



Finding the Right Summer Camp

Choosing a summer camp can feel overwhelming, especially if you are looking for one that can support an autistic camper. There are camps focused on many different areas of interest with different levels of structure and environments – and not every camp is a good fit for every child. The tips below can help you find a camp that will work for you and your child’s needs.



Where to look for camps

- ▶ Contact neighborhood groups, support groups, or local organizations like churches, YMCAs, or community centers often offer summer camps
- ▶ Talk to your local school district to see if they offer Extended School Year (ESY) programming, or if they are aware of summer camps in your area
- ▶ If your child receives behavioral health services, ask the staff at your agency or check their website and bulletin boards to see if they offer or advertise camps

General questions to consider when looking at summer camps

- ▶ When is the camp offered?
- ▶ Is it a day camp or overnight camp?
- ▶ Is camp offered for the entire summer or only a few weeks?
- ▶ Where is the camp located?
- ▶ What is the age range of campers?
- ▶ What is the cost? Is financial aid available?
- ▶ Is there a cancellation policy?



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Questions to ask about how the camp can support autistic campers

- ▶ What is the daily schedule like? Is the level of structure or need for independent play appropriate for my child?
- ▶ If my child has support staff, can they accompany my child to camp?
- ▶ If my child is unable to participate in a field trip or activity, are there other options available on those days/times?
- ▶ Are meals provided? If so, can accommodations be made for sensory needs and dietary restrictions? If campers bring their own lunch, do they have access to a refrigerator?
- ▶ Are the camp staff able to support my child’s communication and behavior?
 - Meltdowns/behavioral issues
 - Wandering, especially when outside
 - Sign language, AAC devices, or PECs
 - Social interactions

Tips for preparing to go to camp

- ▶ Visit the camp ahead of time to see where they will be going and to meet the staff
- ▶ Try to get pictures of the camp ahead of time to prepare your child, you can also make a social story with ASERT’s guide
- ▶ Ask if your child can attend partial days when first starting to help adjust to the camp schedule