

Questions to Ask Summer Camps

Article by: *OurKids.net*, Canada's trusted source for camps and schools.

By now you may have browsed [camp guides](#), visited as many websites as possible and asked other parents for their tips to help narrow down your choices. So what's the next step in your summer camp search? Well, there's nothing quite like a camp visit. If you have never visited a summer camp, do so and you won't want to leave!

[Kids summer camps](#) welcome the chance to show you around and answer all your questions. Call ahead to arrange a tour, and make sure to bring your child along. As part of your research, try to visit camps you're interested in the summer before you plan to register your child.

Some camps hold information sessions during the year. This is a great opportunity to meet the camp director, senior staff and, often, other campers and parents. View a list of [upcoming information sessions](#) and start planning now.

Bring along a list of questions to ask so you don't forget what's important to you. Below are some things to consider while researching camps or [print a list of questions here](#).

Camp's philosophy or vision:

How does this translate into the day-to-day life of the camp?

Camp leadership and governance:

What is the director's background? How long has he or she been involved with the camp? Is the camp governed by a board or an owner-operator?

Staff qualifications:

What kind of training do counsellors receive? Do any have certification in specialty areas?

Camp environment:

What is the "feel" of the camp? Is it a welcoming place? Is it well maintained and secure?

Facilities and equipment:

Is there a main dining hall, nurse's office, cabins or tents in the case of a residential camp? Are there appropriate activity areas at day camps? Is there a playing field, waterfront or swimming pool? Special equipment—canoes, easels? Special facilities—ball courts, rock climbing wall, performance space, horse stables? What is the overall condition?

Program:

What activities are available? What is a typical day's schedule? You can search for camps that offer specific activities using the [Advanced Search](#) tool.

Activity time:

How do campers interact with their counsellors and other staff? What is the camper-to-counsellor ratio?

Age-appropriateness:

Given your child's age and stage of development, what programs would be good choices? Is there a range of ages among campers in each session and how is that handled?

Health, safety and well-being:

What medical staff is on-site? What is the camp's policy on prescription medications? What emergency policies and procedures are in place? How does the camp deal with homesickness? How are behaviour and discipline issues handled?

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Fee:

What's included and what's extra? Learn more about paying for camp in [Money Matters](#).

Camp life:

Do campers seem engaged and happy? Can you picture your child in the setting? On your visit, also be sure to:

- Ask for an outline of the camp's program and of any special learning opportunities offered campers.
- Ask if they can refer you to parents of previous campers.
- Try to speak with the director and counsellors.
- Ask if your child can meet other campers. Ask for a camper or counsellor to take your child on a tour of the camp.
- Ask to observe an activity.
- Ask for any helpful resources, for example, packing lists.
- Ask what bursaries or other financial support may be available.

Footer: Give your kids a Summer Camp experience this year. Find top camp for kids and teens at www.ourkids.net/camp.