibbs-Smith)

Camp Granada: Sing-along Camp Songs

By Frane Lessac (Holt)

### For Future Campers (Baby-Preschool)

Bailey Goes Camping

By Kevin Henkes (Morrow)

**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES  
Division of Amenities and Transportation Services**

*The National Institutes of Health recognizes the important role that high quality, affordable and accessible child care plays in the lives of NIH employees and therefore provides direct services and support for employees with child care needs.*

## NIH Child Care Programs

<http://childcare.ors.nih.gov>

### NIH Back-up Care Pilot Program

NIH has contracted with Bright Horizons to offer NIH Employees access to back-up care when they need to be at work and their regular child or adult/elder care is unavailable. NIH employees must preregister at <http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/NIHBack-upCareProgram.aspx>

### NIH Child and Adult Dependent Care Resource and Referral

NIH has contracted with LifeWork Strategies, Inc. to provide referrals to many types of child and dependent care services and resources. The NIH community has free, unlimited access to the NIH Child and Dependent Care Resource & Referral Service. This highly personalized professional service is available by calling **1-800-777-1720** between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Services include child care centers, nanny care, **summer camps**, elder care programs & resources, adoption resources, and more!

### NIH Lunch and Learn Parenting/Dependent Care Seminars

Parenting/Dependent Care Seminars are webcast live and are archived for future viewing. The Seminars cover parenting issues from infancy to the teenager years and dependent care issues from the emotional impact of caring for an adult dependent to legal issues. Seminars are archived and available at [http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent\\_seminars.aspx](http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/parent_seminars.aspx)

### NIH Parents LISTSERV

The Office of Research Services, Division of Amenities and Transportation Services manages an interactive e-mail list for child care and parenting issues. Additional information can be obtained at [http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/wlc\\_services.aspx#listserv](http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dats/childcare/Pages/wlc_services.aspx#listserv)

