



JANE BROWN
Executive Director

SELECTING A CAMP

A child can gather a lifetime of wonderful memories at camp or be utterly miserable. The kind of camp you remember with fondness may be right for your child or not. Here are some guidelines for choosing a camp:

- What are your child's interests? If the child talks of nothing but baseball, or drama, then a camp specializing in that activity may be appropriate.
- What are your needs and expectations for camp? What are the child's expectations?
- Decide on the selection criteria—day camp vs. overnight, “must have” activities, “nice to have” activities, transportation, and, of course, cost.
- Contact the directors of the camps for more information. Most camps have brochures; some have videos.
- Visit the camp's website.
- Visit the camp.
- Ask about the camp's philosophy, counselor to camper ratio, age of counselors, training procedures and hiring criteria for counselors.
- How long has the director had the job?
- What is the turnover rate among counselors? A high turnover rate indicates dissatisfaction.
- What proportion of campers return each year? Unhappy campers do not come back the next year.
- Ask for a prior camper reference contact.
- Is the program highly structured or flexible? Some children like knowing that swimming is at two o'clock every day; others prefer a choice of activities.
- What are the facilities like?
- What medical facilities are available at the camp? Are trained personnel on duty at all times? What are the camp's procedures in a medical emergency?
- What trips are offered? Are they appropriate for your child's age?
- Does the camp offer programs for and have experience with children with special needs? (if applicable)
- How does the camp integrate a new child into the group? This is not usually a problem if your child is in the first session, but fitting into an established group may be easier if the camp takes this into account.

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