



Special Considerations for Summer Child Care

Choosing summer child care arrangements can be difficult. Selecting and monitoring a quality program that is right for your child is a greater responsibility for parents because summer camps are not required to be licensed. However, state law does require that summer camps must complete background checks on all employees. Always ask questions and look closely at the facilities. The following are some things to consider during your search.

CAMP PHILOSOPHY

- Does the program philosophy match your child's interests?
- Are a variety of activities offered?
- Is there a balance between periods of activity and rest?
- Even specialized programs, such as, sports or computer camps, should offer opportunities for socialization and other activities.

THE ENVIRONMENT

- Is there sufficient safe space which is fenced or clearly defined?
- Are restrooms clean and easily accessible?
- Is shade available outdoors? Is there access to indoor space in the event of inclement weather?
- Is there access to drinking water?
- Are appropriate food storage procedures used?

COMPATIBILITY WITH YOUR NEEDS

- Ages of children and how are they separated into groups?
- Does the camp run for the entire summer? Are all the dates that you need covered?
- What are the hours of operation? Is before and after care available for an additional cost?
- Do you need to pack lunch or other supplies?
- Are new activities offered in each session or does it repeat?
- Can they accommodate any special needs your child may have such as, allergies, physical limitations, etc.?

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- What are the staff/child ratios? Are groups assigned to primary staff members?
- Are staff members trained in first aid and CPR?
- Are state, federal and child abuse registry searches completed on all staff and volunteers who have access to children?
- Does staff have access to telephones?
- What are the drop off and pick up procedures? Are they organized and safe?
- Is there communication between the staff and families?

TRANSITIONING TO SUMMER CAMP

Once you have selected an appropriate program for your child, you can help them adjust to the new setting. It is normal for children to be anxious about new things. Discuss the upcoming change in a positive way by emphasizing the fun aspects, if possible visit the site and meet the staff. Consider including your child in the decision or enrolling them with other children they are comfortable with to make the adjustment easier.