

Summer Care Options



Objectives

- Assess your summer care needs
- Examine the different types of summer care options
- Learn about summer care options for teens
- Find out how you can reduce summer care costs

Assessing Your Summer Care Needs

Your schedule

- Do you work full- or part-time?
- Are your hours regular?
- Do you have any trips planned?

Your finances

- Have you budgeted for summer care?
- How much can you afford?

Your child's wishes

- Have you talked to your child?
- What would he or she like to do?

Planning Ahead for Summer Care

- Begin your search as soon as possible
- The more popular the option, the greater the demand
- Searching for summer care facilities a year in advance gives you a chance to evaluate them while in session
- Early enrollment discounts may be available

Qualities of Good Summer Care

- A safe, protective environment
- An opportunity for your child to form relationships with adults and other children
- A variety of interesting and stimulating activities appropriate to your child and his or her interests

Summer Camp: A Popular Option

Camp can help your child:

- Learn or enhance a sport, hobby or skill
- Discover the meaning of caring for him or herself, others and the environment
- Boost self-esteem and gain confidence
- Survive without television or CD players
- Learn to make choices and accept responsibility
- Gain independence

General vs. Specialty Camps

General

- Equal attention on a variety of activities
- Activities may include mix of sports, arts & crafts, swimming, canoeing, hiking, nature, etc.

Specialty

- Focuses on a particular skill, interest or theme
- Activities focus on one of those areas or may be more specific:
 - Aviation
 - Computers
 - Travel
 - Adventure
 - Drama

Day Camps

- Ages 5-15
- Variety of educational and recreational activities
- Monday-Friday
- Half- or full-day options
- Some offer transportation and flexible scheduling
- Coed
- Children grouped according to age
- Typically organized through local nonprofit agencies, churches, community organizations, etc.
- Cost varies greatly; additional fees may be charged for field trips or special programs

Residential Camps

- Better known as “sleep-away” camps
- Provide room, board and supervision
- Ages six through teens
- General or specialty; coed or single sex
- Accommodations may be cabins, tents or dorms
- Camp size varies from under 100 to over 400
- Required to be licensed

Special Needs Camps

- Designed for children who are cognitively, emotionally and physically challenged, or have health impairments
- Some camps mainstream children; others are solely for children with special needs
- Typically have a lower counselor to camper ratio
- May structure activities around IEP
- Medical facility should be nearby

Gifted and Talented Camps

- Designed for academically and/or artistically gifted and talented children
- Day and residential options
- Typically focus on academics or fine arts, but some combine them with traditional camp activities
- Adventure camps offer challenge without academics
- Children may be required to pass an entrance exam

Choosing a Camp

Program

- Day or residential?

Location

- How far away?

Setting

- Country?
- City?
- Mountains?
- Lakeside?

Size

- What is most comfortable for your child?

Gender

- Coed or same sex?

Ages

- Same age or variety?

Length of sessions

- How long will your child attend?

Cost

- How much can you afford?

Evaluating a Camp

- Ask about the camp's philosophy
- Set up an appointment to visit the camp
- Find out whether the camp is licensed
- Contact the BBB
- Seek the help of the ACA and the NCA

Preparing Your Child for Camp

- Talk about concerns in advance
- Have realistic expectations
- Build support in advance
- Visit the camp in advance
- Expect some adjustment difficulty
- Have a strategy for handling homesickness

Other Summer Care Options

- Child care centers
- Family day care homes
- In-home child care
- Backup care

Child Care Centers

- May be privately owned or operated by a nonprofit organization
- Typically open 10-12 hours a day, five days a week
- Offer physical, activity-oriented and educational programs
- Many offer special programs during the summer
- There may be limits on age and number of children who can attend—investigate early

Family Child Care Homes

- Owned and operated by an individual caregiver
- Programs and activities vary depending on caregiver's background and personality
- Programs may be modified during the summer to include more outdoor and recreational activities
- Average of six children per home allowed by law—finding openings can be difficult

In-Home Care

- Care for your child in your own home
- Parents serve as the employer
- Salaries vary depending on demographics, experience and qualifications
- Some agencies offer special summer placements or you can advertise on your own

Backup Care

- Always have a backup care plan
- Make arrangements with other caregivers who are available at the last minute
- Make sure to plan for and carefully evaluate backup caregivers just as you would any other caregiver
- Flexibility is key

Summer Care Options for Teens

- Summer camps for teens
- Counselors and CITs
- Other summer camp jobs
- Alternatives

Reducing Summer Care Costs

- Municipal organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Public subsidies
- Other money-saving resources

Resources

- **American Camping Association**

www.acacamps.org

- **National Camp Association**

www.summercamp.org

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