



# Summer Camp Guide

For Parents And Caregivers

Education  
**Support**  
Hub





# Are you ready for Summer 2023?

Summer camps empower and entertain children as they overcome obstacles, learn new skills, and gain confidence. Campers often make lasting friends as they explore creative, academic, and athletic endeavors that may evolve into lifelong pursuits.

When attending summer camp, children encounter new activities filled with challenges they have never faced. They must work with peers to overcome obstacles or solve problems. They must use

their skills creatively to win games and competitions. Sometimes they must accept the results of a game or contest that may differ from the hoped.

Camps invite social-emotional learning as children encounter new activities filled with challenges, work with peers to solve problems, and maybe learn to accept defeat during a game or challenge.

Camps also combat learning loss, or “the summer slide,” during the summer months. According to the

American Educational Research Association, children lose up to 40% of the gains made over the school year while on summer break. Summer camps of any length and variety encourage children to continue to learn and grow in a safe and supportive environment.

Summer camp registrations are starting to open. Don't miss the opportunity to give your child a fun, engaging summer with friends, fun, and learning. Are you ready for summer 2023?

## About Us

The Education Support Hub, [educationsupporthub.com](https://educationsupporthub.com), is a one-stop-shop for camps in the region and provides links to more information and registration. Due to an Indiana Department of Education Learning Recovery Grant, many of the camps are free of charge this year. REGISTER TODAY!



# Off to Camp

Participating in a summer camp can be a pivotal experience in a child's life, and the developmental benefits are endless. But figuring out which camp best suits your child's needs, interests, and age can be difficult. Here, we walk you through the various types of camps and offer some questions to consider during the selection process.



## Day Camp vs. Sleep-Away Camp

One of the most important decisions when considering summer camp is enrolling your child in a day or sleep-away camp. Both options are fun and offer lasting friendships, life lessons, and learning opportunities. What is best and when ultimately depends on your child's personality and preferences.

Generally, sleep-away camps range from one to eight weeks of enriching, educational, and often confidence-boosting activities with other children from across the region or even the nation; however, not all children are interested in or ready for a sleep-away camp. There is no magic age at which when all children are prepared for days or weeks away from home, but your child is likely ready for overnight camp if they:

### 1. Manage Personal Hygiene On Their Own

Children are ready for sleep-away camp if they can bathe and brush without assistance.

### 2. Express They Want To Go

Our children are often the first to tell us they want some independence. Listen, and let them try this safe, structured experience away from home.

### 3. Enjoy Sleepovers Away From Home

Do a trial overnight or weekend away with grandparents or other family or friends. Debrief with your child and the caregiver to reflect on the experience. Did your child enjoy it? Were they able to sleep? Did your child show signs of anxiety or regressive behavior? If it went off without a hitch, not just once but a couple of times, your child is ready.

### 4. Go To Sleep With Babysitters

Bedtime is one of the most difficult aspects of camp for many children, as bedtime is most associated with parents and the comforts of home.

If they can sleep on their own or without a family member putting them to sleep, they will handle the sleepy-time separation.

### 5. Effectively Navigate New Situations

If your child has been able to adapt to new teachers or coaches, a classroom filled with unfamiliar children, new after-school activities, or a move to a new school, these are all indications that they can quickly get into the groove of camp.

### 6. Interested In Learning New Things

Children who enter experiences and meet new friends with excitement rather than dread have an easier time transitioning to expectations at sleep-away camp.

### 7. Understand What To Expect

Children do well when prepared for new experiences. Read about the camp; if available, watch videos or take a virtual tour of the experience. The preparation will ensure a smoother transition.

## Day Camp vs. Sleep-Away Camp

Many camps will accept campers as young as 6 or rising first-graders. However, the average age for a child's first sleep-away camp is 7-8 years old. Camp counselors will help campers remember to take showers, apply sunscreen, and eat — or at least try — their vegetables.

For a child's first camping experience, we recommend signing up with a friend(s) or attending a camp where they know some counselors. If they cannot do so, some camps help connect campers before camp, or the camp director will you (in person or virtually), so your child has a friendly face at drop off.

And start with a weeklong camp, then build to the more demanding, longer camps the following year. Making your child's first camp experience good is important, so they are excited to continue these rewarding experiences.

## Not Ready for Overnights?

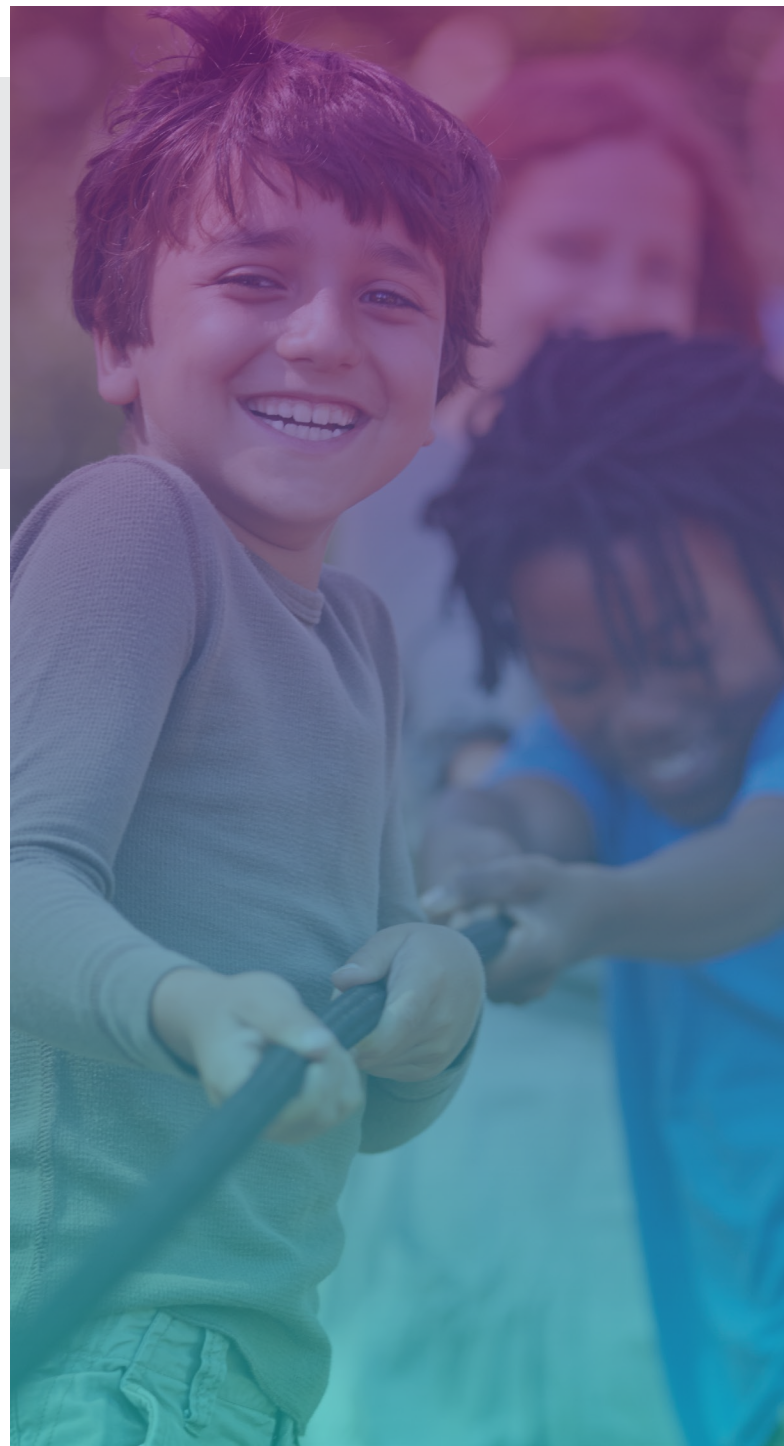
Day camps are an excellent option for children who might need more time to be ready or are interested in spending multiple nights away from home. These half or full-day experiences provide children with the enrichment and connections of a sleep-away camp but allow them to get a good night's sleep at home. With thoughtful consideration, you and your child will make the correct choice for your family.

## Settle On A Focus

Once you've decided between an overnight camp or daytime adventures, you must narrow down the type of camp, which can be just as difficult. The city, region, and nation offer unique camps that hone in on one interest, like music or sports. In contrast, other camps are more holistic — providing a sampling of outdoor adventure, academics, and arts and crafts.

Some camps are designed for campers with special needs, like sensory issues or ADHD. These specialized camps or sessions ensure that children of all abilities get the most out of the camp experience and connect with others like them.

Talking with your child about the options is the best way to narrow down the ideal camp. Look for videos or FAQ pages that detail the camp experience. Walking through a typical day or week with your child can help determine whether it is a good option.



## Making Camp Affordable

Camp costs vary dramatically nationwide, from a few hundred dollars to more than \$5,000 for all-summer sleep-away programs. If you are unsure how to pay for your child's summer camp experience, you are not alone!

More solutions than you might imagine exist to help parents pay for camp, but they might only sometimes be easy to find. Dig around on

websites and email or call the camp directly to discuss payment plans, scholarships, and other options.

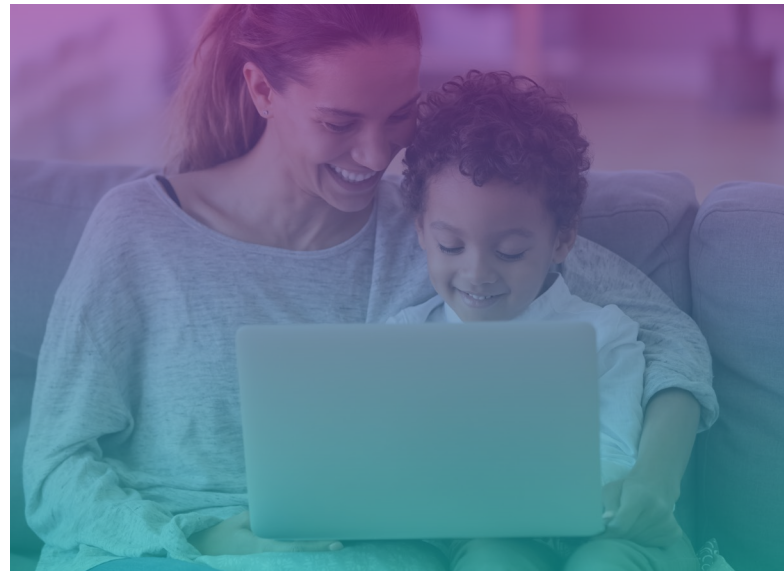
Day camps fall under the same tax guidelines as childcare, so if you pay for childcare with a flex plan or write off the expense, you can do the same for day camp. Also, virtually all sleep-away camps (and many day camps) have scholarship programs.

Also, if you attended a camp as a child, your alum status qualifies you for special consideration for financial aid. Military service and other associations may also make you eligible for discounts.

Camps are often the best resource to help identify financial solutions, and they can also refer you to external funding sources. Again, keep searching and asking.

## Finding The Ideal Camp

Today's options are far more varied than you likely remember from childhood. Some camps focus on music and theater, arts and science, language, sports, circus themes, and computers, to name a few. Picking a camp can be overwhelming, but if you ask the above questions and talk with your child, you will make the best decision for your family. If your child still comes home with complaints, they have a story to tell, and you can try another camp the following year.



# Learning doesn't stop when the bell rings.

Visit [EducationSupportHub.com](https://EducationSupportHub.com) to view more information about our programs and register your child for summer camp today.

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