

3 Dangers of Summer Camp for Kids (+7 For Parents)

2018-07-30 05:00:27 By Tennille Shelley

Summertime is here, and what better way could kids get out and enjoy fun in the sun than Summer Camp?

Unforgettable memories are created camping out beneath bright stars, and toasting yummy, gooey s'mores over an open fire.

Visual contact with nature is also shown in studies[1] to have a positive impact on physical and mental health. These studies say that getting in touch with nature increases serotonin and Vitamin D production as well as improving problem solving skills and bond strengthening with fellow camp-mates.

Creating unforgettable memories and reaping the mental and physical health benefits of communing with nature are both wonderful aspects of letting your child participate in all that Summer Camp has to offer them, so we want to help you prepare your children to get the most out of their Summer Camp experience by avoiding a few common hazards.

[3 Second SEAL Test Will Tell You If You'll Survive A SHTF Situation](#)

Overexposure to Sun

One of the most common Summer Camp pitfalls happens when kids are outdoors in the sun for extended periods of time. Overexposure to sun leads to dehydration, heat exhaustion, or even heat stroke. Remind your children to drink plenty of water, and to always wear sunglasses and a hat, and to frequently apply sunscreen.

Teach your children to be conscious of what their bodies are trying to tell them. Overexposure to the sun has tell-tale symptoms like weakness, headache, nausea, or vomiting. Remind your children that if they experience any of these symptoms, they should immediately seek shade, remove any layered clothing and re-hydrate.

Immediate medical attention should be sought if your child has a fever of over 104, is confused, lethargic, or has seizures.

Practice Water Safety

Swimming and Summer go hand in hand, but it is important for children to remember that safety always comes before fun. Here are a few tips for your kids to remember while boating or swimming:

1. Remember the buddy system. Especially in natural bodies of water like lakes, rivers, streams, and oceans, it is best for children, even though they may be highly prolific swimmers, to swim with a buddy, never alone. Children should never swim unsupervised, even for just a few minutes.
2. Know the water before you dive in. Never dive into a lake, river, or any other body of water without knowing it well. Water should always be entered feet first to get an idea of the depth and floor of the water.

3. Reduce chances of injury. When possible, provide swimming shoes to wear in natural bodies of water to prevent injury from sharp rocks, broken glass, or other hidden debris.

Be Mindful of Street Danger

Lots of Summer Camps include field trips to surrounding areas. Be sure to remind your child to stay on the sidewalk and remember to look both ways before crossing the road. Practice with your child to get your child familiar with staying focused and undistracted by mobile devices. Children, before leaving for Summer Camp, should be adept at becoming familiar with their surroundings at all times.

Do Your Own Homework as a Parent

Prior to sending your children away to Summer Camp, be sure to thoroughly research every aspect of the Summer Camp. Here are a few things to keep in mind before sending your children to Camp:

Is your chosen Summer Camp fully accredited? The American Camp Association Standards for Accreditation[2] requires Summer Camps and other sleepaway camps to pass 300 different health and safety tests before they qualify to receive accreditation. You have a right to know how your chosen camp is evaluated and improved over time. A lot of Summer Camps are members of nationally recognized organizations that set industry standards and staff educational opportunities. Accreditation gives you a snapshot of how your chosen facility has measured up against a given set of standards when reviewed by a peer group.

Generally, when an organization has successfully met review requirements, it shows they are actively attempting to live up to national standards, but remember, no Summer Camp is perfect. Always do your own research, check as many references as possible, and ask all pertinent question to gain a full picture of where your children will be spending time away from you.

While the American Camp Association is considered by far to be the largest summer camp accrediting organization, there are numerous other organizations that provide accreditation to camps. These other organizations include the CCA, GSA, AEE, BCCA, and more.

The American Camp Association standards cover a wide spectrum of programs from day camps to Sleep Away Camps with camping sessions lasting 8 eight weeks or longer. If you're looking for a traditional camp with a broad range of activities with one home base, ACA accredited camps will be your best source for a reputable Summer Camp.

If you're interested in allowing your child to participate in wilderness trips and experiences beyond base camp, the Association for Experiential Education[3] accredited organizations will show you a list of ideal choices in this area. AEE camps include activities like rock climbing, mountain biking, backpacking, or whitewater canoeing, in remote areas.

Find out about the vetting process for Summer Camp Employees - "We do background checks" is not a sufficient answer to questions about employee screening.

News[4] recently broke about a well-regarded sleep-away camp in Texas that wasn't being fully transparent with families. KPRC-TV Channel 2, an NBC-affiliate news station based in Houston, conducted a two-month undercover investigation of Camp La Junta. The camp, located in the Texas town of Hunt, is a boys summer camp that claims to promote "self-confidence and independence."

The camp has been a fixture in Texas for more than 80 years.

Despite the longevity and popularity of Camp La Junta, the camp has a complicated history. The Channel 2 investigation recounted a story from 2009 when an 11-year-old boy at the camp was repeatedly sexually assaulted by his cabin counselor, Matthew Bovee. The boy wrote a letter to his mother, describing a routine Bovee called "shower checks," where he would touch the boys in the cabin to see if they were "clean." The boy told his mother he had been forced to shower six times in one day as punishment.

The employee responsible for this atrocity was found guilty of "injury to a child" and is currently serving a 10-year prison sentence.

Camp La Junta claimed to hold Praesidium accreditation, but after further investigation, it was discovered that although the camp even included mention of the accreditation was included in their marketing materials, Camp La Junta was not actually accredited at all.

Parents have a right to know which types of criminal checks the camp runs on employees. Find out if your chosen camp screens employees using county, state, or multi-jurisdictional background checks, and confirm that they also run sex offender checks. Do not hesitate to ask which company the camp uses to screen its employees. With the background check business name information, you can complete further research into the camps background check policies.

Find out what level of training the camp's staff holds. Ideally, anyone responsible for caring for your child will be fully up to date with CPR certification, first aid, emergency preparedness, and lifeguard certification at the least. Ask the average age of the camp counselors, and their level of training and experience.



Find out how close the nearest emergency room is. Should an incident or injury occur that is beyond the scope of the staff's medical ability, how long will it take for an ambulance arrive to the camp or any of the planned locations which the camp will be taking your child.

Find out what your chosen camp's discipline policies are. The ACA's Behavior and Discipline Manual[5] outlines standards of practice for dealing with behavioral issues with children such as bullying, frustration, acting out, boundary setting, homesickness, exhaustion, internal and external conflicts, fighting, stealing, and more.

It is important that you know your specific camp's policy for handling your own child's behavior and the behavior of the other children at camp.

Find out the technology policy for your chosen Summer Camp. Talk to your prospective camp about their policies regarding technology. A lot of reputable camps believe that your child's time away from camp is an important time to take a break from screen time and internet stimulation. Time away at camp is a time to become aware of their surroundings and gain actual in person social interaction experience. An ideal camp is one that requires cell phones and other mobile gadgets to be put away.

Ask about leadership development opportunities. Could your child use some leadership development? Summer Camp might be an excellent opportunity for them to get started learning how to lead. Especially with older children, opportunities often exist for kids to be recruited into staff and gain resume-building experience that look great on college applications. It's best to get a sense of the long term community your child is entering into. Strong alumni associations and social networks are

indicative of a camp with a strong, vibrant culture.

Summer camp should be a safe, exciting, fulfilling, and unforgettable experience for you child. For you, it should be a time of confidence and relief, rather than one of anxiety. By taking the time to educate your children, and by thoroughly researching all of your options, both you and your child will create memories that last a lifetime.



3-Second SEAL Test Tells You If Your Family Will Survive A SHTF Situation

[Watch Video »](#)

Resources

- [1] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2760412/>
- [2] <https://www.acacamps.org/staff-professionals/accreditation-standards/>
- [3] <https://www.aee.org/accreditation/>
- [4] <https://bit.ly/2LiXx4f>
- [5] <https://www.acacamps.org/sites/default/.../05-HR-Behavior-and-Discipline-6-16.doc>

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