



## Tips for Parents

The thought of planning summer care for a child can be stressful for working parents. Preparation is the key to relieving this anxiety. The following tips may help you.

1. Keep a calendar of all important dates to help you determine when you will need to provide care for your child. Include the following dates for when:
  - School lets out for summer
  - School starts in the fall
  - When you will take vacation time off from work
  - Relatives and friends will visit you over the summer
  - Doctor appointments or medical procedures are scheduled
2. Determine what you consider to be quality summer care. Many of the same standards that are used for choosing a child care center or family day care provider should also be applied to summer programs, including:
  - Experience of staff
  - Low staff to child ratio
  - A balance of activities for small and large groups
  - A balance of activity and time for rest
  - Field trips
  - Staff training (including but not limited to water safety and first aid/CPR credentials)
  - Well established health, safety and emergency procedures
  - License and accreditation
  - Back up plans for inclement weather
3. Educate yourself on the options available and what is best for your child. Visit and ask questions. Involve your child in the process once you have done some of the initial research. Ask for references.

### Types of Camps

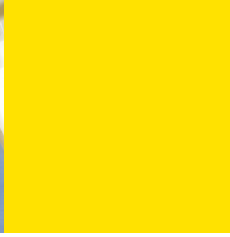
A large metropolitan city such as Atlanta offers a great variety of camp and learning options for children and youth. When considering what is out there, it is important to think about your child's interests and abilities, and whether your child ready for a day camp or a residential camp.

*Summer programming options include:*

- Day camps
- Residential Camps
- Combination Camps
- Family Camps
- CIT Programs (Counselor in Training)
- Volunteer Programs

*Summer programming can be found in:*

- Child Development Centers
- Specialty Camps
- Agency Camps
- Parks & Recreation Departments
- Churches & Synagogues
- Private Schools
- Community Centers



## Summer Program Checklist

A good reference to use when evaluating quality summer programs is to refer to same the guidelines you would use when evaluating a quality child care provider. Some key questions to ask may include:

- Is the camp accredited by the America Camping Association?
- Is the site safe and well maintained?
- Who is in charge at all times?
- Does the program have both indoor and outdoor facilities?
- How is transportation handled daily and for field trips?
- Does the director have experience running camps and working with this age group?
- What are the fees, sessions and hours?
- What ages are served by the program and how are they grouped?
- What are the qualifications and number of staff?
- Are there any enrollment requirements?
- Are there any fees beyond tuition?
- Is before and after-care provided and, if so, is there a fee?
- What meals or snacks are provided throughout the day?
- What types of activities are included in programming?
- Is a physical exam required or suggested?
- Does the camp place importance on small group sizes and low child to adult ratios? For example:
  - 1:6 for children 6 years & younger
  - 1:7 for 7 & 8 year old
  - 1:8 for 9-14 year old
  - 1:10 for ages 13 and older