



# Summer Options for Teens

While most teenagers no longer require constant supervision during the summer when school is out, many teenagers will benefit from structured activities that keep them busy and engaged. This guide provides an overview of summer options for teenagers.

## Summer Camps for Teens

Summer camps are not just for young children; they can also be an educational and exciting way for teenagers to spend all or part of the summer. Although most residential and day camps are designed for campers ages seven to 17, there are a variety of camps that cater specifically to teenagers, most of which offer some type of specialty program. Sport camps, for example, allow teenagers to spend time away from home (or near home in a day camp) developing a sport or skill. Tour and adventure camps allow teens the opportunity to explore a new area, develop a new skill, meet new people and build a sense of spirit, adventure and independence. Costs of programs will vary, and most specialty camps, or camps that offer travel packages, will be more expensive than general camps. Alternatively, instead of enrolling your teenager in camp for the summer, suggest that he or she work at a summer camp.

## Summer Camp Counselors and Counselors-in-Training

Every camp needs reliable, hardworking counselors to carry out the philosophies of the camp, oversee activities and supervise and care for campers. Each camp will have its own hiring requirements, but typically counselors need to be at least 18 years of age and have some experience working at a camp and/or caring for children. Some states allow counselors to be 16 years of age. Counselors generally are required to be trained in CPR and first-aid, although most camps will provide counselors with training after they are hired. Residential camp counselors may need

to meet more stringent hiring requirements since they will be caring for campers both day and night, and specialty counselors may be tested in a particular talent and/or skill.

Salaries for counselors vary depending on the camp and job requirements and may be higher for persons who are certified in lifeguard training and other skilled positions. Room and board is included at most residential camps and health and accident insurance may also be covered in some programs.

Younger teens interested in becoming counselors generally can join a counselor-in-training program that allows them to work closely with full-fledged counselors during regular camp sessions, assisting them with caring for campers. Counselors-in-training typically are not paid, but can attend camp at a reduced rate or sometimes free of charge. This also greatly increases their chances of getting hired as a counselor in the future.

## Other Summer Camp Jobs

Teenagers who do not feel comfortable working as a counselor but are interested in working at a camp may be able to apply for the following summer jobs:

- **Activity instructors** are responsible for teaching campers a particular sport or skill, or organizing and overseeing a group of activities.
- **Lifeguards** are needed to work at a camp's pool or other swimming areas. Proper certifications such as advanced lifesaving are typically required.
- **Trip leaders** lead groups of teenagers or youths on adventure-based tours throughout the United States or Europe.
- **Kitchen help** is generally needed in the form of food service directors, cooks and dishwashers.



## Other Summer Options for Teens

If camp does not interest your teenager, here are some other suggestions:

- **Summer employment**—If your child is at least 16 years old, summer is the perfect time to get a job or internship. Free of school responsibilities, teens can experience what it's like to have a job and earn money. Teens or preteens too young to work in commercial operations may be able to find a job on an independent basis working, for example, as a mother's helper, dog-walker, tutor or landscaper.
- **Volunteer organizations**—Contact local volunteer organizations or the guidance department at your child's school to find out about organizations that recruit teens for volunteer positions. Examples include caring for animals at a local nature center or shelter, visiting homebound senior citizens, reading to the blind or volunteering for such national organizations as Volunteers of America, Habitat for Humanity, the United Way or the American Red Cross.
- **Academic enrichment programs**—Many universities or schools offer academic classes or enrichment programs for teens. Contact the schools in your area to find out what programs are being offered.
- **Sports programs**—Many communities sponsor structured programs in local parks and schools. Some are organized to meet the needs of adolescents and teenagers, others employ local teens to instruct younger children in sports such as swimming, tennis, baseball and soccer.
- **Summer retreats**—Churches and synagogues, as well as many schools, plan summer trips for teenagers. Some are purely for recreation, while others may incorporate recreational activities along with volunteer duties.

- **Travel**—This may be a good time for your child to visit relatives and/or friends who live some distance away. Many teenagers travel on their own, especially when their parents know they will be staying with other responsible adults. Some schools or religious organizations also sponsor academic and enrichment summer programs abroad.

## Helpful Resources

### American Camp Association, Inc. (ACA)

5000 State Road 67 N.

Martinsville, IN 46151

765-342-8456

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

A community of camp professionals that accredits and supports day and residential camp programs throughout the United States. Call ACA directly or visit the web site for information about ACA-accredited camps and camp jobs.

*This publication is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to provide any reader with specific authority, advice or recommendations.*

Copyright © 2015 LifeCare®, Inc. All rights reserved. LifeCare®, Inc. is the worldwide provider of Life Event Management® Services

#7380\_SummerOptions\_FOH\_0215

