



Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Summer Camps for Children

by Julie A. Daymut, M.A., CCC-SLP

It's summertime! For many children this means it's time for summer camp. Children have many opportunities to learn new things and practice different skills while at summer camp. They practice social skills like making friends, taking turns, and working as a team. They improve their physical strength and agility with activities such as hiking, boating, and swimming. They also get to be creative with activities such as crafts, where they can make cards and gifts for friends and family.

There are many types of summer camps to meet different needs and interests. Some examples are: sports, academic, adventure, religious, exercise, arts, and special needs. Some special-needs camps integrate several disorders (e.g., learning disabilities and ADHD); some focus on just one disorder (e.g., autism); and others are for both children who have special needs and those who do not. Other examples of special-needs camps are: diabetes, epilepsy, leukemia, hearing impaired, social skills, speech impaired, and physical disabilities. These camps provide special services and activities to meet the children's unique needs.



### Things to Consider and Questions to Ask

When deciding whether to send your child to summer camp, and which camp(s) to choose, there are many things to consider. Below is a list of questions to ask when deciding on summer camp:

-  • What does my child like? What are my child's interests and needs?
-  • Will my child be okay away from home?
-  • Will the camp have the accommodations to meet the needs of my child?
-  • Is there anyone I know who has sent their child to this camp?
-  • How much will this camp cost?
-  • Is there funding available to help pay for this camp?
-  • What activities will my child participate in?
-  • When can I visit my child at camp?
-  • Is this camp coed?
-  • What are the ages of children at this camp?
-  • Who are the counselors and what are their qualifications? How many counselors work/volunteer at this camp?
-  • Is there medical staff on-site? How does the camp handle emergencies?

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- Does the camp meet my child's dietary needs?
- Can I observe the camp? Can I bring my child for a trial visit to see if the camp is a good fit?
- Is this a day camp or an overnight camp?
- How many children attend the camp?
- What life skills (sewing, cooking, etc.) can my child learn?
- Does this camp include opportunities to do community service?
- What is the camp's philosophy for addressing special needs?
- What are the beliefs of the camp?



You can check around your local area or online for camps for your child. As well, The American Camp Association (ACA) provides information about and accreditation for over 2,000 camps. To learn more, go to: <http://www.campparents.org>.

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