

## Summer Camp

### How to Research Summer Camps

Have you made child care plans for the summer yet? June is just around the corner!

Whether it's finding child care for school age kids or handling alternative arrangements when family day care providers take vacation, summer child care can be a challenge. The following suggestions and resources will help make this summer's child care arrangements easier for you and your child.

### Things to Consider when Looking for a Camp

It is important to include your child in the decision-making process in order to lessen the chance of an unhappy camp experience. A child that doesn't like competitive games may not enjoy being sent to a camp where "Capture the Flag" is played on a daily basis.

#### ***When choosing a camp, consider:***

- your child's age
- your child's interests
- his or her comfort with a specific camp's activities

#### ***Other TIPS:***

- Make sure the activities are well-structured with plenty of variety and little down time. Activities should be geared toward promoting self-esteem and team-work.
- If the camp focuses on a specialty such as the performing arts, theatre, sports, or science, ask how much time is devoted to those subjects each day.
- Ask about the ratio of counselors to kids, counselor qualifications, the median age of counselors, and staff turnover. Most accredited overnight camps require a ratio of counselors as follows: one counselor for every six campers for ages 7 and 8; one counselor for every eight campers for ages 9 to 14; and one counselor for every ten campers for ages 15-17.
- If you are considering an overnight camp, talk with your child to see if he or she is ready for that experience. Will your child know other friends who will be at that camp?
- Word-of-mouth and a conversation with other parents whose children have attended that camp can provide additional information in selecting a camp for your child.
- Most county programs in the metropolitan DC area offer extended camp hours for working parents. If yours does not, see if you can arrange for alternative care during that time. Possibly a neighbor or parent of a day camper could provide care.
- Call now to find out about camp regulations. Many camps fill up quickly. And, just in case, have the following information ready when you register: emergency contact information, name and phone number of your pediatrician, medical insurance details, vaccination records, allergy and medication information.