

## Are Your Kids Ready for Camp?

Summer camps are changing, and so are the children who attend them. Camps offer many activities, but it is the camp “experience” of being away from home, meeting new friends, and learning how to get along with others, that are most beneficial for children.

Natural settings are appealing, as well as the opportunity to explore new interests that can range from crafts to canoeing, photography, or geology.

Checking out a camp with an on-site visit or attending an open house, can be helpful in choosing a camp. Talking with parents and children who have attended the camp previously also is helpful.

Parents should ask about age-specific programs; number of campers per counselor; camp structure, activities, supervision, meal plans; and the availability of first-aid or medical assistance.

### How old should a child be before attending camp?

Camps vary, but most set or recommend age limits. Some may target programs for specific ages, while others plan programs that group children by age. There can be advantages and disadvantages to either. Children may choose a mentor or buddy from an older group, but there may be older children who prefer not to be around younger ones.

A child’s age, maturity, level of interest, and independence also should be considered. For example, a child’s readiness to try a camp may be apparent. They may voice an interest, pressure parents because friends plan to attend, or indicate a desire to explore or develop a new interest at a subject-specific camp.

Other signs of readiness may include a child’s ability to manage self care (like personal grooming); attention span; ability to play with other children and participate as a member of a team; and ability to follow directions and accept responsibility.

### Should a child go to a camp with friends?

Again, there can be pluses and minuses. Having a ready-made friend can be comforting, but when friends

attend the same camp session, children may not be as likely to make new friends.

### Will a child need special camp equipment?

Most camps provide (or rent) equipment for planned activities. Most also provide a detailed list with packing recommendations for parents.

New clothing isn’t recommended for camp. Children often feel more comfortable in well worn items. Don’t send new bath towels. In fact, the older, the better. Towels can be slow to dry and often are lost.

Comfortable shoes, a good supply of socks, and an extra pair of shoelaces are necessities. Other important items include: toothbrush, toothpaste, jacket, rain poncho, hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and lip balm.

Disposable cameras are preferable to more expensive cameras that may get lost or broken (except, perhaps, at photography camp). Boom boxes, personal CD players, mini-TVs, or video games are best left at home.

The same is true for cell phones. Camps foster independence, self-reliance, and personal growth. Children who call family and friends from cell phones often diminish the benefits of the camp experience. If a problem occurs, counselors will call parents.

*Pat Fultz*

## Foods That Help Keep You Cool

Cook during the coolest part of the day, then cover and refrigerate cooked foods to eat later in the day. Plan to eat smaller portions, and skip high-fat foods and sugary desserts. Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables—well-chilled salads are a good choice—and drink plenty of water.

Need to take your lunch? Place well-chilled food in an insulated cooler. If possible, place the cooler in a shady spot, rather than leaving it in a hot car or truck or in direct sunlight. When temperatures are above 90° F, food left out for more than an hour should be discarded.

*Mike Bradshaw*

## PARENTS CORNER

### Cooperation and Helping

Instead of “building character,” competition is more likely to heighten a child’s fear of failure, invite comparison with others, and diminish self-esteem. Cooperative activities enhance children’s feeling of personal power and help them feel more a part of the social group.

How you act toward your children is the most powerful form of teaching you have to offer. Involve them in cooperative activities with you. Encourage them to help you when you have a problem or are in distress. Accept this assistance even when the amount of effective aid they have to offer is not very great. Build habits first, effectiveness second.

Avoid comparing children to others to motivate them to do better. Such comparisons aggravate insecurity and increase competitiveness.

*Excerpt from The Parents’ Page, Vol. 2, No.4,  
contributed by Charles A. Smith*

### Remember to Balance Your Time

Good time management will help you find:

**Time for Yourself**—There should be a few minutes each day when you do not have to answer to anyone, and can do exactly what you want to do. Give yourself a special treat every once in a while. These treats will revive your positive attitude for future tasks.

**Time for Your Family**—Who are the most important people in your life? Family members demand a lot of time, but you also depend on them and love them. Finding a balance between work, family, and self is important. Sometimes, when you give more to your family, other tasks seem less important than you thought.

**Time for Others**—Friends, neighbors, and community members also need some of your time. The shared time spent volunteering, attending local activities, or just spending time together will benefit everyone involved. When your time is limited, you need to set priorities in this category also.

*Megan Mayo and Katey Walker*

### Breakfast Is Important

Skipping breakfast is like trying to drive a car without gas. Breakfast should account for 25 percent of the day’s calories, but foods you choose can make the difference between a good day and a so-so day. For example, cereal commercials promise high-energy and peak performance for a reason. Cereals are comprised of carbohydrates that are a prime source of energy to fuel muscles and the brain. They are fortified with B vitamins, which aid the energy-producing process, and iron, which carries oxygen from the lungs to muscles.

Breakfast is considered most beneficial when eaten within four hours after waking. People who run short on time or say they’re not hungry in the morning should still plan to eat breakfast.

Packing breakfast-to-go, such as juice in a box and a whole grain roll or bagel, can be an easy solution that usually is more nutritious than vending machine or short-order foods. Leftovers, like pizza that include foods from the grain, vegetable, dairy, and possibly meat groups, also can make an occasional quick breakfast.

#### How about a soft drink (or pop) for breakfast?

The carbohydrates found in most soft drinks are from simple sugars that are rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream causing blood sugar to rise temporarily then return to a lower level. The nutritional benefits of milk (calcium) and juice (vitamin C) are recommended.

#### What if I crave sweets?

Craving sweets is a sign of hunger. Planning to eat three regular meals and two snacks, such as an apple, piece of cheese, or graham crackers and milk, can curb hunger.

*Karen Hudson*

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