



Summer Camp for Kids with Special Needs: Considerations and Questions

Types of Summer Camps: Specialty Camps, Inclusive Camps, Day Camps, Residential Camps, Family Camp, Pre College Program

Background and Training of Staff

- Does staff typically return every year
- What disciplines are medical staff / what is their background
- What are emergency procedures
- What are the local medical facilities
- What is the staff to camper ratio (including overnight)

Special Considerations:

- Be specific about personal care needs
- Dedicated counselor
- Can I speak with a counselor before session starts

Facilities

- Accessibility: cabin, bathrooms, trails, pool, transportation
- Noise, personal space and other environmental factors
- Electrical outlets, air conditioning, etc.

Communication

- Verbal and written
- Where is information kept and who has access
- How is information disseminated
- Will I be able to communicate with my child and/or staff
- How will I be notified if there is a health or other issue, can a plan be put in place

Medical Issues

- How medication be administered and monitored- think ahead for stimulants
- For children who are medically fragile can a plan be put in place to anticipate care needs, a child's Individual Health Plan may be a good blueprint
- Can I speak with or meet with the camp physician and nurse
- What medical facilities are in the area

Other considerations

- Do you have a policy on handling of health issues
- Do you have a policy on handling of behavioral issues
- Do you have a policy on handling of interpersonal issues

Activities

- What is a typical day like
- Does my child get to select activities
- If my child can't participate what happens
- Do you use adaptive equipment

Preparing your child for camp

- Trial run: sleeping at friend or relatives, start with a weekend program.
- Ask about concerns in plain language.
- Role play self-advocacy (I need help with _____, can you repeat that or I didn't understand what you meant, can I do that a different way, etc.).

Involve child in selecting camp

- What do they want to do
- Who do they want to be with

